Global Literary Studies

Key Concepts

Edited by
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Global Literary Studies Through Concepts: Towards the Institutionalisation of an Emerging Field

1 Introduction

As the war in Ukraine rages on and millions of refugees flee Russian bombings in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, urgency has taken hold of publishers in the West, who are quickly translating works by Ukrainian novelists, poets, and historians in an effort to make some symbolic social justice out of this global geopolitical crisis. Hitherto relegated to the pole of small-scale production and independent publishers, after the Russian invasion, Ukrainian writers are gaining more visibility via worldwide mainstream publishers, who are celebrating the best of Ukrainian literature and culture. These works in translation promote cultural diversity and highlight the difficult situation in the country by offering invaluable insights into the war and the historical relations between Ukraine and Russia. But they also remind us of the multiple cultural, political, and economical constraints involved in the literary marketplace. Undoubtedly, their publication is not only a matter of shedding light on a largely unknown and neglected cultural space for many Western readers; it is also an economic and political decision that will bring financial profits and political support. Let us give a more specific example. In the April 2 entry in her *Diary of War*, the Ukrainian writer and photographer Yevgenia Belorusets, who began reporting from Kiev as the Russian invasion started, asked her international readers to learn the names of unknown places in Ukraine. The forgotten and now destroyed towns and villages of Zhdanivka, Toretsk, Horlivka, Verkhnotoretske, and Bucha are a testament to an overlooked, impoverished territory where war has been affecting everyday life since 2014. Belorusets, who had previously explored this in *Lucky Breaks*, a newly translated short fiction collection depicting women affected by war in the coal regions of the Donbas, asks the reader to commit and to remember. She also makes us ponder, from the standpoint of literary studies, the urgency of listening to these forgotten voices and the role they play within a global order strained not only by North-South but also by East-West borders, as well as by local and regional fracture lines (for example, the Caucasus or the former Soviet Union).

This example sadly acknowledges the gaps and biases in some current trends within comparative literature and world literature, which are still largely centred on Euro-American institutions and methods. But our hyperconnected

present makes possible an analysis of the global circulation of books that sheds light on non-Western literatures and geographic and linguistic frontiers that have previously been overshadowed. This hyperconnectivity also nuances the tendency to overfocus on the nation. However, emphasising the idea of movement and circulation does not imply any promises about a global, friction-free space of immediate and unrestricted accessibility, as well as it does not guarantee any promises about success or impact. Indeed, territorial inequalities are still evident, as is the fact that minor literatures and less-translated languages are often obscured by a world-system of translation that privileges English as a global language and grants visibility according to the interests of a global publishing industry. Thus, while the very existence of global literary studies as an institutionalised field is not yet fully established, the global turn in various disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences has been gaining traction in recent years against the backdrop of the current global conjunction. Debates around literary transnationality; the circulation and reception of forms, genres, and textual patterns in different regions of the world; and the growing constellation of agents in the international literary space speak to the need to examine complex systems and increasingly interwoven realities.

This book aims to contribute to the field of global literary studies with a more inclusive and decentralising approach. Specifically, it responds to a double demand: the need for expanding openness to other ways of seeing the global literary space by including multiple literary and cultural traditions and other perspectives in the discussion (Krihnaswamy 2010; Edmond 2021; Denecke 2021; Roig-Sanz, Carbó-Catalan, Kvirikashvili 2022), and the need for conceptual models and different case studies that will help develop a global approach in four key avenues of research, which are at the core of this volume: global translation flows and translation policies, the post-1989 novel as a global form, global literary environments such as oceans or the planet, and a global perspective on film and cinema history. We believe global literary studies should aim at decentralisation from both a geographical and a thematic standpoint, as well as with regards to the theories and practices we set in motion and the agents involved. Therefore, this book undertakes the task of briefly reviewing notions such as cultural transfer, global, globalisation, and world within an historical and critical institutional perspective. It also takes a gender and LGBTQ+ perspective, as well as a digital approach.

Through the analysis of five concepts we consider fundamental to a global perspective in any discipline – space, scale, time, connectivity, and agency – this book aims to propose a conceptual model that discusses 1) new conceptions of space in global literary studies, as well as what they borrow from previous conceptions; 2) novel ways to integrate unforeseen layers and scales that allow us to combine local, national, regional, and continental features, but also

other levels like the human and nonhuman or the idea of small and big in relation to data; 3) the relevance of time and the need to work with a *longue durée* approach, as well as the historicization and periodisation of theories, practices, and methodologies in global literary studies; 4) the new or unknown relations that emerge when we put the idea of connectivity at the centre; and 5) the agents participating in the circulation of literary, translation, and cinematic products, as well as the global subjects that are being modelled in those fields. By discussing the tensions that these concepts entail, we gain greater insights into the global turn and examine the diversity of multiple historiographical traditions and methods.

Certainly, the use of concepts as a mode of historical inquiry has a long tradition. The study of concepts has been central both in the discipline of history, with the important work by Reinhart Koselleck (2002), and in other fields such as philosophy and sociology (Wimmer 2015). Concept-oriented approaches also provide a valuable framework to historicise the language and metaphors we use to understand literary phenomena in different contexts and over time. Particularly interesting in this regard is the idea of "travelling concepts" (Bal 2002), which stresses the performative value of concepts as they move across different cultures and disciplinary boundaries. Bal defines travelling concepts as "tools of intersubjectivity" that "facilitate discussion on the basis of a common language" (2002, 22). They are "sites of debate" and "tentative exchange" (13), able to condense complex theories and practices into a single word or set of words, the meaning of which needs to be constantly renegotiated. Thus, we understand concepts not as established, univocal terms, but as dynamic and ever-evolving sites of meaning and experience that have a history and carry layers of meaning as they circulate beyond national and disciplinary boundaries (see also Baumbach, Michaelis, and Nünning 2012; Neumann and Nünning 2012). The concepts of space, scale, time, connectivity, and agency are key instances that travel across different perspectives and scholarly contexts in literary studies and the humanities as well as the social and natural sciences, prompting new, interdisciplinary discussions. By exploring these concepts through different case studies, we aim to contribute to building a common, more self-reflective language and conceptual model within the theoretical discussion on the global as it applies to literary, translation, and film studies.

2 Global Literary Studies as an Emerging Field

The notion of the global is taken as an epistemological premise. We understand it as a research approach that looks at cultural phenomena, in a broad sense, from a greater scale and from a multidirectional perspective, and as an emerging field that is lately being institutionalised and has been gaining ground in multiple disciplines (Middell and Naumann 2010; Berg 2013; Conrad 2016; Rotger, Roig-Sanz, and Puxan-Oliva 2019). The notion of the global is also a way of re-thinking literary, translation, and film history, as it recognizes the heritage of transnational history and postcolonial literature, as well as the varied attempts to engage in comparative approaches and other terms such as cultural transfer, cosmopolitan, and world. Obviously, these terms are very slippery, as they have many layers (economical, political, cultural, aesthetic), and it's not always easy to unravel the complex set of literature that has been published from different research traditions and sometimes overlapping theories. The term transnational history was coined to help us understand the relationship between the global and the local and the national and the international; however, this approach is both useful and problematic (see Clariana-Rodagut and Roig-Sanz forth. 2022). The representation of multiple, simultaneous spaces and processes involves a wide range of conceptual and methodological challenges, including aesthetic, political, economic, social, and cultural constraints. These challenges led to the global turn, which questioned the centrality of the nation and promoted area studies instead. The field of global literary studies also adopts the premise that literatures do not only travel from the centre to the peripheries; rather, they circulate in multiple directions and develop as they mirror, compete with, or ignore each other. It also promotes plural globalities (global Romanticism, global modernisms), heterogeneity, multilingualism, and the recognition of non-Western historiographies, while using a gender-conscious, ethical, interdisciplinary, and digital approach. Of course, we foresee that there are many possible definitions of the global (both as a process and as an approach). In this volume, we understand the global as a decentralised attempt to write a decolonial literary, translation, and film history, and as an epistemological premise and methodological research perspective that enables us to grapple with hegemonic discourses and address fundamental topics related to our selected key concepts.

In order to provide a brief overview of some of the theoretical and conceptual framework that precedes the notion of the global, we would like to take and vindicate the idea of cultural transfer as a point of departure. Cultural transfer has been fundamental to our understanding of how literature and cultural goods have circulated across time and space, and it refers to multiple phenomena of

circulation, transformation, and appropriation across geo-cultural areas.[1] However, the use of this notion as a conceptual frame has involved several challenges. As is well-known, the concept of cultural transfer was established in the late 1980s by the German Studies scholars Michel Espagne and Michael Werner to fill the gaps in comparative studies and diffusionist perspectives. It was an innovative way of analysing the reinterpretation of cultural goods and the encounters among them, as well as an attempt to overcome national borders. Throughout the 1990s – just after the fall of the Soviet empire and German reunification – scholars from a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences discussed the methodological nationalism that had been prevalent for many years. At the same time, the desire to transcend an ideal of universalism also became clear. The beginning of the 21st century saw the publication of studies on literary and cultural transfers between, for example, the United States and Europe, and Portugal and Spain. Nevertheless, it was a simplification to conclude that networks and mechanisms of export and import functioned without a third party, as illustrated by trilateral and broader constellations such as France-Germany-Russia and cultural transfers related to the heritage of Ancient Greece and Rome, to name but a few examples. However, despite an awareness of the need to go beyond these binary and triangular relations (Espagne insisted on that in 2013, see also Lüsebrinck and Jørgensen 2021), many studies still frame cultural transfers between an origin and a target culture, following a binary model that was too rigid. The transnational perspective that was introduced to European literary history, for instance, still took a strongly Eurocentric approach that was mainly focused on Western literature.

In a similar vein, research on cultural transfers and a transnational perspective outside Europe (in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, for example) also tended to be very local. It was usually limited to a single national context or, again, to binary or triangular national relations in which Europe always played a role, such as the study of Brazilian translations in Argentina through the mediating role of France (Sorá 2003) or the transatlantic circulation of novels between Europe and Brazil (Abréu 2017) during a time period that is meaningful for Europe (1789–1914) but maybe less so for Latin America. Thus, in the last few years, new theoretical and methodological developments within a global approach have tried to bring to the fore a set of cultural relations that have been mostly overlooked in favour of transfers in which Europe played a central part.

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1 The first developments of these ideas were presented as keynote lectures at the following conferences: "Paradoxes and Misunderstandings in Cultural Transfer," at the Université Catholique de Louvain in May 2019, and in the context of the seminar Cultural Transfer 2020/21 at the Leipzig Research Centre Global Dynamics (ReCentGlobe) in March 2021. See also Clariana-Rodagut and Roig-Sanz, forth. 2022.

As noted above, global literary studies has not yet been fully incorporated into academic institutions as a disciplinary field, and it has been developed within the framework of two different institutional origins. On the one hand, it has followed a line that promotes scholarship on global history, which has emerged from German universities in Berlin – with Sebastian Conrad – and in Leipzig, under the leadership of Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann. This line of research takes a specific interest in transnational processes and relationships between the Global North and the Global South and material culture. On the other hand, global literary studies has built on a line of Anglo-American research on globalisation processes – as in the case of the University of Warwick's Maxime Berg – and world literature in the United States. Research in this Anglo-American line has been carried out at Harvard, Stanford, and the University of Virginia by David Damrosch, Franco Moretti and Mark Algee-Hewitt, and Debjani Ganguly, among others. As is well-known, the field of world literature studies has been institutionalised in the form of new "world literature" departments and institutes like David Damrosch's Harvard-based *Institute for World Literature* (IWL), as well as journals like the *Journal of World Literature* (Brill), *World Literature Today* (University of Oklahoma), *Research in Contemporary World Literature/Pazhuhesh-e Zabanha-ye Khareji* (University of Tehran), *World Literature Studies* (Slovakia, Ustav Svetovej Literatury SAV), or the *Forum for World Literature Studies* (Shanghai Normal University). Undoubtedly, the sociological perspective taken by Pascale Casanova in her very well-known *The World Republic of Letters*, published in English in 2004, also signalled a turning point towards the global, as did Anna Boschetti's *L'espace culturel transnational* (2010), both works that emerged from Bourdieusian field theory. Previously, we already saw, especially in Europe, growing interest in the sociology of literature since works by Robert Escarpit and Alain Viala (1958), Paul Dirkx (2000), and Paul Aron and Alain Viala (2006) were published in countries such as France and Belgium. In the case of translation, works by Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari (2007), Johan Heilbron (1999), and Gisèle Sapiro (2008, 2009) focused their attention on multiple agents (authors, publishers, translators) who have been also understood as cultural mediators (Meylaerts, Gonne, Lobes, and Roig-Sanz 2017; Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018), but also on national institutions and transnational policies (see the chapter by Carbó-Catalan and Meylaerts in this book), festivals, book fairs, and literary prices. From a sociology of publishing perspective, John B. Thompson (2010) has also conducted valuable research, and materialist approaches have been also combined with close reading, with a special focus on the novel (Sarah Brouillette 2007, 2014, 2021; Sánchez Prado 2018; Locane 2019; De Loughry 2020; Rotger and Puxan-Oliva 2021; Horta 2022; Rotger 2022).

Within this general context, global approaches to literary and translation studies (Roig-Sanz 2022) have given voice in the last few years to new or renewed literary worlds such as multilingual writing, literature and human rights, minor and less-translated literatures, black studies, and gender studies and LGBTQ+ perspectives. Everywhere in the humanities and the social sciences, interest in engaging with questions that involve a global perspective or the encounter with the other has been overwhelming. At the same time, socio-historical methods have also nourished global, world, and postcolonial studies, so the field of global literary studies involves multiple perspectives that can be complementary. Thus, beyond the boundaries of cultural transfer history and comparative literature, a global view has been part of the cosmopolitan perspective[2] and the cultural turn,[3] as well as more recent fields such as world literature,[4] ecocriticism, the sociology of translation,[5] globalisation and literature,[6] and the digital humanities.[7] Nevertheless, literary scholarship is still struggling to provide critical, ethical, and interdisciplinary perspectives that examine cross-border cultural and literary phenomena and allow us to establish a fruitful dialogue with other fields such as world, transnational, and global cinema,[8] or even computer science (Roig-Sanz and Fólica 2021). All of these hurdles, which became especially evident after the break in 1989, have led literary critics and cultural historians to look for new concepts and new methodologies to face challenges concerning both the conceptualisation of their object of study as global and the adoption of a global critical approach (Darian-Smith and McCarty 2017). In similar fashion, many topics and fields that were once marginalised (women, migrants, minor literatures, literature in diaspora, human rights, and spatial justice) have come to the fore and become prominent as academia seeks to enhance cultural diversity. In this way, many researchers now work in large-scale contexts and share an interest in analysing global connections, but this trend is not yet generalised across all domains, academic traditions, and time periods (Liu 2018).

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2 See Appadurai 1996; Delanty 2009 and 2018; Mignolo 2005; Robbins and Horta 2017; Harvey 2009.

3 See Jameson 1998; Bachman-Merick 2016.

4 See Damrosch 2003; Moretti 2000 and 2003; Apter 2013; Beecroft 2015; Cheah 2016; Sánchez Prado 2006 and 2018.

5 See Heilbron 1999; Wolf and Fukari 2007; Heilbron and Sapiro 2002.

6 See Jay 2010; Gupta 2009; Habjan and Imlinger 2016.

7 See Moretti 2005; Jockers 2013; Manovich 2016; Piper 2018; Terras et al. 2017; Underwood 2017; Fólica 2021.

8 See Hagener 2007; Ďurovičová and Newman 2009; Higbee and Lim 2010; Gunning 2014 and 2016.

Global literary approaches have also been featured by a data-driven perspective, and by the goal of combining methodologies that are both qualitative and quantitative. However, data mining and knowledge data discovery (Borgman 2015; Meyer and Schroeder 2015) have not yet been applied to many non-European contexts to test assumptions about literary value, institutions, or the position of cultural producers in the cultural field, nor to re-evaluate the roles of multiple actors. These shortcomings can be attributed to the lack of structure and digitalisation of many sources and archives from non-European contexts, which makes a data mining approach challenging, but also to the fact that the previous research on world literature has placed most of these actors in relation to their "peripheral origins" – that is, in a subjugated relationship to the centre or the empire, depending on the case or time period. As we know, postcolonial theory has also reinforced the need to include lesser-known literatures and cultural processes that are not always West-oriented (Said 1978; Appadurai 1996; Chakrabarty 2000). Postcolonial studies have analysed power struggles, discourse, and ideology, but the field has been less interested in the reinterpretation and circulation of cultural goods. Nonetheless, we need to go beyond merely using postcolonial contexts, as these studies tend to focus on the relations of power and domination, and not necessarily on the circulation of cultural goods.

Within the field of global literary studies, thus, the concept of cultural transfer has the potential to be applied to Asia, Africa, and Latin America if we decolonise and decentralise our vantage point and observe those regions not only from a postcolonial perspective, but also with a growing interest in – for example – trans- and inter-imperial histories. This means that we need to integrate both modern and contemporary literatures into a more comprehensive point of view and identify niches of semi-coloniality to map out future research prospects. For example, we must reassess the fact that today, writers from overseas France still publish in France, while Indian authors publish in England and Congolese writers publish in Belgian circles, or the fact that big-name authors such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe are still the representatives of an entire continent (Africa) rather than simply Kenyan and Nigerian authors. A more complex account of exchange, circulation and non-circulation, and multidirectional flows would certainly also include – for instance – Creole, Philippine, and African diasporic cultural mediation. As many scholars have already posited, we need to challenge the relation between Europe and other literatures worldwide (Gramuglio 2013) and promote a richer and more complex idea of world and global literature by proposing alternative terms such as literatures in the world (Shankar 2016), writing-between-worlds (Ette 2016), significant geographies (Orsini and Zecchini 2019; Laachir, Marzagora, and Orsini

2018a and 2018b), biblomigracy (Mani 2016), circuits of connectivity (see Vimr in this volume), and contact zones (Pratt 1991), as well as translation zones, spaces of translation, and global translation zones (Apter 2006; Guzmán Martínez 2020; Roig-Sanz and Kvirikashvili forth. 2022). Although we will not explain these terms at length, they remind us that even as we acknowledge the impact of the market (Helgesson and Vermeulen 2016) and the effects of political, social, and cultural constraints (Sapiro 2009), we must also bear in mind the specificities of literary production and circulation in many contexts to understand the complexities of the world literary system and to avoid reproducing the diffusionist perspectives that we aim to move beyond (Mani 2016; Mufti 2018).

3 Novel Approaches to Space, Scale, Time, Connectivity, and Agency in Literary Studies

With the aim of writing a global and entangled literary, translation, and film history, we propose a conceptual model grounded in the five aforementioned concepts and the following assumptions: 1) an understanding of global literary history and the literary world as decentred, dynamic, and characterised by multiple spaces where cultural goods and producers of knowledge flow and circulate in different directions and through different channels; 2) the integration of different scales (local, national, regional, and global, but also macro, meso, and micro-scale analysis or human and nonhuman) and the ways they intersect; 3) a flexible conception of time that allows us to work with multiple temporalities and non-linearity; 4) a study of movements (physical and intellectual), networks, connectivity, intersections (and disentanglements), and their resulting effects, which can be measured in terms of relations, impact, success, and failure; and 5) a multi-scale analysis of agents, which we also call cultural mediators.

3.1 Space: A Dynamic and Decentred Literary World

The spatial turn placed space and movement at the core of many current issues in a wide range of fields, pushing literary and cultural historians to review classical dichotomies such as centre and periphery, dominant and dominated, global and local, and North and South. A consensus on the significant role of non-Western regions in modern cultural processes has been established, but what units of analysis can we propose to conceive space in a new way? How do we study literature written in or about specific areas that are defined not by

nation-states but by other geographical and socio-technological parameters, such as oceans, rivers, mountain chains, or digital clouds? How does the epistemological understanding of cardinal points like North or South – as in the Global North or the Global South – affect our revision of these different geographies? How do environments and the global environmental crisis produce ideas about spaces that are global or shared? How do these different factors challenge our study of literature? And, finally, how can we apply a decolonial (Sousa Santos 2007) and decentralised cultural perspective that enables researchers to engage in (geographically and temporally) larger accounts of literary processes and focus empirically on regional and urban differences?

Literature still favours major metropoles like New York, London, and Paris, which are Northern centres of cultural production. However, other cities and megacities around the world (Cairo in Egypt, Shanghai in China, or Buenos Aires in Argentina, for example) are also cultural capitals (Charle 2009) with vital literary, translation, and film scenes, and they have a fundamental place in the publishing industry and in cinematic representations beyond their national boundaries. Many studies still analyse literary or cultural processes without sufficiently acknowledging the hybrid aspects of any space or boundary and the emergence of hybrid literatures that are not self-contained. Indeed, the study of literature should also go beyond international histories, relations among nations, and imperial history, as we cannot consider the circulation of books only through the lens of the global expansion of Western Europe. Multiple regional connections remain marginalised (Eckert 2013), and focusing on certain parts of the world as the only counterpoints tells parts of the story while obscuring other parts. For example, the national literary-historical mainstream rarely sufficiently acknowledges the role of so-called peripheral literary fields or the complexities of non-European literary fields in cultural processes that have simultaneously affected multiple regions. Therefore, it is possible to make major contributions by meshing a wide range of sources pertaining to cultures that are generally considered peripheral into a more global vision. Cultural transfers occur not just from centres to their peripheries (as most studies based on cultural-transfer approaches have argued), but also in reverse and through other channels – from periphery to periphery, for example, or via South-South relations.

Nevertheless, as noted above, we need to incorporate a critical lens into our global approaches in order to identify imbalances and relations of unevenness. For example, by decentring the analysis of world literature on different levels, we can study interactions with indigenous languages in the Spanish-speaking world (for example in Peru, Mexico, or Bolivia) or focus our analysis on the borders between Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking zones, as in the case of Uruguay. Natural

connections or maritime routes, such as seas, rivers, and oceans (Steinberg 2001; Suzuki 2021; Puxan-Oliva in this book), can also mediate within a colonial context, and by studying them, we can bear witness to the relevance of the ocean in experiences of slavery, or the importance of the sea in refugee crises and migrant displacements in the Mediterranean, as well as in relation to ecological ethics (see, for example, hydrofeminism). In a similar vein, we can emphasise the role of mountains, deserts, or rainforests, and we can conduct analyses at the level of the region (the Caucasus) or the city (in the capital, in the case of Beirouth, in Lebanon), but also in other relevant sites of cultural transfers and exchanges like Oporto, in Portugal, or Puno, in Perú. The conceptual frame of global translation zones (Roig-Sanz, and Kvirikashvili forth. 2022; Roig-Sanz, Cardillo, and Ikoff forth. 2022) may also provide an alternative perspective on the circulation of people and texts that can be useful in large-scale contexts and for investigating the in-betweenness of that circulation. Likewise, the role of the seemingly central spaces in leading the emergence and development of novel artistic forms of expression must be nuanced and questioned to enhance diversity, as well as to abandon the framework of innovative centres and imitative peripheries (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018).

3.2 Scale: Multiple Epistemologies and Methods

The analysis of cultural and literary developments involves multiple scales, as these processes cannot be seen as separately and exclusively local, national, regional, or global; instead, they take place at the intersection of multiple scales. Where, then, do we position ourselves to discuss the histories of literature, translation, or film from a global perspective? How do we handle scales like the local, the national, the regional, and the global? Given that we intend to integrate these scales rather than view them as excluding one another, we propose to explore the opportunities and tensions produced by working with several scales and reflect on how they are affected by cultural, political, social, and economic contexts. Do scales reveal horizontal or vertical relations? How are micro and macro scales represented in translation, film, and literature, and how do they influence poetics? Scale also relates to a broad audience and the ways communities of readers are shaped from the local to the global and also in diverse temporalities.

Certainly, over the last two decades, the notion of scale has been at the core of many debates, especially since the expansion of the literary canon prompted by the intensification of world literature's discussions. In order to move away from the adversarial nationalist approaches that limited the study

of literary phenomena to the nation and to a handful of canonical texts, global approaches to literature include a large corpora of texts from multiple languages and spaces. Indeed, the problem of commensurability has direct conceptual implications for the notion of scale. How should we gauge different scalar dimensions in the analysis of literary, translation, and film histories as they move through time and space? One example is found in *glocal* configurations, which highlight the interdependence between global processes and local experiences (Livingston 2001; Roudometof 2016a and 2016b; Rao Mehta 2018) and can help us bridge these two dimensions that are often understood as opposite, diving into the many frictions that tie them together. However, the term *glocal* as a scale might not be useful when approaching natural spaces such as the Mediterranean (Vidal-Pérez 2022) and we might think of different types of scales such as the coast and the sea, the experience of the individual and the collective. Thus, scaling up the object of research involves pressing methodological challenges and at least two types of scales: contextual scales and more textual ones. On the one hand, a reinterpretation of translation, cinematic and literary phenomena at the crossroads of the local, the national, the regional, and the global illuminates cultural areas and linguistic communities that are interrelated and dynamic systems, rather than fixed and permanent ones. On the other hand, certain principles related to literary and social value or other issues connected to the legitimacy, continuity, or aesthetic judgement of a given work can shed light on the different layers of its reception and how it becomes (or does not become) a canonical work.

Likewise, the study of literature at the intersection of multiple scales goes hand in hand with macro-, meso-, and micro-scale analysis. In this respect, the notion of scale implies the combination of both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The field of global literary studies has seen large- and small-scale analyses, often conducted with digital tools and either big data approaches or what Borgmann (2015) calls "big data, little data, no data". Certainly, the broad field of digital humanities offers many possibilities to work with and process more data so that our objects of study reach scales that broaden our understanding of how vectors move and how cultural goods circulate. In this way, we can locate, map, and evaluate movements, connections, interactions, and displacements at the micro level while generating data that can yield insights on the macro level from a social network perspective. Methodologically, developments in data analysis have made it possible to more broadly handle and register relations and social historical networks (Collins 1998; Verbruggen 2007; Björn-Olav 2009; So and Long 2013), mapping out different scales and measuring intensities between decanted points – between the scale periphery and the periphery, for example.

The problem of scale is hence epistemological and methodological as well as formal. One issue that arises when addressing scale is the question of how literary forms can represent scales that defy subjective experience and therefore can hardly be transferred to writing. The many representational challenges involved in imagining nonhuman scales, whether too small (a virus) or too big (climate change) to be perceived, reside in what Woods (2014) depicts as "scale variance". Variance amongst different scales tells us about the profound discontinuities between scalar levels, thus explaining the difficulty and the many constraints involved in thinking across them. The incommensurable nature of these scale disjunctures complicates any attempt to comprehend the global or imagine it through literature. The same problem arises when dealing with temporal scales: there is the scale of human history, but also the scales of deep time and geological time, and the latter two are impossible to experience through our senses, so they call for "a scaling-up of the imagination" (Chakrabarty 2009, 206). How should we narrate what we cannot experience and can barely imagine? And, from the point of view of literary form, to what extent can these scalar discontinuities push the limits of literary representation, of what can actually be told through the conventional modes of literature and art? Some chapters in this volume demonstrate how the contemporary global novel is experimenting with ways to imagine the global and account for the nonhuman by, for example, introducing ideas of complexity and nonlinearity at the level of plot (Caracciolo); building on science-fiction and crime fiction narrative techniques (Puxan-Oliva); extending the boundaries of the realist novel to adapt to a catastrophic, planetary realism (Ganguly); or drawing attention to the location and orientation of actors and texts as different scales of analysis (Orsini).

3.3 Time: Flexible Temporalities and a *Longue Durée* Approach

Different spaces and scales are obviously distinct in terms of timing, historical traditions, and cultural experiences. The idea of multiple spaces and scales is intertwined with the notion of multiple temporalities. The fields of literary, translation, film, and cultural history are concerned with interactions, processes of exchange, and cultural differences in various locations, but also at different points in time. Since global and transnational approaches are sometimes difficult to work with because they have to do with differing national histories, we argue for a flexible periodisation of our corpus, as well as of the spaces of comparison. We believe that a *longue durée* account of how literature,

translation, film, and culture, broadly understood, circulate (or do not circulate) over time, extending far beyond borders, may help to shed light on the circulation of multiple literary temporalities. These temporalities also affect the ways in which literature, translation, and cinema attempt to account for different time periods and represent time – how the future is visualised, for example, or how greater periods of time allow us to take an Anthropocene perspective. Thus, we have to develop a better way of dealing with transfer processes over time, since this would allow us to grasp the (non-)linearity and asymmetry of those processes. Of course, there are asymmetries in circulation and reception. For example, there is a lack of transregional and translingual comparative and cross-border studies within many domains, including Iberoamerica; literature on the intercultural mediation and networks between Spain, Portugal, and Latin America (including Brazil) is still scarce, fragmented, and rarely interdisciplinary, despite the linguistic, historical, and cultural ties between them. Undoubtedly, with such a broad scale, the temporal dimension has been a pitfall. Cultures do not necessarily develop all at the same time or in the same space, which does not necessarily mean that a given movement or cultural process is late, or that a given context is lagging. For modern periods, it can be difficult to compare literature from the Habsburg, Ottoman, Russian, and Japanese empires, but dealing with key topics such as knowledge, race, and violence can help us do it. When we talk about (non-)linearity, of course, the main issue is our vantage point. If we analyse two spaces, we will find a source-target relationship, but transfers and the circulation of literature can certainly flow in many directions, along several planes, and through several periods. For example, translations from Russian and Armenian were published in many magazines in the interwar period, but the transfers were not linear, because these indirect translations went through Paris or Rome. In such circumstances, can we use a single periodisation to close off our space of analysis? What events would lead us to use subperiodisations within broader chronologies that cover, for instance, a wide variety of spaces? For any geographical scope, expanding the chosen time frame can also uncover earlier references.

In short, it seems clear that a periodisation that is helpful for the source culture may not always prove valid for the target culture. Thus, to study cultural transfer in more detail, we need to break away from the source-target binarity, classical periodisation, and the analysis of fixed generations of writers and artists, as well as from large movements (romanticism, symbolism, etc.). It would be more fruitful to make periodisation more flexible and observe the evolution of transfer over time in the *longue durée*, following Fernand Braudel. For example, African-diasporic cultural mediators and aesthetics are certainly relevant to cultural processes involving the cases of Cuba, the Caribbean, and Brazil. Additionally,

attention to the *longue durée* and flexible periodization can also unearth political networks that overlap with literary networks, such as the socialist and communist networks involved in the spread of socialist literature and the foundation of film clubs in several Ibero-American countries (Clariana-Rodagut and Roig-Sanz, 2022). In turn, we can understand the factors behind each case of cultural transfer, which allows us to understand asymmetries in a different – and perhaps improved – way. This way of understanding the temporal dimension can also shed light on literary authors or specific works that were translated prolifically at a particular time and then completely forgotten. Furthermore, by applying a data-driven approach, we can also uncover new and nuanced insights on the rise and development of literary modernity, for example, or the circulation of specific agents or texts through concrete historical events such as the Second World War. The use of macro- and micro-historical analysis with data mining and machine learning, as well as visual representations of movement (geospatial maps), relations between cultural goods, places, and actors (network maps), and quantitative data on texts' circulation can also show us an interesting picture of how agents and texts changed before and after the war.

3.4 Connectivity: A Relational Approach to Circulation Processes

As we understand it, the field of global literary studies is centred around the idea of connectivity. Since the field focuses on entanglements and networks, and on the circulation of intercultural processes (Middell 2019, 6), it mainly takes a relational approach and draws attention to unknown and unexpected relations, and to new ties. Today, there is no doubt about the relevance of networks and relationships in literary dynamics and the fact that books, authors, translators, and critics do not exist in isolation, whether in the contemporary international marketplace or in the past. At the core of the idea of connectivity, movement, circulation, and social historical networks, we find relations, but also ideas of impact, success, and failure, which are ways to measure the centrality and degree of these connections. Indeed, a meaningful segment of global literary approaches have engaged in analysing literature or the publishing industry as a field in which "agents and institutions are linked together in relations of cooperation, competition, and interdependency" (Thompson 2010; see also Carbó-Catalan and Roig-Sanz 2022). But, how do we analyse the existence (or lack thereof) of connectivity, relations, flows, mobility, or displacement that shed light on processes of cultural transformation? How do we conceptualise all these terms that seem like synonyms but have nuances that distinguish

them? What are the operative constraints in those relations (economic, political, cultural, linguistic, or religious)? We understand displacement (see Mota in this book), or being "out of place," to refer to forced displacements such as exile, migration, or diaspora, as well as that of cosmopolitan intellectual elites. Displacement can also refer to discontinuities among cultural products (literary works, films, translations, genres), practices, concepts, representations, imaginaries, and agents in the literary field. Connectivity has often been portrayed in novels and films that attempt to represent global movements or hyperconnectivity, but these works usually struggle to find a fitting poetics for it.

On a methodological level, network research has put social relations and the study of go-betweens at the centre, and a broad community has gathered around this perspective. The success of a cultural transfer is not measured by whether it is reinterpreted and circulated in the same way in one place as in another, but by its transmission, repercussions, and rootedness. But how can we measure this success? We could certainly investigate whether the initial translation of a work sparked the production of further translations, editions, and translations of similar authors, etc., or we could assess whether those books received much attention from the critics, but, as noted above, a translation is also an interruption of the circulation of the original, so this approach is missing an important element (Wilfert 2020). Alternatively, the contemporaneity of a given work may also function as an indicator of success, as the time that elapses between a work's production and its review is a quick way of testing to what extent and how fast it circulated. This discussion about impact and success has also led us to revise the idea that movements, interactions, and relations may not always involve new and innovative forms, harmonious exchanges, or positive relations that can be described clearly through the analysis of reviews. This idea seems to hold true when it comes to visualisations: we can understand a map as if it were the territory itself. For instance, the fact that a given author has mentioned or reviewed another author is not necessarily a sign of affinity; this connection implies circulation, but it might not imply transfer, success, or global impact. Indeed, movement and circulation appear to be a step that precedes transfer. Circulation and movement might also represent transfers that take place through controversy, as when the translation of an author or text is taken on because of its controversial character, or through the world's largest sites for consumers and book recommendations, such as Goodreads. Any transfer can be an appropriation, but it might not necessarily be a positive one. We might also eventually measure impact through the fact that an author is translated by or helps translate other authors from the same language or literature. In that case, translation does not replace the original, but it leaves a trace. This model foregrounds entanglements and mobility among books, casting them as threads spanning geographical

boundaries, temporal divisions, scales, and disciplinary borders. Impact, however, is another matter, and it is related to print runs. Connectivity is also useful to rethink specific fields of study as a relational practice between cultures (see Fólica in this book)

On the other hand, it seems important to understand the connected nature of the present and past and the role of connectivity as a way to transmit power or exclusion. We aim to highlight how the mobility of agents and cultural goods produces common ground, but also dissociations and differences. In this way, we can observe how networks homogenise social relations or make them more diverse across the world. Networks and connections contributed to the formation of a canon, but they also encouraged mechanisms of exclusion, as the study of processes of textual transfer in translation and reviews shows us. These relations form a highly complex, multidirectional, and diffuse system that requires multidimensional, non-linear mapping; however, as stated above, the challenge of evaluating the importance of connections that led to meaningful qualitative impacts and further relations is much harder to chart. For example, the challenge of finding a record of the reading/consumption of a work and its resulting meaningful impacts is a more difficult one. A relational and big data approach, in turn, can also enhance more transnational research on topics related to displacement, such as exile and migration in literary and translation history. Until recently, we lacked the tools to understand, for example, the scope of a given transfer's impact, but we now find ourselves confronting the possibility of imagining far more complex networks. In this respect, we must reinforce the analysis of South-South (Fólica 2021) connections and interactions to have a complete understanding of asymmetry and imbalances. Asymmetry, for example, has been well-documented in analyses of intra- and extranslation, but it is not as prominent in research on the relation between periphery and periphery. All cases in which an author must be consecrated by a centre to get to other spaces are examples of the non-linearity of cultural transfers. By including forgotten areas in our network analysis, we can redraw the map of cultural transfer and identify relations and nodal points, as well as sites of non-circulation (Locane 2018) and spatial immobility (see Roig-Sanz, Cardillo, and Ikoff 2022).

3.5 Agency: A Multi-Scale Analysis of Cultural Mediators

The conventional fixation on big names, an exclusionary focus on male white authors, and cultural elitism has meant that the analysis of new voices and lesser-known artists from a wide range of geographies and ethnicities (e.g., Black studies, indigenous literatures) is still less abundant in mainstream literature. The

concept of agency places a particular emphasis on approaches from women and gender studies that break with the prevailing research on their male counterparts, as well as on other relevant topics such as race, LGBTQ+ issues, and the gender binary model. A multi-scale understanding of agents and their multiple roles (such as translator, critic, preface writer, editor, or diplomat), along with the inclusion of perspectives from gender studies and ethnic studies, may allow us to unearth transnational actors that have been overshadowed in cultural circles, national and international markets, and industry. This global literary studies approach enables us to understand global subjects and agents' multiple roles, but how do we discover and describe those multifaceted profiles? How do we work with archives about mediators? Our goal has been to further develop a more specific and accurate definition of the cultural mediator as a multilingual person who transgresses geographical, linguistic, and disciplinary borders. By taking a global understanding of the agent, we can also uncover transnational actors and define types of cultural mediators and types of mediation, with a special focus on gender and the inclusion of non-binary, Black, and minoritized communities such as writers and translators from African-language traditions or any small, less-translated literature, from Catalan to Maori. Undoubtedly, gender biases have caused multiple distortions, perpetuating the invisibility of women; since we have missed many stories about creativity and innovation, we must ask the question of how cultural transfer has really been embodied. Most national histories ignore women involved in networks of modernity and creation, and even major female figures are rarely included. Furthermore, research on these topics tends to overlook the roles Asian, African, and Latin American women played beyond their immediate spheres of influence, and the current literature still frames women as consumers and analyses women's writing in relation to the home, from a national perspective, or in relation to their work as filmmakers in the case of cinema history. Female cultural mediators have historically been understood as passive recipients, but they are often the ones who actually cause historical change and the circulation of knowledge. The same goes for Black literature and translations of Blackness (see in this book the chapter by Grinberg Pla). In that respect, the Black Lives Matter movement has stressed the urgency of making Black translators and authors more visible and translating more Afrodiasporic literature. Thus, drawing our attention to the agency of the minor (understood in a broad sense) will lead us to a more diverse understanding of the factors that have shaped literary and artistic modernity at different points in time. For this reason, we propose to work with situated historical case studies (Haraway 1988). It goes without saying that the focus on Asian, African, or Latin American women is doubly rebellious, since women have been considered the periphery of the periphery.

That said, how can we move from a quantitative inventory to an analytical close reading of what individuals actually did and how meaningful their actions were? How can we discover and describe those invisible and multifaceted profiles? By placing the key figure of the cultural mediator – a term that was related to translation in the context of migration – at the centre, we interpret this figure in a broader way: as an agent that acts across borders, disciplines, and languages, enabling us to focus on interactions that transcend linguistic or political boundaries. The figure of the cultural mediator also allows us to develop our analysis across disciplines and their interdisciplinary bonds, since focusing on this figure necessarily brings disciplines together. Applying big-data approaches to a largely decentralised community can also help us encounter a wider network of agents, allowing us to bridge the gaps that centrist approaches to literary, cultural, and film history have created, as well as the history of many movements. Agents and agencies (national institutes, literary prizes, festivals or book fairs) frequently mediate between one literature and another, and they can also facilitate cultural market transactions, promote prestige (English 2005) and consecration mechanisms, and intervene in canon formation.

Agents can also be subjects in novels and films that contribute to or expose the consequences of global phenomena such as environmental crises, terrorism, human rights violations, or pandemics, and they sometimes participate in reflections on global ethics, justice, and citizenship. The identity of these global figures and the ways literature incorporates them are also primary concerns.

4 The Contents of the Book

This book gathers international scholars with expertise in various research areas: cultural transfer, translation studies, sociology of literature and sociology of translation, novel studies, narratology, ecocriticism, digital humanities, film cultures and global cinema, gender and LGBTQ+ studies, and Black studies. They are diverse in terms of their stage careers, affiliations (SOAS University of London, University of Virginia, École Normale Supérieure, KU Leuven, Philipps University of Marburg, University of Ghent, University of Gothenburg, The Czech Academy of Sciences, Georgetown University in Qatar, Bowling Green University, Universitat de les Illes Balears, and IN3-Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) and geographical origins (Australia, Argentina, Brazil, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Czech Republic, Turkey, and Spain and Catalonia), but they all reflect on the current and future paths of global studies applied to literary, translation, and film history. These fields are at the core of the research undertaken

by the Global Literary Studies Research Lab in Barcelona, some contributors of this volume being members of this group. Encompassing various languages of expertise and literary regions, ranging from Europe and Latin America to North America, South Asia, South Africa, and the Middle East, the chapters in this book discuss our key concepts within varied time frames. While most of the contributions focus on the contemporary, attending to literary, translation and film histories of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the book also considers authors and cultural processes that go back to the Renaissance, with forays into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Within this overarching time frame and geographic scope, the book showcases very different approaches to the concepts of space, scale, time, connectivity, and agency.

The book understands that the five key concepts proposed as a conceptual model require a twofold sociological and poetic approach. Another feature we assume to be specific is the goal of finding new methodologies for global literary research that in many cases are both qualitative and quantitative. All five key concepts can (and should) be approached from more than one critical perspective, and they are all examined through different and varied case studies. For this reason, the book is divided into five parts, each dedicated to one of these key concepts. The present chapter (chapter 1) delineates a conceptual framework depicting the main avenues of research that each concept undertakes. By summarising the state of the art, we aim to assess the multiple uses of these concepts in literary, translation, and film history and bridge them in order to open an interdisciplinary dialogue and contribute to their historization.

Part I focuses on the concept of space. In chapter 2, "Global Narrative Environments, or the Global Discourse of Space in the Contemporary Novel," Marta Puxan-Oliva (Universitat de les Illes Balears) proposes to look at global environments in literature. These global environments are defined as spaces that do not easily fit within national borders and are internationally contested, such as oceans, airspace, great deserts, open space, the poles, and even the planet itself. Puxan-Oliva argues that the concept of "global literary environments" is useful for thinking about the production of space in contemporary literature, which addresses new problems such as the relationship between individuals and space's material, biological dimension; international disputes about global problems related to space, such as toxic waste disposal; and the erosion of the planet and its long-term consequences for humanity as a species. Her chapter uses the case studies of J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986) to discuss the island and the ocean as spaces that alter our relationship with natural matter; Roberto Ampuero's *El alemán de Atacama* (1996) to examine the international use of the desert as a covered waste disposal site, which destroys the environmental

balance in native societies; and Franz Schätzing's *The Swarm* (2004) to observe the catastrophic planetary effects of massive oil drilling.

In chapter 3, "Queer Literary Ecologies and Young Adult Literature," Jenny Bergenmar (University of Gothenburg) investigates an under-researched area within global literary studies: queer fiction and the development towards global, digital queer reading communities on social media. After providing an overview of past historical conditions for the circulation of LGBTQ+ fiction, the chapter focuses on the global exchange of queer literature in what Bergenmar calls "queer literary ecologies": digital spaces of queer belonging and recognition that form among LGBTQ+ readers on a transnational scale. Bergenmar explores this shift from local, small-scale distribution of queer literature to global accessibility as a simultaneous loss and gain of community – as LGBTQ+ identities become more mainstream, new kinds of queer belonging emerge. Furthermore, the chapter investigates spaces of queer belonging more broadly, in conversation with world literature scholarship. In establishing a dialogue between global literary studies and queer historiography, Bergenmar argues that queer temporalities can provide anti-canonical knowledge and a better understanding of marginalised identities.

In chapter 4, "Space and Agency in the Petrocolonial Genealogies of Cinema in the Gulf," Firat Oruc (Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, Qatar) focuses on the formative years of film and screen culture in the aftermath of the discovery of oil in the Arabian Peninsula. Foregrounding a complex interplay between the concepts of space and agency, Oruc shows how the arrival of cinema in the Gulf took place in three main spheres: private cinemas (exclusive to the colonial and indigenous elite), corporate-sponsored cinemas (confined to the Euro-American staff of the oil companies), and commercial public cinemas (reserved for the local migrant labourer audience). Each of these spheres was shaped by multiple local and transnational agents that took part in multiple configurations and efforts to regulate the emergent cinematic experience by defining the physical spaces where films would be exhibited, undergirding the urban segregation of different demographic groups in the oil city, and administrating the transnational traffic of films and film bureaucracy. These regulatory practices fall under a logic of governance that Oruc calls petrocolonial, insofar as it captures the intersectionality of bureaucratic imperial power and capitalist energy extraction in the Arab Gulf.

Part II tackles the problem of how to comprehend and represent different scales, from the local to the global, the micro to the macro, the quantitative to the qualitative, the small to the big in relation to data, and the human and non-human. In chapter 5, "Significant Geographies: Scale, Location, and Agency in World Literature," Francesca Orsini (SOAS University of London) interrogates the

notion of scale as an epistemic problem in world literature studies. Building on earlier reflections on scale, Orsini points out that the general emphasis on circulation and the sociological study of how literary works move and acquire value at different scales (local, national, regional, global) often assumes a view of the world as an empirical reality that can be grasped in its totality. Instead, Orsini takes a located and multilingual approach, developing the notion of "significant geographies" in order to rethink world literature from the ground up. Her chapter traces trajectories and imaginaries that are recurrent and/or matter to actors and texts, such as the West African kingdoms of Maryse Condé's novel *Segou* (1984), which have narrative connections to Fez, Timbuktu, Brazil, and London. Unlike the neo-positivist methods of some current world theorists, Orsini's term significant geographies foregrounds agency and positionality, and it also underlines how the world is not a given; rather, it is produced by different embodied and located actors as they manage, shift, and combine scales.

In chapter 6, "The Scale of Realism in the Global Novel," Debjani Ganguly (University of Virginia) tracks radical shifts in the realist novel in relation to questions of scale and magnitude that surpass the normal bounds of human experience. The realist novel, she argues, undergoes a major transformation as it confronts cataclysmic technological and environmental changes toward the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the new millennium; that is, as the very meaning of reality becomes shot through with geophysical phenomena (pandemics, floods, wildfires) at a scale and intensity that upend notions of the ordinary and the everyday. What bearing might the current technological, biomedical, geological, and planetary transformations have on the global realist novel? Ganguly sets out to examine realism in the Anthropocene through what she has termed "planetary realism," demonstrating how megascale nonhuman forces at work in the planetary catastrophes of our time are impacting the contemporary novelistic imagination. She explores these questions by juxtaposing Lawrence Wright's *The End of October* (2020) with Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), and by reflecting on Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) and Namwali Serpell's *The Old Drift* (2019).

Chapter 7, "Glocal Epiphanies in Contemporary Literature: Material Elements, Narrative Strategies," stays in the realm of the contemporary global novel, but it takes a more formal approach to the problem of scale. Within the framework of narrative theory and environmental humanities, Marco Caracciolo (University of Ghent) explores the tensions between human and nonhuman scales and the ways in which vast planetary phenomena like climate change, which cannot be addressed at a local or regional level, put pressure on novelistic forms and conventions. Focusing on David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004) and Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being* (2013), Caracciolo demonstrates the

relevance of narrative analysis to broader discussions vis-à-vis planetary phenomena. He argues that narrative form excels at creating what he terms "glocal epiphanies," and explores how material objects can be the main catalysts of these epiphanies in contemporary narratives. By foregrounding material things that circulate globally, these narratives position themselves – and their readers – at the intersection of the global and local geographies and cultures. The physical and cultural history of an object becomes what Caracciolo calls a "material anchor" for planetary processes, allowing narrative to stage the complex interconnectivity of globalisation.

Part III focuses on the concept of time, considering the different temporalities and periodisations at work in decentred, multilayered global histories of literary, translation, and film. In chapter 8, "The Global Renaissance: Extended Palimpsests and Intercultural Transfers in a Transcontinental Space," Michel Espagne (École Normale Supérieure and University of Leipzig) looks at the Renaissance as a network of transnational cultural relations that are deeply rooted in diachronic cultural transfers from Antiquity. The model of the palimpsest, Espagne argues, can shed new light on the study of the Renaissance from a global perspective. This extension of the palimpsest may be possible on two levels. On the one hand, we can easily imagine the revival of old texts from extra-European or European contexts that are distant in time and space from the period considered as the heart of the Renaissance phenomenon. In such cases, a literary expression draws models from ancient strata of culture to revive them according to different scales. In the French Middle Ages, the Arab world, or the Chinese world, the Renaissance would therefore have occurred in multiple temporalities. Another possible extension of the palimpsest consists in searching the literary history of the European Renaissance for a mediaeval, Arab, or Asian subtext produced by transnational actors. Espagne's approach results in a spatialization of Renaissance historiography.

In chapter 9, "Displacement and Global Cultural Transformation: Connecting Time, Space, and Agency in Modernity," Aurea Mota (IN3-Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) uses the idea of displacement as a means to understand how time and space become connected through human agency as global cultural modernity forms. The appearance of modernity has been widely explained in terms of the rise of a new experience of time, based on the idea that the past must be overcome and the present is the time of right-thinking and controlled rational action, which is aimed at a better future based on the idea of progress. Thus, it has been predominantly accepted that modernity represents a moment of temporal rupture that occurred between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Within this framework, Mota expands the idea of displacement as (self)transformation and deconstruction, which appears in the work of Jacques Derrida, to the

domains of modern global cultural studies. Focusing on the work and the trajectories of two women Brazilian writers, Nísia Floresta and Clarice Lispector, Mota illustrates how time and space become connected through the agency of intellectuals, who create entanglements that shape global literary constellations in the past and the present.

In Part IV, the idea of connectivity is the key concept for chapters 10–12. In chapter 10, "Cosmopolitanism Against the Grain: Literary Translation as a Disrupting Practice in Latin American Periodicals (*Nosotros*, 1907–1943)," Laura Fólica (IN3-Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) studies how translation destabilised the principles of Latin American periodicals by introducing unexpected connections with foreign literatures. Fólica discusses the binarism that pits "cosmopolitan magazines" that publish translated works against "national magazines" that do not. She applies the concepts of connectivity, by conceiving of translation as a relational practice between cultures; scale, by considering the relationship between national, regional, and international levels; and agency, through the conceptualization of translators as cultural mediators. Using a digital humanities perspective, Fólica analyses the case of the Argentinean periodical *Nosotros* (Argentina) and its links with other Latin American magazines like *El Convivio* (Costa Rica), *La Cultura* (Mexico), and *Cuba Contemporánea* (Cuba) by integrating geographic and relational visualisations into her analysis. Literary translation, Fólica argues, led local publications to engage in "international nationalism," which helped conceptualise Latin American national literatures within a network of local, regional, and global relations, as well as struggles and tensions.

In chapter 11, "Transnational Networks of Avant-Garde Film in the Interwar Period," Ainamar Clariana-Rodagut (IN3-Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) and Malte Hagener (Philipps University of Marburg) stress the centrality of agency in transnational networks of avant-garde film during the interwar period. By closely following the history of the screenings and reception of Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), the chapter explores how films circulated transnationally through networks of ciné-clubs, specialised cinemas, and film societies. Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener concentrate on films as aesthetic objects, but also as economic goods and political instruments, arguing that films, just like other cultural goods, have their own agency. Indeed, films actively participate in processes of meaning-making and interpretation through their production, distribution, circulation, exhibition, and contextualisation. Using notions such as "boundary objects" (Susan Leigh Star), "immutable mobiles" (Bruno Latour) and "cultural transfer" (Michel Espagne), the chapter reflects on larger questions regarding the ontology and epistemology of cultural objects and circulation processes.

In chapter 12, "Choosing Books for Translation: A Connectivity Perspective on International Literary Flows and Translation Publishing," Ondrej Vimr (The Czech Academy of Sciences) analyses the global system of world literature from a large-scale perspective, exploring the extent to which international literary circulation is subject to spatial, social, and cultural relations. Through the analysis of a series of semi-structured interviews with publishers and acquisitions editors in five smaller, non-central European countries (the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, and Sweden), Vimr's contribution investigates connectivity in contemporary publishing and shows how what he calls "circuits of connectivity" cast light upon the layered nature of global literary transfers. These circuits of connectivity often relate to the topic of the literary work, to concerns around genre, or to geographic proximity, but they can also stem from a broad range of situations – from common history and linguistic, cultural, and political affinities to personal contact networks that connect editors with their peers. The diverse dynamics of these circuits demonstrate the complex and historically situated nature of a connectivity perspective, which stands in contrast to more universalist and centrist approaches to studying international literary processes.

Finally, Part V addresses agency as a means to think about the agents involved in transnational circulation processes. In chapter 13, "Translation Policies in the *Longue Durée*: From the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation to UNESCO," Elisabet Carbó-Catalan (IN3-Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and KU Leuven) and Reine Meylaerts (KU Leuven) analyse the translation policies of two international organisations: the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (1924–1946) and its successor, UNESCO (1946–). Filling a gap in the state of the art related to the continuities between these interconnected organisations, the chapter analyses the mechanisms both institutions deployed around translation, as well as how these mechanisms evolved in the transition from the IIIC to UNESCO. Taking the Eurocentric character of these institutions into account, the authors conduct a diachronic study of their translation policies and their cultural diversity, as well as how their policies echo in contemporary practices. The study of translation policies constitutes a means of addressing the agency of certain institutions in society and the relevance of adopting a *longue durée* approach, which is central to showing the evolving nature of institutional practices in a continuous and complex renegotiation between continuity and rupture, and between the multiple cultural temporalities at play.

In chapter 14, "Eslanda Robeson: A Writer on the Move Against Global Anti-Blackness," by Valeria Grinberg Pla (Bowling Green University), the notion of agency serves to illustrate how Eslanda Goode Robeson's (1895–1965) activism through travel and writing challenged the dominant racial and gender hierarchies

that were prevalent throughout the twentieth century. Taking an Afrofeminist and transnational perspective, Grinberg Pla studies how Eslanda Robeson performed between spaces and acted as both an interpreter and a translator while also depending on interpreters and translators to communicate her message. Both as a cultural mediator and as an internationalist, Robeson impacted the transnational, transregional, and multilingual dissemination of anti-racist ideas in literature and beyond, while also contributing to a redefinition of the literary field as not completely separate from the political one. From her groundbreaking travelogue *African Journey* (1945) to her numerous journalistic pieces, letters, and public talks against Apartheid, segregation, and colonialism, the chapter traces the global circulation of Robeson's ideas, as well as her involvement in liberation and decolonial movements throughout the world. Despite their significance in their own time, these connections remain understudied to this day, as scholarship on Black intellectuals has focused primarily on males and significantly less on the agency of women.

5 Conclusions

Global literary studies have proved to be interdisciplinary – not only in relation to adjacent disciplines, but also in relation to the ties established between literature and computer science, or literature and the social sciences, sociology, politics, and economics in particular. By discussing and putting forward novel insights into what we consider to be the most grounding concepts for a global approach to any discipline, this book has brought to the fore unexpected relations between areas of study, helping to better acknowledge their borrowings and connections, and also providing a new perspective from which to identify and contextualise continuities, discontinuities, and shared problems. In this regard, the book makes a strong contribution because: 1) it innovatively channels the theoretical discussion through the concepts of space, scale, time, connectivity, and agency, to understand the notion of the global at large and foster the cross-fertilization of ideas in the humanities and the social sciences; 2) it builds an interdisciplinary dialogue on global literary history and adjacent fields like film and translation histories by crisscrossing different methods and critical perspectives (poetic/sociological, quantitative/qualitative, human/nonhuman), and 3) it proposes multiple case studies taking into account an ethic, gender, ethnic, and digital approach.

The concept-based structure of this book has served as its guiding principle, allowing us to see how different theoretical and methodological perspectives,

and even different areas of study, showcase each concept. In Part II, for instance, approaches from world literary studies, novel studies, and narrative theory show how the notion of scale is key to the study of literary phenomena at the intersection of local, national, regional, and global processes (Orsini, chapter 5), not only methodologically, but also when considering the representational challenges that planetary, non-human scales pose for contemporary fiction (Ganguly, chapter 6; and Caracciolo, chapter 7). In the same vein, it is interesting to see how time can be considered through a critique of normative Western chronologies from a queer perspective (Bergenmar, chapter 3); from the point of view of cultural transfers and global history (Espagne, chapter 8); through the idea of displacement as a historical category that actively contributes to shaping cultural transformation (Mota, chapter 9); and through a *longue durée* approach that gives priority to deeper, more durable structures (Carbó-Catalan and Meylaerts, chapter 13). Translation studies, Black studies, or feminist approaches to literature and film also provide complementary views on the notion of agency, highlighting the role of local and transnational agents (Oruc, chapter 4), the role of gender and race in our understanding of transnational cultural mediation (Grinberg Pla, chapter 14), and the potential in considering the agency of cultural institutions or films (Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener, chapter 11, and Carbó-Catalan and Meylaerts, chapter 13).

Whether we look at our key concepts through a literary form perspective or a sociological lens, we have seen how we cannot understand scalar or spatial issues without noticing how they are traversed by the temporality of human and nonhuman forms of agency across diverse literary, translation, and film environments. Interesting in this regard, for example, is how the subjective experience of being connected affects the ways in which we understand agency in our globalised book market, as well as the reasons behind some decisions to publish a given translation (Vimr, chapter 12). Connectivity also intersects with the production of space and time in a global context as social media platforms like BookTok or Goodreads, for instance, enable the appearance of new spaces in the cloud where communities of readers, including LGTBQ+ communities, can access, recover, and share texts from different historical periods and cultural contexts (Bergenmar, chapter 3). Thanks to these intersections, there is space throughout this book for authors to conceptualise both consolidated and new research at the crossroads of two or more of our five key concepts, from Orsini's "significant geographies" and Ganguly's "planetary realism" to Puxan-Oliva's "global narrative environments," Bergenmar's "queer literary ecologies," Oruc's "petrocolonial configurations of cinema," Caracciolo's "glocal epiphanies," Espagne's "extended palimpsests," Mota's understanding of "displacement," Vimr's idea of "circuits of connectivity," Fólica's "international

nationalism," Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener's applied conception of films and their transnational networks, Carbó-Catalan and Meylaert's *longue durée* approach to "translation policy," and Grinberg Pla's new ideas of "movement". Other concepts like materiality, circulation, network, or flow are also considered and reflected upon in many contributions in these pages.

To conclude, we are convinced that a better understanding of these concepts and the myriad of meanings they entail contributes to advancing the growing field of global literary studies, facilitating and informing interdisciplinary discussion, and deepening the global perspective of study in the humanities and the social sciences. Undoubtedly, this global and decentralised approach should go hand in hand with a decentralisation on the academic level too, which will allow us to minimise progressively the long and intertwined history of colonialism and the struggles of Anglo-American and Parisian universities for the hegemony of culture and scientific knowledge. This decentralisation will enable scholars from all over the world, and not only those working in European or American universities, to add their valuable perspectives, interpretations, and specific theoretical frameworks to future literature and to a current debate which is not closed.

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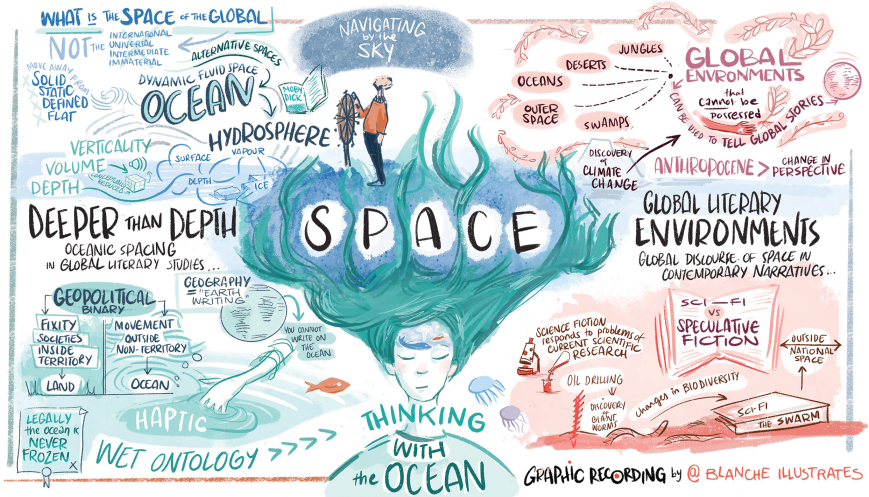
Part I: **Space**

Marta Puxan-Oliva

Global Narrative Environments, or the Global Discourse of Space in the Contemporary Novel

One cannot really comprehend the idea of the "global" without thinking about space. This is clear with the phenomenon of globalisation, in which capitalism encompasses the whole world. In this sense, to understand the ways in which we have developed our notions of the global, we need to review the particularities of space and scale that make it a distinguishable category. Furthermore, our interest in the global has run parallel to the considerable space theorization in critical geography over the past few decades, the impact of which has given rise to the term "spatial turn" in several disciplines. It seems that the idea of "the global" has cross-fed from our contemporary notions of space. Nowadays, part of the flexibility enjoyed by the broad concept of the "global" is due to our more complex ideas of space, conceived from a multi-dimensional standpoint that superposes physical space, movement and change, and spatial imagination, in the work of scholars such as Henri Lefebvre (1974), Michel de Certeau (1980), Edward Soja (1996), Doris Massey (2005), David Harvey (2006), and Edward Casey (2013).

The parallel developments in the conceptualization of space and globality call for a broader understanding of their material relations as well as of theoretical approaches to global and spatial research. Even in literature, since notions of globality appeal to a planetary space the dimensions of which embrace almost the entire spatial limits of known territory and phenomena, thinking from a global perspective often feels too broad and general when not done in relation to the local (Heise 2008). Globality has also attracted strong criticism when considered as intimately related to economic globalisation (Habjan and Imlinger 2016; Apter 2013). However, concern about space and globality does not necessarily involve generalising or being complicit with globalisation. If we operate at a global level, commercially, politically, culturally, and even legally, then these practices deserve to be studied with tools that we are struggling to produce and adjust to a global scale. Perhaps more importantly, we generate ideas of the global partly triggered by these practices, partly to explain contextual circumstances that we perceive as worldwide,

such as, for example, transnational neoliberal capitalism or a human-driven new geological era. From the standpoint of this chapter, the relationship between space and globality needs to be considered from the dual dimensions of fact and discourse, a blend defining our contemporary spatial approach. I will do so from the point of view of contemporary novels and literary studies.

Among the many possibilities in thinking about space from a global perspective in literature, in this chapter I distinguish what I call "global environments," spaces which are clearly conceived and work in a manner that can hardly be considered in terms other than global, such as oceans, outer space, deserts, highlands or even the planet itself. While there are many angles from which to consider "global environments," I propose looking at them by considering the way that contemporary novels contribute to making these spaces global, producing what I specifically call "global narrative environments." These literary environments help shape larger discourses concerned with the relationships between space and globality, such as Ecocriticism and the Anthropocene. In this chapter I focus on the relations between the material, social, and conceptual dimensions proposed by the spatial turn that configure these environments as global spaces in literature. Taking this perspective I offer a tentative definition of "global narrative environment," and delve into the case of oceans as paradigmatic and their relation to the discourse of the Anthropocene. Finally, I use the example of Frank Schätzing's novel *The Swarm* (2004) to illustrate the construction of oceans as global literary spaces that engage with and participate in global discourse.

1 Global Environments

Contemporary novels adopting a global approach highlight certain spaces that are difficult to imagine from a non-global perspective. These can be termed "global environments" and, when studied as a product of a narrative, understood as "global narrative environments." That is, "global environments" refer to spaces that exist independently of literature and that are managed from an international perspective. As we will see, this kind of environment is described and built from various discourses, from anthropological and legal to literary ones. I will focus on the nature of these global spaces as well as on their narrative construction.

The spatial turn has promoted a fruitful understanding of space that has involved at least two profound changes: firstly, that space is intimately related to time, since we cannot contemplate space without movement (for example, Lefebvre 1974, Certeau 1980, Harvey 2006) and without a historical perspective, which is also a socioeconomic and political perspective (for example, Massey

2005). Spaces are used by people, they change, and are historical. Secondly, space is influenced by our imagination. We imagine and conceive space, which heavily determines and justifies how we actually use it socially (Soja 1996).

In different disciplines and from several points of view, scholars have approached spaces that do not easily adjust to a national scale or definition. The best-known formulation is the anthropologist Marc Augé's (1992) concept of "non-places," spaces that prevent us from developing rooted identities that can serve local, national, and self-identification purposes. As Augé explains, non-places like supermarkets, highways, hotels, and airports can be understood as globalisation products that resist identification through homogenization and anonymization processes. These are identical, interchangeable, spaces everywhere and thus capable of producing a sense of the global. However, Augé's spaces are built spaces. Then, what happens to wide open, mostly unbuilt spaces with transnational regulations and uses? I am interested here in large less-built environments such as oceans, deserts, and the poles, which are understood as global and have hardly been considered in literary studies.

I propose here to identify these unbuilt open spaces as "global environments," a new concept that partly stems from some of the specificities drawn by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's (1980) notion of "smooth spaces," Lauren Benton's (2009) "anomalous legal spaces," and the historical "global commons." From a philosophical perspective, Deleuze and Guattari distinguished between "striated space" and "smooth space" by associating the regulated, grid space of the former with the state structures, and the latter with a changing space that is difficult to inhabit and territorialize, fluid and characterised by constant movement. Deleuze and Guattari's privileged smooth space was the desert, which resists settlement and is a changing landscape, features that are common in global environments, as we will see.

In her book *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900*, Lauren Benton (2009) also discusses the desert. While considering that imagination of the desert has drawn on non-historicity and abstraction, Benton traces the political uses of these imaginations for gaining power and collecting profits. Her argument echoes Doris Massey's, also considering the necessary overlap of political and economic history in our conception of space. Lauren Benton argues that deserts, along with oceans, highlands, swamps, and rivers are peculiar spaces because they have been internationally contested throughout history – mostly by modern European colonial powers. Since these spaces have been the object of changing and disputed legislation, Benton calls them "anomalous legal spaces." She traces the international legal history of the ocean as her most paradigmatic case.

The peculiar nature of vast natural spaces whose physical conditions resist territorialization, but which hold valuable goods that make them heavily contested, has long been socially and legally identified as special. Indeed, this is the origin of the category of "global commons," which today includes the high seas, the seabed, Antarctica, the atmosphere, and outer space. While it does not have a juridical definition, the category "global commons" applies to those spaces on the planet located outside national state jurisdiction whose goods can be freely exploited (Juste Ruiz 2018, 135). They are also object of "human common interest" or "human common concern" (Juste Ruiz 2018, 140), meaning that their regulation is not only internationally established in treaties such as the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (1982) that rules oceans, but that nation states compromise to ensure that their legislation aligns with the internationally established provisions that guarantee the preservation of common goods and convened control of resource exploitation.[1]

Stemming from the problems addressed by the notions of "smooth space," "anomalous legal spaces," and "global commons," I suggest considering these spaces as "global environments." I propose that "global environments" are wide, open spaces that are difficult to regulate, inhabit and settle due to their physical nature. They are often used as transition spaces and for resource exploitation, as well as they are internationally contested, have socially and legally been established as anomalous, and usually fall under the natural law principles of free collective access and benefit. Among these, we can include the designated "global commons," which are oceans, airspace, outer space, and Antarctica and also other contested vast natural spaces like the poles, deserts, jungles, swamps, and highlands. In this list, we could include planet Earth, given its strong force in global environmental concerns such as the Anthropocene.

These environments exist independently from our conception of them, but their global condition results from a blend of the material, social, and imaginary perspectives that our renewed ideas of space endow them with. This makes us aware not only of their peculiar nature but also of the ways in which their features

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1 Juste Ruiz distinguishes between three regulation regimes; one that defines the global commons historically as free access goods, another that focuses on common interest, such as animal species, and another that focuses on human world heritage, which is less place-specific and whose regime applies to the seabed. As Juste Ruiz explains, this combination of definitions has grown while the interest for globally considered spaces and goods requiring international protection and management has made the understanding of global commons complex in their legal interpretation. Added to this problem, there are agreements and shared state and international management issues. For a full account of the regulation of global commons, see Vogler (1995), Buck (1998), and Joyner (2012).

are being mobilised to produce a perspective that deliberately presents these spaces as global.

2 Global Narrative Environments

Literature strongly contributes to the building of global imaginaries. We can mostly see that in what we call the "global novel" (i.e. Morace 2014, Haley 2015, Hoyos 2015, Rosen 2017, Ganguly "The Global" 2020), the "world novel" (Irr 2011, Coletti 2011), or the "planetary novel" (Keith 2018, Taylor 2016), a diverse contemporary genre that deliberately assumes a global approach through concerns such as cosmopolitanism, global violence, hyperconnectivity, new affects, translation and multilingualism, and the planetary (Rotger and Puxan-Oliva 2021). Drawing on diverse linguistic and cultural traditions, these novels elaborate global concerns through experimenting with narrative form, building on narrative techniques such as multi-strand plot, polyphony and generic spaces, and borrowing from genres such as science fiction, the realist novel, and crime fiction. Through these narratives, they build global imageries and participate in global discourses. In this effort to perceive the stories from a world perspective, global novels are a suitable genre in the construction of global spaces such as the environments I discuss here.

The narrative use of space in literature concerned with the global would deserve further exploration, not only with regard to how space is elaborated through a global perspective in a thematic, cultural dimension, but also with regard to how this is formally constructed. Narrative theory has long been unconcerned with the sociocultural dimension of narrative technique. To redress this tendency, scholars such as Susan S. Lanser (1992), Erin James (2015), Greta Olson (2018), and Sarah Copland (2018) have introduced gender, environmental, political, and racial perspectives to narratology to understand how literature creates discourse through narrative technique. Specifically, Marie-Laure Ryan, Kenneth Foote, and Maoz Azaryahu (2016) have initiated research on narrative space in conjunction with critical geography by analysing how space is narrated, for example, in museums or in the street, inscribed in signs, stories, or explanations. A few scholars, like Jeremy Rosen (2017), Ursula Heise (2008), Erin James (2020), and Adam Trexler (2015), have considered global space from a cultural dimension together with narrative technique. James proposes that a narrative theory preoccupied with the Anthropocene should correct the "lack of engagement with narrative theory within the environmental humanities" and the "almost total absence of considerations of the environment in narrative

studies" (2020, 184). Bringing together narrative technique and global spaces, Rosen (2017) has proposed the idea of "generic space" as frequent in global novels by Haruki Murakami or David Mitchell. Generic spaces are spaces shaped by popular ideas disseminated in media, that is, a country like Japan would be represented in a novel through other exported cultural products such as films and comic books. In a larger argument, in *Sense of Place, Sense of the Planet*, Ursula Heise (2008) proposed "eco-cosmopolitanism" as a literary way of developing a type of space in literature that sees local, place-specific environmental concerns as globally connected. These formulations guide our study of space from a blended perspective that seeks to reveal how literature produces a discourse on global space by articulating the social and cultural contexts with their linguistic formulation. Therefore, speaking in terms of "narrative environments" instead of the narratologically established "narrative setting" reflects that the discourse and contextual circumstances are inextricable in the elaboration of space in narrative.[2]

The concept of "global environments" is useful in thinking about the production of space in contemporary literature beyond national borders and about current concerns that are linked to these environments. Global environments such as deserts, seas, or swamps provide literature with a fruitful ground to discuss contemporary problems that are perceived as global. Examples abound. To mention a few, in J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986), the sea is perceived as a realist setting and repository of colonial enterprises in a rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe* that progressively shows the ocean as an agent space that confuses an enigmatic narrative voice with the material liquidity of seawater. In this use of oceanic space, the separation between non-human matter and humankind is no longer visible, transforming discourse in a non-mimetic narrative similar to what happens at the end of Franz Schätzing's *The Swarm* (2006 [2004]), as we will see. In these novels, the relations between species are blurred so as to create a post-human, ecocentric view of the ocean that is currently being proposed for our understanding and uses of it. In a very different manner, the Chilean Roberto Ampuero's *El alemán de Atacama* (1996), uses crime fiction conventions to portray the Atacama Desert as the favoured site for international toxic waste disposal, since chemicals can be easily buried unnoticed in the vast uninhabited territory and illegal business can operate freely with the complicity of a corrupt government. Novels like these deploy global environments to discuss global social and political problems, while they strongly participate in globalising space. In this sense, we can think about "global narrative environments," that is, the use of global environments in narrative.

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2 I explored this argument in Puxan-Oliva 2018 and 2023.

3 Oceans as Global Environments

Oceans are a paradigmatic example of "global environments." Interest in oceanic studies has grown enormously in the past decades in fields like critical and political geography, political and ecological economics, anthropology, and literary studies. This is in part due to the fact that oceans have become a focus for rapid industrial development at sea, in what is known as the "blue economy" and "blue growth," a race for sea profits made possible due to great technological advances that enable food production as well as a greater extraction of mineral and biological resources. The aquaculture revolution is at the core of the blue economy, a new agriculture that produces fish and seafood in enormous quantities with devastating effects on the environment due to the release of toxic chemicals that destroy coastal biodiversity (Mallin and Barbesgaard 2020; Bennett et al. 2021). New mining exploitation methods such as deep-sea fracking, and new areas such as the increasingly melting Arctic Ocean have also heightened attention and alarm about oceans. Since oceans are progressively understood as prospective economic expansion areas, environmental preoccupation about their state has grown. Attention to this socioeconomic phenomenon has renewed our cultural interest in oceans, as scholars have shown that values, imagination, and ideas about the ocean profoundly condition our practices at sea, as well as they help justify them.

Geographers like Philip Steinberg (2001), Jon Anderson and Kimberley Peters (2014), and John Hannigan (2016) have not only drawn attention to oceans as complex spaces but have also transformed our understanding of them. This recent scholarship on critical geography proposes that oceans should be viewed as a multi-layered social construction (Steinberg 2001; Anderson and Peters 2014). In *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (2001), Steinberg argues that geophysical oceanographic conditions have historically triggered different, sometimes contradictory imaginations of the sea as a space of governability and power control, and as a huge non-possessable space. Steinberg discusses the ways in which the sea has been considered void, a transit space as well as a geopolitical space, the potential development of which involves being able to govern it, a project that has accompanied the unfolding of modern and global capitalism. In *Contesting the Arctic: Politics and Imaginaries in the Circumpolar North* (2015), Steinberg, Tasch, and Gerhardt study the Arctic Ocean case, where they contrast the different perspectives that groups like the gas industry, environmental associations, indigenous Inuit populations, or Danish, Russian, Canadian, and US policy makers have over the Arctic Ocean and the different discursive views they produce in order to support their vision of its future management and their own interests. Steinberg, Tasch, and Gerhardt proposed the concept of "ocean imaginaries": perspectives

that grew out of various ideas of the Arctic, which envisioned the region variously as a "terra nullius," a "resource frontier," an "indigenous statehood," or a "normal ocean." Their project highlights the overlapping imaginaries that underpin present politics and expectations for the future of the Arctic Ocean, and their specific contexts in a broader international perspective, articulating their conceptualization and management on local and global scales.

Building on Steinberg's claims, Hannigan's 2016 *The Geopolitics of Deep Oceans* describes the multiple conceptions of deep oceans, centring on the historical, international challenges that various social imageries have posed to governing deep oceans. The fact that oceans are considered collective goods has influenced the perception that oceans should be ruled globally. As Hannigan points out:

> The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOSC) [UNCLOS]. The LOSC is the centrepiece of a powerful and continuing narrative about deep-sea geopolitics that I have called 'Governing the Abyss.' According to this storyline, the only way to bring order and protection to an unregulated maritime frontier is to adopt a universal legal regime, whereby the high seas and the deep oceans come under tighter supervision and control of the nations of the world. (2016, 52)

The high seas and deep sea are "grey areas" (Hannigan 2016, 67), since coastal states have no regulatory power and international institutions such as "the International Seabed Authority responsible for regulating scientific research on the ocean bottom are yet to be fully defined" (Hannigan 2016, 67). Another problem in sea governance is the overlap of international institutions, parallel jurisdictions and "treaty congestion," which hinder their international management (Hannigan 2016, 73). As scholars like Benton, Steinberg and Hannigan show, the ocean can only really be conceived transnationally, since even coastal waters are agreed upon in international treaties, while the high seas and seabed remain as global commons, subject to contested, complex, international efforts to establish agreements that fit with our global conception of oceans. What these studies leave clear is that the socioeconomic uses of the ocean in an increasingly global development of neoliberal capitalism and its environmental damage threatening oceanic sustainability have strongly reinforced our global conception of oceans. In fact, our present discourses dealing both with the international regulation of global oceanic environments as well as with their sustainability are key factors in the new directions in ocean globalisation.

Indeed, oceans are not only relevant from a global perspective as a space that has a historically established legal and environmental consideration surpassing national borders. Their global dimension is today greatly emphasised by the devastating effects that we predict climate change will have on the oceans. The accelerated environmental damage to the oceans is a cornerstone in the

definition of the Anthropocene: a geological era in which a human footprint impacts upon the entire Earth and seriously threatens its sustainability. In 2000, Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer provocatively proposed that we are living in a new geological era, the Anthropocene. In an oft-quoted seminal article published in *Nature* in 2002, Crutzen stated:

> Because of these anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide, global climate may depart significantly from natural behaviour for many millennia to come. It seems appropriate to assign the term "Anthropocene" to the present, in many ways human-dominated, geological epoch, supplementing the Holocene – the warm period of the past 10–12 millennia. The Anthropocene could be said to have started in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when analyses of the air trapped in polar ice showed the beginning of growing global concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane. (2002, 23)

Whereas the scientific grounding for the Anthropocene as a geological era is still under debate, global climate change viewed through this new geological era has strengthened what Ursula Heise called the "sense of planet" (Heise 2008). As Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests in his well-read essay "The Climate of History: Four Theses," the early 2000s were a turning point in global climate change awareness:

> The situation changed in the 2000s when the warnings became dire, and the signs of the crisis – such as the drought in Australia, frequent cyclones and brush fires, crop failures in many parts of the world, the melting of Himalayan and other mountain glaciers and of the polar icecaps, and the increasing acidity of the seas and the damage to the food chain – became politically and economically inescapable. Added to this were growing concerns, voiced by many about the rapid destruction of other species and about the global footprint of a human population poised to pass the nine billion mark by 2050. (2009, 199)

The new environmental dimension of globality conceived from a geological perspective heavily shook the social-sciences globalisation theories, since it affected the earlier perception of global space as heavily linked to the globalisation of capitalism and the social and economic development of a network society (Castells 1996). Chakrabarty explores the profound unrest that global climate change had on the scaling and perspective of historical methods:

> As the crisis gathered momentum in the last few years, I realized that all my readings in theories of globalization, Marxist analysis of capital, subaltern studies, and postcolonial criticism over the last twenty-five years, while enormously useful in studying globalization, had not really prepared me for making sense of this planetary conjuncture within which humanity finds itself today. (2009, 199)

For Chakrabarty, experience from the past and present is the basis for historical understanding. To think about globality from the non-human scale of geological climate change creates the paradox that we cannot reflect on it historically and

geologically at the same time, since we conflate the different scales of natural and human histories. However, whereas we are not able to build on human experience to weigh up global climate change, we still need a historical sense that enables us to plan economic, social, and political initiatives so as to redress its damaging effects. Thus, Chakrabarty points out, "in unwittingly destroying the artificial but time-honoured distinction between natural and human histories, climate scientists posit that the human being has become something much larger than the simple biological agent that he or she has always been. Humans now wield a geological force" (2009, 206). This means that we are claiming ourselves to be geological agents, but this involves reaching beyond our human time and spatial scales. In this sense, the measures of space change, since as Bruno Latour notes "it is no longer a question of landscapes, of the occupation of land, or of local impact. From now on, the comparison is made on the scale of terrestrial phenomena" (2017, 115), and we have thus moved to a different "human dimension" and reconfigured "the role of human agents" (2017, 117).[3] Therefore, the idea of the globe that the Anthropocene promotes challenges our thinking when we combine the scales through which we configure that sphere. For Latour,

> [w]hat is at stake in the Anthropocene is the order of understanding. It is not that the little human mind should be suddenly teleported into a global sphere that, in any case, would be much too vast for its small scale. It is rather that we have to slip into, envelop ourselves within, a large number of loops, so that, gradually, step by step, knowledge of the place in which we live and of the requirements of our atmospheric condition can gain greater pertinence and be experienced as urgent. (2017, 139)

Nonetheless, even conceiving the globe as a set of "contradictory and conflictual connections is not a job that can be accomplished by leaping up to a higher 'global' level to see them act like a single whole" (Latour 2017, 141). It can only at most aspire to achieve a finer sense of the paths through which to conceive globality and to expand the reach of the connections we have made thus far. This need to think simultaneously on a global, broader scale while paying attention to specific connections and issues should make sense of the problematic management of what I have called global environments, and specifically of oceans.

Oceans are central to Anthropocenic environmental and human concerns due to the rising release of methane and carbon dioxide that are absorbed by oceans – endangering marine biodiversity – and other consequences of climate

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3 Even more puzzling, as Latour points out, time scales have shifted with the Anthropocene, because we are forced to think of human history from a geological time scale, but at the same time the scientific community claims that this geological change has occurred due to human intervention only in the last 200 years, with the Industrial Revolution (see Latour 2017, 117).

change such as rising seawater levels. Whereas historically ocean management has been approached from a political, economic, and social use standpoint, it is now a major ecological concern, since planetary sustainability depends on the oceans' capacity to withstand the levels of carbon (Roberts 2012). From the oceanographers' point of view in conversation with policy makers, an ecosystem approach is gaining ground as the preferred perspective for the management of global climate change. This approach does not understand "human beings and species as independent entities but as conforming an integrated and unitary system – that is a socio-ecosystem –" where "the traditional dialectic conflict 'conservation against development', which has dominated economic and political forums, has been substituted by the paradigm of 'conservation for human well-being'" (Martín-López, Gómez-Baggethun, and Montes 2009, 231–232, my translation). Adopted by the Convention of Biological Diversity as a primary framework in the mid-1990s, the ecosystem approach "has gained traction in a variety of fields and contexts, including ocean governance and fisheries management, thanks to its promise to overcome a traditionally fragmented management paradigm, and instead facilitate holistic ecosystem governance" (De Lucia 2019, 7). The current ecosystem approach seeking to achieve sustainability at a planetary level and the development of the Anthropocene discourse and awareness have powerfully reinforced the idea that oceans need to be considered a global environment, managed accordingly. If I have proposed oceans as global environments because of their combined physical and socio-cultural peculiarities, they are even more clearly so when an additional Anthropocenic, ecological perspective is the filter through which they are examined.

4 Oceans, the Anthropocene, and the Narrative Globalisation of Space: Frank Schätzing's *The Swarm*

An emerging corpus of contemporary literature is particularly interested in oceans from a global perspective: from novels dealing with overfishing as diverse as the English Ian McGuire's novel *The North Water* (2016), the Norwegian Morten Stroksen's novel *Shark Drunk: The Art of Catching a Large Shark from a Tiny Rubber Dinghy in a Big Ocean* (2017), and the Cambodian Vannak Anan Prum's graphic memoir *The Dead Eye and the Deep Blue Sea* (2018); to oil extraction at sea and its disastrous consequences in novels such as the Nigerian

Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2010) and the Spanish Alberto Vázquez Figueroa's *El mar en llamas* [The sea in flames] (2011).

Other global novels, which Adam Trexler (2015) usefully calls "Anthropocene fictions," assume an environmental perspective aligned with the Anthropocene and planetary environmental destruction, such as the Chilean Luis Sepúlveda's *El mundo del fin del mundo* [The world at the end of the world] (1994), the US Paulo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2009), and the Taiwanese Ming-Yi Wu's *The Man with the Compound Eyes* (2013), which connect overfishing, the rising sea levels, and plastic waste in the oceans, respectively, with a global environmental crisis that is leaving a footprint on a planetary scale.[4] By adopting an Anthropocenic view, these novels significantly contribute to globalising the large internationally contested environments by producing what I have called global narrative environments. The case of Frank Schätzing's novel *The Swarm* illustrates how novels both narrate global space and contribute to globalising it.

Frank Schätzing's novel *The Swarm* [*Der Schwarm*] is particularly relevant to the stated arguments. Published in 2004, this German science-fiction thriller tells the story of a near future in which various activities dramatically affect sea biodiversity and change the Earth's life course. Heavily fuelled by scientific discourse, the novel deals with new technological developments in oil extraction, drilling at deeper levels in various locations, causing great releases of methane and triggering major tsunamis. This ultimately modifies molecules into a new microorganism that their discoverers call the Yrr. Simultaneously, sound pollution produced by US underwater surveillance activities affects species such as whales and orcas, which start attacking tourist boats off the West Coast of Canada. Changes in biodiversity also include the extreme proliferation of species like jellyfish. These related phenomena are progressively connected in the novel in a global catastrophe that seems to be governed by new molecules that characters speculate to have developed a consciousness that leads to the ocean's attack on and destruction of humankind, in a tribute to Stanislav Lem's novel *Solaris* (1970). Detected and fought against by a multinational US-led military and a group of scientific experts, the stories at first develop contrapuntally, but at the end converge in a human apocalypse caused by the planetary crisis.

In *The Swarm*, oceans are built as global environments. The various conflicting economic industries and activities such as fishing, drilling and tourism clash with each other at the same time, fatally threatening a sustainable future:

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4 The study of oceans in literature concerned with a global view has recently grown. See for example, Mentz (2009), Blum (2010), Hofmeyr (2012), DeLoughrey (2017), Oppermann (2019), and Vidal-Pérez (2019).

the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries had castigated the oil industry for expelling millions of tonnes of contaminated water into the sea every day. It had lain undisturbed in sub-seabed petroleum reserves for millions of years but was now being pumped to the surface by the hundreds of offshore North Sea platforms that lined the Norwegian coast. The oil was separated from it by mechanical means, and the chemical-saturated water discharged back into the sea. No one had questioned the practice until, after decades the Norwegian government had asked the Institute of Marine Research to undertake a study. The findings dealt a blow to the oil industry and environmentalists alike. Substances in the water were interfering with the reproductive cycle of cod. (2006, 22)

The novel focuses on the oceanic socio-scientific concern that articulates the exploitation interest with the global environmental change this is producing. The global impact of the environmental damage produced by methane release in the experimentation with new deeper oil drilling technology in oceans is scientifically explained at length. As Andrew Milner et al. (2015) and Ursula Heise (2019) have recently proposed, science-fiction is particularly well-equipped to address the narratives of the Anthropocene, since "in so far as SF defines itself in relation to science, then it finds itself obliged to produce fictional responses to problems actually generated by contemporary scientific research" (Milner et al. 2015, 13). As with other novels such as the controversial climate-change thriller *State of Fear* (2004) by Michael Crichton, *The Swarm* heavily relies on scientific data to explain the state of the oceans. As Dürbeck notes, this is organised as dialogue between experts, between experts and ordinary people or experts and politicians or public agents (2012, 22). Thus, a scientist main character didactically explains to a friend:

You've probably heard that the sea is full of methane . . . . Well, methane is a gas. It's stored in vast quantities beneath the ocean floor and in the continental slopes. Some of it freezes on the surface of the seabed – it combines with water to form ice. It only happens in conditions of high pressure and low temperature, so you have to go pretty deep before you find it. The ice is called methane hydrate . . . . Hordes of bacteria inhabit the oceans, and some live off methane. (Schätzing 2006, 40)

The newly discovered worms laying on the deep ocean floor in massive amounts eat the bacteria that nurtures on the methane released by aggressive oil drilling. This is part of a larger oceanic problem, since it "was merely a reflection of the true state of the seas, which were suffering the consequences of overfishing, chemical dumping, the urbanisation of coastal regions, and global warming" (Schätzing 2006, 194). Through this threaded socioeconomic and environmental perspective on a global scale, *The Swarm* approaches oceans as environments that need to be internationally managed and taken care of.

By pointing to the environmental devastation of the ocean, the novel is heavily infused with the scientific concerns that underpin the proposal of the

Anthropocene as a new geological era. As a planetary problem, these scientific findings showcase a profound environmental crisis that, as Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz argue, with the discovery of the Anthropocene, is no longer a crisis, but a point of no return where the damage has been forever inscribed on the soil of the Earth "with no foreseeable return to the normality of the Holocene" (2016, 21). *The Swarm*'s narrative heavily emphasises a neglected final crisis in references to Earth history in its temporal and spatial dimensions, which continuously appear in the characters' daily conversations. In the novel, exchanges between scientists account for this continuous reminder: "They are extracting ice cores from a depth of four hundred and fifty metres. Unbelievable, isn't it? Ice as old as that can tell us the history of our climate over the last seven thousand years," says one character, to which another responds: "'Most people wouldn't be impressed' . . . 'As far as they're concerned, climate history won't help eliminate world poverty or win the next world cup'" (108). Key to the Anthropocene view, the novel includes geological time and space scaling to elevate the oceanic knowledge and crisis to a planetary level. Schätzing's novel frequently associates the scale of oceans with that of the universe, addressing Chakrabarty's scaling challenge, since it conflates natural history and scientific discourse with social and individual histories. As one of the characters in *The Swarm* says, "it's on a different scale, but I'm always being told that we know less about the oceans than we do about space" (33), and later "[t]he depths beyond the shelf were an unknown universe, more mysterious to science than outer space" (46).

Finally, in the novel, the management of planetary human-driven downfall is mostly a problem of international politics where agreements are needed but actions hard to undertake collectively:

> Authority? The majority of you will be aware that three days ago Germany called for a joint European Union commission to deal with the current situation. The German minister of the interior now chairs that initiative. As a precaution, Article V of the NATO treaty has also been invoked. Norway, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and the Faroes have all declared a state of emergency, in some cases regionally, in others on a national scale. (386)

The Swarm poses a new global order as a risk. As the US secret military mission warns its members: "Depending on how the international situation develops, there's every chance that the United Nations will take some kind of overall control. Throughout the world the existing order is crumbling and new jurisdictions are emerging" (386).

One of the most important challenges for contemporary narrative is its formal expression of the global. When addressing global environments in particular, the difficulty turns on what I have called "global narrative environments."

Discussions on how to narrate the global environmental crisis and the Anthropocene have revolved around the uses of genre and narrative technique. Scholars like Amitav Ghosh, Andrew Milner, Ursula Heise, Debjani Ganguly, Stewart King, and Adam Trexler have discussed these issues from the point of view of genre. Specifically, they have dealt with the difficulties of realist narrative in fitting the global scaling and the non-human perspective (Ghosh 2016), its adaptation to a catastrophic, planetary realism (Ganguly "Catastrophic" 2020), the aptitude of science fiction to include scientific data (Milner et al. 2015) and to manage the scaling difference (Heise 2019), and crime fiction's readiness to index global environmental criminality (Puxan-Oliva 2020; King 2021.). In his thorough assessment of Anthropocene fiction, Trexler points out various genre borrowings to meet the challenges of "interpretation between domestic and planetary scales," the "complex transformation of human economies, and thus human culture" due to the effects of climate change in global economy, and the shaping of narrative by "non-human things" (2015, 26).

The Swarm employs science-fiction and crime fiction narrative strategies to create the narrative tension of a scientific mystery around a catastrophe in which cause and effect expand from a long past of economic activity damaging oceans to a long future where humankind collapses. Thanks to these narrative strategies, *The Swarm* blends different scales. The novelistic plot concentrates a planetary problem affecting local contexts in particular events and characters, combined in several threaded stories, which happen simultaneously around the world in what Alexander Beecroft calls a "multi-strand plot." These include a chef's death when cooking a poisoned lobster in a French restaurant; a jellyfish invasion in Costa Rica, the Australian coast, and other locations; and a tsunami produced along the Norwegian North Sea coast. These local phenomena are narrated in a realistic manner and organised in a progressively entangled plot. The novel focuses on different populations, different environmental illegalities and abuses converging into a global oceanic rebellion against the human species that the narrative works through extrapolative science-fiction into the future (Otto 2012, 109). The discourse of the Anthropocene adds a stronger dimension to the narrative purpose, since it aids in the proposal of geological time and space scales, which appear side by side in Schätzing's novel, as we have seen.

Using a realist narrative mode, *The Swarm* also uses science-fiction unnatural narration.[5] As other novels concerned with an ecosystem approach to global

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5 "Unnatural narration" is the narrative mode coined by Brian Richardson used to describe a kind of non-mimetic, non-realist narrative shown in narrative discourse and frequently used in experimental narration and in science-fiction (see Richardson 2006; Alber and Richardson 2020).

environments such as J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986) or Wajdi Mouawad's *Anima* (2012), *The Swarm* adopts a posthuman materialist perspective to imagine a future where human time and space consciousness dissolve into the ocean's liquidity and its geological time and space dimensions. To adopt this Anthropocene, ecosystem perspective, the novel relies on experimental, science-fiction narrative strategies, since the realist novel form is at pains to embrace a posthuman narrative voice.[6] Interest in this formal adoption then moves the debate from thematic interest in the Anthropocene to the ways in which narrative might be able to account for the species' perspective and beyond, as the ecosystem perspective moves away from the human eye and voice. Scholars working on new materialist perspectives on global environments such as Hester Blum (2010), Philip Steinberg (2013), Serenella Iovino (2014), Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2017), and Serpil Oppermann (2019), emphasise the need to understand oceanic narration from their matter perspectives, which should enable the decentring of an anthropocentric view. In drawing on the specific narrative techniques being developed to represent the Anthropocene perspective, Erin James discusses Iovino and Oppermann's idea that matter can narrate by placing emphasis on the fact that narration involves language and is, thus, necessarily produced by humans. However, she observes that "an Anthropocene narrative theory suggests that geological strata, ice cores, and tree rings offer us a representation of a sequence of events and, as such, display a minimal amount of narrativity" (2020, 191), which makes our perception of time and space aware of other scales that involve a broader, non-human-centred scale. In this direction, at the end of *The Swarm* when the destruction of humankind is taking place, the narration evolves towards breaking mimetic language in order to produce a sense of the blending of an enigmatic, species narrative voice that feels like "a particle moving in space and time" (2006, 850) into the geological time and space parameters:

> One thousand years, little particle. More than ten generations of humans, you've circumnavigated the world.
> One thousand trips like that and the seabed will have renewed itself.
> Hundreds of new seabeds and seas will have disappeared, continents will have grown together or pulled apart, new oceans will have been created, and the face of the world will have changed.
> During one single second of your voyage, simple forms of life came into being and died. In nanoseconds, atoms vibrated. In a fraction of a nanosecond, chemical reactions took place.

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6 See David Rodríguez (2018) for an exploration of the uses of post-human narrators in Anthropocene comics.

> And somewhere amid all this is man.
> And above all this is the yrr.
> The conscious ocean. (2006, 858)

In fact, Anthropocene fictions strain narrative technique in expressing both the scale disparity as well as a non-human-centred perspective that is, ultimately, human as well. It is this precise puzzling view that forces us to see the planet as a whole space and take an external species perspective appropriate to natural history and the sciences, while we keep our individual stories on a human scale occurring at specific times and locations. This tension lies at the heart of narratives concerned with a global perspective and, remarkably, those that directly address the Anthropocene.[7]

In *The Swarm* oceans are incontestable global environments. This space is genuinely global, since the novel cannot be told or interpreted from a national perspective, nor does it fit any national critical perspective without its concerns being severely curtailed. Therefore, oceans, along with other spaces such as outer space, air space, Antarctica and other contested vast natural spaces such as deserts, jungles, swamps, or highlands, could be seen as suitable for global perspectives like these, and thus argued as global environments, used by literature to address global concerns.

Nonetheless, powerful as the discovery of the Anthropocene might be in revealing oceans at risk, the Anthropocene is also a powerful discourse producer for global spaces. Oceans in *The Swarm* are being globalised through this Anthropocene perspective. While the Anthropocene is still controversial among scientists, Bonneuil and Fressoz are right to state that it has already had an impact as a sociocultural discourse. In their view, there is reason to suspect "that the knowledge and discourse of the Anthropocene may itself form part, perhaps unknowingly, of a hegemonic system for representing the world as a totality to be governed" (2016, 48), a narrative that "presents an abstract humanity uniformly involved – and, it implies, uniformly to blame" (2016, 66), and a discourse of awakening in which "the moderns only have to embrace the anthropocenic gospel to obtain remission of their sins and perhaps even salvation" (2016, 73). In this light, the Anthropocene

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7 In her excellent chapter, dealing with space and specifically water space, James argues for an idea of "unspatialization" (2020, 195–6) or a lack of specific space that I would nuance. While there is no narration without humans, there is no territory without space, regardless of whether that is easily mappable or knowable. No geographer will affirm that the deep sea is not a space. Precisely, as this chapter argues, the problem with spaces like the sea is that they defy our ways of drawing space, especially in terms of the territorialization needed for state and corporate interests. Space in this sense, as Massey argues, is always political, regardless of how hard it might be to measure.

would be "a new teleology of ecological reflexivity and collective learning [that] replace[s] the old teleology of progress" (2016, 78). In several ways, it has not only replaced "the teleology of progress" but has heavily endorsed and worked for a capitalist, anthropocentric, Anglo-European view, as Bonneuil and Fressoz also argue, along with scholars like Jason W. Moore in his edited volume *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (2016), and to which others like Donna Haraway (2016), Kathryn Yusoff (2019), and Stefania Barca (2020) have responded with alternative planetary views.

As a cultural structure of feelings, to borrow Williams' words, the Anthropocene would not differ much from other totalizing global discourses. Latour includes the Anthropocene discourse among global discourses:

> Whether we are dealing with the idea of the Anthropocene, the theory of Gaia, the notion of a historical actor such as Humanity, or Nature taken as a whole, the danger is always the same: the figure of the Globe authorizes a premature leap to a higher level by confusing the figures of connection with those of totality. (2017, 130)

Discourses of the global, "notions of globe and global thinking" (Latour 2017, 138), while accounting for the needed transnational perspective when approached either from a socioeconomic or an environmental perspective, "include the immense danger of unifying too quickly what first needs to be 'composed'" (Latour 2017, 138). Narrating global environments is a way of globalising them, a way of transforming space into a "tissue of globable" (Latour 2017, 130).

In conclusion, when approaching space from a global perspective, we should consider what I have called "global environments": open spaces, legally anomalous and subject to international management, interest, and legislation, difficult to territorialize and resistant to settlement, imagined as globally shared. Global environments like oceans, deserts, highlands, Antarctica, outer space or the Earth are not suitably weighted solely through national lenses since, because they are conceived as globally shared, their management and sustainability requires a perspective that works beyond national borders. Through global narrative environments, literature helps account and discuss the global dimension of spaces like oceans, deserts, or outer space that bring with them political and socioeconomic contestation. Nonetheless, because literature participates in our need to work out a vocabulary and tools for a global critical approach, it inevitably takes part in global discourses such as those concerned, for example, with environmental sustainability or new models of economic development such as the blue growth economy. In this context, the discovery of a human footprint in the geological strata of our planet has given a final strike to the global conception of Earth and its related discourses. Central to global discourses such as the Anthropocene, global environments are also being globalised when novels purposely take them

to a planetary or worldwide scale. Indeed, the literary conceptualization of spaces like oceans as global is another element that justifies and actually produces a unitary conception and assessment of our environmental, humanitarian, economic, or political concerns from a global perspective. In this sense "global environments" in literature host the ambivalent politics of discourses on the global, which help examine current shared crises while simultaneously undertaking an effective globalising process; a double-edged resource that should not escape our consideration when assessing space from a global perspective in literature.

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Jenny Bergenmar

Queer Literary Ecologies and Young Adult Literature

1 Introduction

In history, queer literature has been notoriously hard to find for readers. This is in part a question of representation. In times when queer identities and actions could not be described openly, readers were obliged to develop a sense for the unsaid or excluded, as well as allusions and symbolism coded as queer. A considerable part of Western queer literary studies have been devoted to the recovery of a queer literary tradition, in fact, it was through literature and other cultural products that the queer theory developing from post-structuralist thinking made its arguments (eg. Sedgwick, 1990; Love, 2007). For queer scholars interested in intersections between queer identities, race and cultural inequalities (eg. Anzaldúa 2009; Muñoz 1999, Ahmed 2004), literature has continued to be an important place to theorise minoritarian and marginalised identities. At the same time, recovery has also been an important part of postcolonial literary studies focused on queer narratives: "'discovering' or 'exhuming' texts considered queer in our contemporary understanding of the term," as Palekar phrases it in her discussion of queer in an Indian literary context (2017, 8).

A classic like Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) was banned in England due to its explicit depiction on female same sex desire but avoided condemnation in Paris, like other banned books such as James Joyces's *Ulysses* (1922) (McCleery 2019). This example shows that the conditions for the reception of queer literature could differ locally, even within Europe. However, not even a famous (or infamous) novel like Hall's, has been subject to any extensive study of its circulation within queer communities, except within local, or Western national frameworks (eg. Emery 2001). The particular importance of travelling people, ideas, and genres for queer literature has been emphasized (Vanita 2011). But global contexts for queer literature remains still today conditioned upon the uneven access to human rights in different parts of the world. However, digital technologies have been used by queer activists in different ways globally, and it can be argued that circulation of fiction forms part of this digital activism (eg. Emenyonu 2018, Pain 2022).

Not so long ago, homosexuality was seen as a pathological condition in many Western countries, and this was reflected in how queer literature was labeled in libraries, as a "Sexual Perversion," and "shelved alongside books on

sex crimes, incest, and pedophilia" (Adler 2015, 478). So, when eventually fiction could represent non-normative sexualities and gender identities more manifestly in some parts of the world, there was still no easy means of finding it for readers. Audiences seeking acknowledgement in literature relied to a large part on small, local communities. Organisations kept their own reading lists, and readers to a large extent depended on a locally shared knowledge of relevant literature. McKinney has described this development as taking place long before any digital infrastructures or social media: "Indexers armed with paper cards and a facility for sorting, filing, and describing lesbian materials stepped in to address these access problems by building community based subject guides" (McKinney 2020, 105).

Many scholars have underlined the significance of books and libraries for queer readerships, especially for "the coming-of-age experiences of LGBTQ people" (Adler 2015, 479). Literature is a particularly crucial source for understanding the prejudices, oppression, and violence that has affected gender and sexual minorities, and for the understanding of subjective queer experiences. Since literature as a medium gives "access to the interiority of characters, one might argue that it teaches us even more about the inner, psychological workings of sexual desire than other media, such as film," Jeffrey Angles points out in his contribution to the volume *Queer in Translation* (Angles 2017, 87). However, this potential access to acknowledgement and recognition in literature has not been unimpeded. "The books you *did* find were rarely, if ever, meant for you, at least if you were an adolescent struggling with coming out and finding love," literature scholar William Banks writes about his own experience as a reader searching for acknowledgement in books (2009, 33).

Although the experiences described by Banks are within an American context, the problem with access to queer literature is global, although the obstacles for readers in search of queer literature might be of different kinds in different parts of the world. The impact of feminist and queer studies in an American context has included a critical perspective on the male, heterocentric literary canon, however, this kind of critique is not equally possible in all global academic contexts. Thus, both academic and ordinary readers may experience that a focus on queer literature and queer reading practices is still controversial. Taking my cue from the longing for queer coming-of-age stories expressed by Banks, this chapter explores access to queer young adult literature by way of social media, and the kind of readership formed by it. As a case study, I have chosen TikTok, since it has established itself as a social media platform with a strong presence of young users (Boffone and Jerasa 2021).Through this focus, I also want to challenge the absence of queer literature, and young adult literature, in world literature as a research field. How has queer readership moved

from the small-scale and local (libraries) as described above to the large-scale and global (social media)? And what does the digital environments mean for the sense of community, moving from a local, and physical, community-based context to a global, digital context? Furthermore, the perspectives that queer historiography can bring to the study of world literature is discussed with a focus on temporalities.

2 World Literature, Queer Literature, and Young Adult Literature

Even though the relation between globalisation and LGBTQ+ questions have long been a topic of scholarly interest (Hayes 2020), queer literature has largely been absent in the many world literature anthologies produced within the last ten or so years, and queer perspectives are rarely used as an analytical framework (e.g. D'Haen et al. 2013; Damrosch 2014; Helgesson et al. 2018). While a multitude of aspects on world literature are presented in companions to world literature and similar collected volumes, queer literature has not seemed to bear through as a relevant perspective within this research field, with a few exceptions. One such is the contribution by Debra A. Castillo's to *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* (2012). Castillo takes on the "male heterosexist core" of both Western literary histories, and the history of world literature, the latter to a large extent depending on texts available in English (2012, 394), and begins to trace the emergence of communities sharing an interest in feminism, queer literature through online magazines and bookstores, and printed literature anthologies (2012, 299–401). The volume *Francophone Literature as World Literature* (Moraru et al. 2020) also contains one chapter on the intersections between world literature in French and same-sex desire. It discusses how different kinds of sexual and gender *difference* play out in different regional contexts, thus bringing to the fore the question of the mismatch between the Western concepts describing LGBTQ+ identities and actions, and the experiences expressed in literature from the Mahgreb, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean (Hayes 2020, 184–190). This is one of many research contributions emphasizing that local queer experiences need to be articulated in their own vernaculars. Another example is Domínguez-Ruvalcaba's (2019) exploration of the intersections between class, race, and languages in Latin-American culture, where queer identities are developed over national boundaries utilising digital technologies.

However, the few contributions on queer literature present in world literature volumes does not mean that global perspectives on queer literature are absent. The already mentioned anthology *Queer in Translation* focuses on intersections of translation studies and queer studies more broadly, in literature, but also in other media and political and activist contexts (Epstein and Gillet 2017). The contributions on literature focus on the role of affective identification in the context of the "gay boom" in Japan (Angles 2017), and on de-queering in the Swedish translation of English young adult novels with queer storylines (Epstein 2017); but the volume also contains contributions discussing how to translate non-normative sexualities that have no equivalent in Western languages and cultures, and the intersections of translation studies, postcolonial studies, and queer studies (Palekar 2017). The interrogation of colonial assumptions in previous studies of LGBTQ+ cultures has been intensified the last ten or so years, as exploration of queer diasporas and homonationalism in what has been named a transnational turn within queer studies (Chiang and Wong 2016). However, issues concerning global aspects of queer literature is only a minor part of world literature as a research field.

The situation is very similar with young adult (YA) and children's literature: there are few contributions to edited volumes on world literature; none in the examples mentioned above. Nevertheless, global perspectives are by no means lacking in the field. As is the case with queer literature, research is mainly carried out in other contexts than world literature studies. *The International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* (Hunt 2005) has a good global coverage with chapters on specific geographical regions, and contains reflections on comparativism, postcolonialism, and translation. Queer perspectives or even general discussions on LGBTQ+ literature is conspicuously absent, though. Global perspectives are developed in depth in *The Routledge Companion to International Children's Literature* (Stephens 2018), which engages thoroughly in global aspects, while many other works retain a mainly Western perspective while also discussing race and migration (eg. Cart 2010). Still, *The Routledge Companion to International Children's Literature* touches on issues of non-normative gender and sexuality very marginally. Typically, one minority issue is included in volumes about children's and YA literature: either global/ international perspectives, or non-normative gender and sexuality. This is for example visible in works explicitly devoted to queer YA such as *Over the Rainbow. Queer Children's and Young Adult Literature* (Abate and Kidd 2011), and *Beyond Borders. Queer Eros and Ethos (Ethics) in LGBTQ Young Adult Literature* (Linville and Carlson 2016), where LGBTQ texts are discussed, sometimes exploring intersections with racial and ethnic aspects, but with primarily Western perspectives. The exception is *International LGBTQ+ Literature for Children and Adults* (Epstein and Chapman

2021). It provides a broad overview over specific countries in Europe, Asia, South and North America, as well as chapters focusing on comparative perspectives on children's literature, with a LGBTQ+ aspects at the centre throughout.

It is not surprising that works on queer YA literature to a large extent has concentrated on accounting for one tradition and not global context. As mentioned in the introduction, the recovery of a queer literary tradition has been important within queer literary studies since queer authors and texts have been deprived of their contexts and interpreted in a heteronormative manner. To regain or reconstruct relevant contexts and modes of reading is an act of both discovery and recovery: the discovery of past queer lives documented in literature, and the recovery of authors included in the canon but stripped of their queer significance. One could describe this work as a creation of a queer 'counter-canon', to use Damrosch's concept describing literary works that may challenge the hyper-canon and present other ways of constructing literary history. Damrosch uses counter-canon specifically to capture subaltern voices and "writers in languages less commonly taught and minor literatures within great-power languages" (Damrosch 2006, 45). Considering that sexuality (and especially nonnormative gender identities and sexualities) has been a controversial topic in YA literature, there remains much work to understand the development of queer textualities in different contexts, even within one language and cultural sphere. YA literature with explicit coming-out motifs is also a fairly recent phenomenon, and the genre was long characterised by stereotypical representations and tragic endings for characters that did not conform to gender and sexuality norms (Cart and Jenkins 2006), thereby reproducing the idea of LGBTQ+ identities and actions as something problematic and fateful. An emerging YA literature after heteronormativity is still in a process of formation, and this process is evidently different in different parts of the world. Banks and Alexander discern three waves of gay YA literature: "first-wave YA literature [. . .] suggest that non-heterosexual characters may exist in a shadow world of the text," "second-wave texts [where] the characters' sexualities are more central to the text, the protagonists 'come out' and come to understand themselves a s gay," and "[t]hird wave texts would embrace the 'orientation' of gay sexuality; characters in these books see their 'coming-out' and 'coming-into' as a natural and normal activity" (2016, 105). Banks and Alexander predict the fourth wave as one that "showcase a larger world of sexualities, gender identities, racial identities, class identities, etc" (2016, 105); a more intersectional and perhaps globally diversified YA literature.

3 Queer Literary Ecologies

In *An Ecology of World Literature* Alexander Beecroft reconceptualises world literature studies through an "ecologícal" approach, underlining "the interaction of literature with its environment" (2015, 3). Beecroft argues that an ecological framework instead of an economic, which has been more often used within studies of world literature, can better account for complexities and interactions between literature and human environments (economical, political, technological etc.). He describes literary ecologies which are not limited to certain geographical spaces but can appear anywhere if the conditions support it. These "cut across traditional cultural borders and juxtapose unrelated cultures" and thereby challenge centre–periphery models of world literature (Beecroft 2015, 28). Could queer literature and its reception contexts be described as such an ecosystem? From a Western and contemporary point of view, one could imagine that the common soil, as it were, of the queer literature ecology is that of marginalized and censored readership and authoring. After all, as Ahmed as stated, "heterosexuality becomes a script that bind the familial with the global," and that script functions as a foundation of what we see as civilised (Ahmed 2013, 423). However, the openness to same-sex relations and fluid gender expressions have differed over time and cultural contexts. The example most often referred to in the West being the place of male homosexuality in Greek Antiquity (eg. Percy 2005), but there are many others, like the Northern Indian "male homoerotic subcultures that [had] flourished in pre-colonial cities and been celebrated by major poets" (Vanita 2011, 106). Literary ecologies in Beecroft's sense are systems of reception and consumption rather than production. I propose that queer readerships connect works in an ecology of queer literature. This queer literature ecology may exist in different times and cultural contexts and cut through and form part of the six ecosystems Beecroft discusses: the epiphoric, the panchoric, the cosmopolitan, the national, the vernacular, the global (2015, 33–36). Queer, of course is a modern and Western concept. However, we can be sure that nonnormative sexualities and gender identities are neither a modern, nor a culture specific phenomenon, although the norms and language to describe this may shift. It is in this way I for the sake of simplicity use the concept queer, as an umbrella term for those gender identities and sexual desires that have been stigmatised and marginalised in different ways in various times and cultural contexts. One drawback is that this use of the concept queer risks functioning as a "false unifying umbrella" (Anzaldúa 2009, 164), and homogenise diverse experience and identities into one group (Domínguez-Ruvalcaba 2019). It is therefore important to remember that there may be inequalities within queer communities, and that within one queer literary ecology, different kinds of minority literary

traditions may coexist and develop, separately or in different intersections. This is especially important to keep in mind when discussing LGBTQ+ literature, where male same-sex experiences have been significantly more portrayed than for example lesbian, bi, and transgender experiences.

The six ecological types described by Beecroft have a chronology, but it is not a progressive development: "multiple ecologies can coexist at any time" (2015, 195). Rather than associating one of the ecologies discussed by Beecroft to queer readership, I argue that it may be traced as an ecosystem enclosed in all the Beecroft's different large-scale ecologies, but with certain temporal dislocations. The national literary ecology emerging during the nineteenth century uses literary history to privilege vernacular literary forms. However, although LGBTQ+ writers to some extent have been included in such histories, this was not acknowledged, nor was their texts read as queer. Still in late twentieth century there were few attempts to recover an LGBTQ+ literary history, and only in a few major languages (Heede 2015), although national literary history as a genre still perseveres in academia, despite the advances of world literature and global frames of interpretation. As Mahmutović has argued, if a specific literature (in Mahmutović's case American Muslim writing) is "made mainly through the way readers make connections between works – as well as authorial intentions in cases where writers aim at producing a particular kind of literature, it is possible to speak of American Muslim writing as *a* literature that belongs to different literary ecologies, for example different national literatures" (2018, 140). Queer literature can in parallel be viewed as a literature constructed by the connections readers make between works that may belong to different literary ecologies, different national literatures, and different times. There is a tradition of community-based reception, where literature changed hands quite literally between queer readers in specific contexts, as described by Wallace (2016). However, these local reception patterns did not mean that reading was confined to national literature. As mentioned above, travel and circulation of queer literature was important since books might be banned in one national context, and not in another (Vanita 2011). Like all literature LGBTQ+ themed literature has increasingly been subjected to global publishing logic, there is a risk that a kind of mainstreamed queer world literature does not address the needs of readerships in countries where queer rights are absent.

In the final section of his book, Beecroft discusses global literary ecology in connection to the possibilities for different literary languages to survive in a global sphere of translation. His outlook on the future of linguistic diversity in literature is not very hopeful, considering the mechanisms of homogenisation of national literatures to a global marketplace. Literary ecologies are large-scale in scope, but also observable in individual texts. He points out a narrative strategy,

"the plot of globalisation" as a common narrative structure in novels within the global literary ecology, using multi-strand narration to express global interconnectedness and decentring (2015, 36). The still developing global literary ecology with its narrative devices is interesting to consider in relation to developments in queer YA literature and in YA literature in general. YA literature *per se* is about identity formation, and this theme has increasingly been plotted as young people's need to navigate between different identities having to do with class, race, religion, sexuality, gender norms, and disabilities. Maybe an addition to the "plot of globalisation" put forward by Beecroft could be that this plot is also intersectional. One such example, *Money Boy* by Paul Gee (2011), is discussed by Durand (2016) who underlines the YA literature can capture the often-paradoxical effects of living in between cultures and languages and represent intersectional identities, for instance, avoid descriptions of LGBTQ+ people of colour as a homogenous group (2016, 83). Durand's particular example is a novel about a Chinese boy in Canada whose coming-out is complicated by the homophobia in the Chinese community, and the fact that he is marginalised as an immigrant.

Queer and intersectional characters are also represented in many other YA novels from the last ten or so years, sometimes with migration and linguistic barriers at the centre, like in *Money Boy*. Goodreads Choice Awards, an award based on the voting of readers, exemplifies this. The nominated YA novels 2021 (Goodreads 2021) describe intersectional and often globalised or bi-cultural and bilingual identities, and some of them also include queer characters and storylines. Benjamin Alire Sáenz' *Aristotle and Dante Dive into the Waters of the World* is one of the nominated novels 2021. It is the sequel to *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (2012), awarded with multiple literary prizes, among them the Lambda Literary Award and the Stonewall Book Award. Both the first and second part are about two teenage Mexican American boys in Texas, combining a love story that must confront homophobia with borderland identities and class boundaries. Another nominated novel to Goodreads Choice Awards 2021 is Adiba Jaidirgar's *Hani and Ishu's Guide to Fake Dating* (2021). It is a coming out love-story centred around a second generation Bangladeshi-Irish girl, and a Indian/Bengali-Irish girl. When the popular Hani Khan comes out as bisexual, she is questioned by her friends because she previously dated boys. She begins fake-dating the studious Ishu, and they end up falling in love, at the same time grappling with both racism and bi-phobia. Jaidigar's previous YA novel, *The Henna Wars* (2020) narrates the complexities of coming out as a lesbian in a Muslim family and in an Irish Catholic school. Both Jaidigar's and Alire Sáenz' books exemplify that globalised and bi-cultural identities is an important theme in contemporary YA literature, and in this sense Beecroft's "plot of globalisation" is visible in them.

In his discussion about global literary ecologies, Beecroft writes that ["w]riters who write in particular ways will find it easier to get published and to gain recognition than others do" (Beecroft 2015, 247) He further explains this as a mechanism or 'evolution' transferred across time, so that writers who have once gained influence retains it (Beecroft 2015, 247). However, Beecroft also argues that this kind of literature may be disrupted by "ecological shocks" and gives the examples "technological developments, changes in the economics of book publishing, changes (liberalising or otherwise) in censorship regimes or in literary tastes, and changing competitions with larger literatures, such as English" (Beecroft 2015, 247). I interpret this statement as a description of how long-lasting literary power structures (for example manifested in canonisation) may be overturned. Although we have seen no disruption of English as the most important language in the global literary market, technology has certainly played a part in shifting the processes of readership formation. One could argue that technology has been the driving force in the emergence of queer readerships that are not necessarily connected to local communities, but instead can share book recommendations and reader experiences through digital media, such as for example Goodreads or TikTok. Research has shown that apart from the access problems to queer literature discussed in the introduction, there are additional are barriers to the access of queer literature for young readers in schools and school libraries (Booth and Buhva 2018), and in some regions, such as the Arab world (*Anonymous 2021).[1] In a situation where access is limited in certain cultural and institutional contexts, digital media become an even more important space for sharing book recommendations and reader experiences. In an article about Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood,* a lesbian and modernist classic, Laura K. Wallace describes the formation of queer reading publics across time. She cross-reads reception events in different time periods and in different contexts, and among other things, academic reading and readers on Goodreads, and concludes that "to many (perhaps most) readers, a book's greatness inheres in its applicability to their own lives, in the aesthetic and affective pleasures and intensities it provides, which have everything to do with identity politics and historical context" (Wallace 2016, 90). Her reading of the reception of *Nightwood* strongly suggests that queer literature can be seen as an ecology, evolving over time, but with the shared experience of readers seeking and finding acknowledgment and recognition in certain works. Although Wallace does not reflect on Goodreads as a digital social medium per se, her discussion of "feeling public," a concept that underlines the formation

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1 The name of the author withheld by the editors.

of readerships as an affective process, is useful for the understanding of public readership on TikTok. It also aligns with Ahmeds discussion of the "the role of pleasure of queer lifestyles or counter-cultures" (Ahmed 2013, 424). The pleasure in reading, and affective response in general, are aspects strongly present in the reader-responses of queer literature on TikTok.

4 BookTok, YA Literature, and Queer Readership

Even though Beecroft points out technology as one of the factors that define the conditions for literary ecologies, and may disrupt ecological systems, he does not develop in depth how digital technologies and social media affect global literary ecologies. But since Beecroft also underlines that readers are instrumental in the creation of literary ecosystems, digital platforms where communities of readers interact are relevant to explore. BookTok is a community of mostly young adult readers on TikTok that has quickly expanded as an important strand of this social media platform, enabling users to share reading experiences, recommendations and interact with other readers. TikTok, developed from the Chinese platform Douyin in 2017, allows users to post videos, and provides sound and visual effects and possibilities of editing the videos (Boffone and Jerasa 2021). It was initially targeted to the teenagers of generation Z but is now a social media platform more broadly used by different audiences and for different topics and interests. On TikTok, interaction is directed towards content, not individual profiles, and as Zulli and Zulli has pointed out, "[c]reative interaction is also prioritised over discursive interaction," meaning, things are not discussed, as for example on Facebook or Twitter, content is created and shared using hashtags. Further, they describe the networks on TikTok as "imitation publics," capturing a style of interaction through imitation and replication rather than connections between individuals (Zulli and Zulli 2020). Through the hashtag #BookTok used together with more specific tags such as the names of individual works, one such "imitation public" is created.

According to Zulli and Zulli (2020), imitation can be of two kinds: it can be formed through imitation of specific videos, or a more general replication of different types of videos (as for example the book haul). In the case of BookTok, the latter is more common. On BookTok a typical content is a video recommending book titles, sometimes more in general such as "Popular books that I never finished" (@bookobsessed) or "Books I've bought because of BookTok" (@isabella-gerli). Although publishers and librarians have a growing presence on BookTok, most posts are by readers themselves, who publish videos about their reading re-

using effects, music, and type of video (a book haul, displaying a large number of books; recommendations and ratings; emotional reactions to books etc). Like "AltTikTok" and "LesbianTikTok," examples mentioned by Zulli and Zulli, Book-Tok can be described as a particular community "developing videos that aligned with and were imitable by that community" (Zulli and Zulli 2020, 12). As Papacharissi has shown using Twitter as an example, hashtags may be used to create "tropes of belonging" (2014, 117) that are characterised by shared feelings. While the shared feelings in the Twitter contexts Papacharissi explored were mainly negative (discontent, disagreement), BookTok usually bind readers together by a strong emotional engagement in fictional characters and staging strong emotional responses; constructing "affective publics" in a similar way as Wallace describes (2016), but with other feelings and content foregrounded (Papacharissi 2014). Ahmed argues that queer pleasure is not only about sexual intimacy, but also the access to social belongings in different spaces, such as "clubs, bars, parks, and homes" (Ahmed 2013, 437). While Ahmed is primarily discussion spaces where bodies come into contact, it may be worth considering the role of digital spaces in the creation of queer pleasure and queer politics.

Publishers have testified to the significance of the shared content on Book-Tok: one example is backlisted titles suddenly in-demand after trending on Book-Tok (Jensen 2022). Many BookTok users are fans of the same genres, such as fantasy romance, manga, or LGBTQ+ literature. Currently #booktoklgbtq has 48.4 million views and #booktoklgbt 377.9 million views.[2] Two of the unexplained upticks of paper backs during 2020 were Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles* (Miller 2012), originally published in 2012 and Adam Silvera's *They Both Die at the End,* originally published in 2017 (Silvera 2017). Both were tied to viral content on BookTok (Jensen 2022), and both (although set in very different contexts and narrated within different genres) are male same-sex love stories and depict homosexual and bi-sexual identities.

The Song of Achilles recasts the *Iliad*'s story of war and heroism as a love story between Achilles and his companion Patroclus. At the same time, the story is also transposed from the heroic and mythical to territories recognisable from contemporary YA literature: coming of age with its grappling with friendship and identity, and sexuality. Miller gained praise for portraying an openly gay relationship, but the depiction of male same-sex love has also been criticized by queer readers for narrating homosexuality from a heterosexual perspective (eg. Reading

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2 Statistics from TikTok app, accessed 28 February 2022. There are also other hashtags to find lgbtq+ literature such as #lgbtqbooktok, #lgbtqbooks etc.

While Queer 2015, Strange Queer Things 2018). Readers using the hashtag #the-songofachilles (or any variety of this hashtag) on TikTok engage explicitly and emotionally in the love story. Users draw Achilles and Patroclus in intimate scenes (eg. @casilda_draws), search for fan art after finishing it (@.dianasbookshelf), they choose music to enhance the emotional impact of certain scenes, such Achilles weeping over Patroclus dead body (eg. @promisesbooks) and they stage their own emotional reactions to the tragedy of the lovers (eg. @eleonorastellax). The reader responses to the novel are usually put in very few words: "Adele + Patrochillies = me sobbing my a$$ of" as the user @jeanne.reads writes in a post from 27 October 2021, staging affective response to the novel by using Adele's song "When We Were Young". It is clear that #BookTok offers a space to share the emotional responses to the text and has been known for supporting precisely affective responses to fiction (Jensen 2020). Judging from the posts using the hashtag #thesongofachilles, emotional responses to the novels tragic love story are highly valued. Wallace's concept of "feeling public," describing the "paradoxical sense that reading is simultaneously public and private, social and individual" (Wallace 2016, 73) is pertinent to this context. Interestingly though, that the book narrates a same-sex love story does not seem particularly significant in its reception on BookTok. Although many use the hashtag #lgbtq, *The Song of Achilles* does not seem to connect queer readers. Ahmed remarks that "[g]lobal capitalism involves the relentless search for new markets, and queer consumers provide such a market (2013, 436). Also, it is clear that queer content directed to audiences that are not queer form part of this capitalist logic.

In contrast to *The Song of Achilles*, *They Both Die at the End* is set in a familiar space, New York, in a recognisable near future. The novel depicts an everyday world, with the exception that people who are due to die in the next 24 hours are given notice of this in advance and given the possibility to find somebody who shares this destiny via the app Last Friend. This is how the two teenage protagonists, Puerto Rican Mateo and Cuban American Rufus, meet. The premise of only having a few precious hours left in life, creates a narrative space for engaging in existential questions about identity and the meaning of life, including the experience of being gay/bisexual teenage boy. The novel was nominated to Goodreads Choice Awards 2017, and like *The Song of Achilles* it has engaged readers in emotional responses on BookTok, and in very similar ways: from readers staging their own emotional reactions (eg. @saracarstens), to reviews (eg. @hungrycaterpillar), and reactions to the end (@abbysbooks). Like Miller's novel, the reception to *They Both Die at the End* does not focus on sexuality; it is read as a love story, and not specifically as a same-sex love story. While an important different between *The Song of Achilles* and *They Both Die at the End* is that the latter is written by an openly gay author, they both

seem to exemplify a mainstreaming of queer culture. This reflects an increased visibility and acceptance, at least in some parts of the world. However, as Daniel Elam has phrased it: "the 'gay community' today is a banally knowable object rather than the product of a passionately forged experience of self-making" (Elam 2017). His remark suggests that when LGBTQ+ culture (or gay culture, as he primarily focuses on) become mainstream, there is a loss of community. When hetero cis teens read and engage in queer love stories it may indicate an embracing of those identities, but also mean that literature representing same-sex relations doesn't per se create queer readership on BookTok. In fact, it is an interesting question if the transformation from the previous limited access to queer literature, depending on the reader being part of a local community, to commercial production and global digital access to queer literature via for example BookTok and Goodreads, means a loss of community for queer people or more opportunities to "feeling public," even as a private reader, as Wallace describes (Wallace 2016).

As shown above, the queer literature ecology on BookTok is not visible through the lens of the bestselling examples discussed above. However, if you follow the hashtags "lgbtq"/"lgbtg+"/"lgbtqia" booktok or "queerbooktok," you'll find posts from queer people who share their reading and give book recommendations. That all kinds of readers have found bestselling titles including queer love stories, like *The Song of Achilles*, doesn't automatically increase knowledge about queer literature: "I swear that's the only lgbtq+ book straight booktok knows," one user comments (@readbyfin). The comments to this post reveal both an underrepresentation of lesbian/sapphic books and a slight frustration about the one-sided interest in certain bestsellers: "if you ask booktok for queer books people will literally only reccomends [sic], the song of achilles, they both die in [sic] the end, and red white and royal blue" (the latter is another bestselling same-sex love story). On queer BookTok there is certainly a community, and a critique against the shallow knowledge about queer literature on "straight BookTok," especially the lack of sapphic literature. Many librarians have accounts with LGBTQ+ book recommendations, and ordinary readers share reading experiences. These experiences can include how to handle parents who don't allow you to read queer books (@thecalvinbooks) and giving each other tips about queer books with "discreet covers" (@literarylesbian). "THANK YOU FOR THIS AND PLS DO MORE IF U CAN! I have a very homophobic and christian family so this helps," one user comments. As Buffone and Jerasa states, BookTok "enables queer teens and allies to engage with queer YA literature" and allow queer teens to "experiment with their identities in ways that are not viable or safe off-line" (2021, 10, 11).

While queer YA literature (mostly male gay) have been increasingly marketed, and accessibility for readers is improved through social media, it is very clear that queer reading (that is LGBTQ+ readers reading LGBTQ+ books) still is controversial and met with obstacles, and of course even more so in global contexts. Since TikTok does not focus on user profiles it is not always possible to identify the nationalities and first languages of those who create content. Although there are videos in different languages, English is the dominating language on BookTok, and the books displayed, commented, and recommended are usually written in English or is translated to English. They seem to be texts that speak to us "as citizens of the world" rather than "residents as a specific place" (Beecroft 2015, 299), although many of them describe queer marginalization and homophobia in specific cultural contexts. If digital social media is considered, the possible future of a global literary ecology where English functions as a lingua franca described by Beecroft (2015, 295–296), seems already here. There is one major exception from the tendency that most literature discussed and recommended on BookTok is written in English, and that is Japanese Manga, and Korean Manhwa, but that is a research field in itself. When it comes to the representation of LGBTQ+ people, bestselling YA literature in English may benefit the visibility of this group in different national contexts where LGBTQ+ rights are limited. In South Korea, where same-sex relationships are not legally recognized, *The Song of Achilles* gained "massive domestic popularity" and is part of a larger trend where the novel is used forward non-normative experiences (Younsei Annales 2021). Angles describes a similar effects of the "gay boom" in Japan in the 1990ies, when Western literature representing male same-sex desire was translated to Japanese, and he explores the subtle adaptation of queer identities and practices that takes place in translation (Angles 2017, 92).

On BookTok there are users specialising in diversifying book recommendations, both in terms geographical and representational diversity. The account @the_asian_librarian, focuses on books from underrepresented geographical regions, such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore, and books with LGBTQ+ representation (eg. @the_asian_librarian February 2020, 22 December 2021). Many accounts focused on queer literature also actively promote diversity, mostly in terms of representation of characters. @justgreggy is one example, a reader from Curacao living is the Netherlands, providing ample examples of books in many different genres over the whole LGBTQ+ spectrum, calling out problematic representations, and offering critiques of the male same-sex love stories that are embraced on straight BookTok.

5 Global Literature and Queer Temporal Dislocations

Compared to the experience of being a young reader with limited possibilities to see one's identity acknowledged in literature that Banks described, cited in the beginning of this article, BookTok and other digital social media offers infinitely more access to queer literature for young readers, although there is some un-evenness in representation over the LGBTQ+ spectrum, and male same-sex love stories are clearly favored. It is almost impossible to get an overview over the YA literature content on BookTok globally. One can access BookTok in other languages, but for example, on Swedish BookTook, to name one small language, the posts are often in English anyway. In this way, literature content on TikTok can be seen as representing the same global and mainstreamed commercial logic as the other literary circuits, like literary criticism and publishing, for example. However, when it comes to queer young adults, both Goodreads and BookTok make possible to ask others for recommendations on precisely your literary preferences (eg. Sapphic fantasy, or trans-themed sci-fi), and it offers anonymous access for persons that haven't come out to their families. This is a kind of community, but arguably not the same as the one Wallace describes. She discusses how the reading of certain texts, coded as lesbian, was a means of becoming part of a lesbian community. "GLBTQ [. . .] reading practices seek and build social relations precisely because GLBTQ people in heteronormative culture often feel isolated and singular" (Wallace 2016, 74). Readers could rally around texts to understand "queerness as a social identity with historical roots, rather than an individual diagnosis" (Wallace 2016, 74). Queerness as a social identity is present in the examples from BookTok I have discussed, and can be understood as an emotional connection between readers that promotes digital and global circulation. However, how historical is this social identity and emotional community? Social media is often very focused on the present. On BookTok, it is primarily new books that are displayed and discussed. Literary history is mostly absent, but as we have seen the digital technologies may disrupt the temporality of the market, making backlisted books resurface again.

To return to the question of queer YA literature and temporality, some efforts have been made to trace an evolution of this literature. The four waves of gay YA literature described by Banks and Alexander (2016, 15) may to some extent be transferrable to other the whole LGBTQ+ spectrum, but not entirely. A genealogy of trans YA literature may have a very different development, focusing more on gender norms than on sexuality. Cart and Jenkins (2006) offers a comprehensive history of LGBTQ novels for young adults, covering almost 200 titles over the

years 1969 to 2004. It is a broad and inclusive history of queer YA literature, including a focus on intersectional identities and cultural differences within an English language and primarily North American context. Cart and Jenkins describe a development from characters that come out in isolation in heteronormative environments in late 1960ies and early 1970ies, to characters happy with their queer identities, and with access to queer friends and family members around 2000. In addition to this chronological approach, they also develop three categories for the classification of LGBTQ YA literature: "Homosexual visibility" books that present coming-out stories, "Gay assimilation" books that present sexual and gender diversity as a given reality, and "Queer consciousness/community" books, that emphasize queer belongings in a broader context (Cart and Jenkins 2006, 169–172). These categories are not identical but similar to those discerned by Banks and Alexander, even if they more explicitly aim to describe a temporal development. Despite showing a move towards more diversity in representation and access for readers to queer literature, Cart and Jenkins also point out the need for more books with queer characters of color, as well as books centering on lesbian, bisexual, and transgender identities. Interestingly, this is among the most common criticism towards mainstream LGBTQ+ YA literature by readers on BookTok as well, indicating that there may not have been a continuous development towards diversifying queer representation in YA literature.

Furthermore, looking at the development of queer YA literature from a global perspective, these stages, or waves, are problematic to apply, since they would show that Anglo-American literature is somehow more mature or developed than other literatures. Also, there is clearly a need to think beyond national borders to account for queer migrant and bi-cultural experiences (Anzaldúa 2009). In their discussion about transnationalism in relation to queer culture, Chiang and Wong underline that "gender, racial, and queer cultural formations do not merely follow the vertical logics of colonial modernity" (2016, 1645), and one might add, does develops its own temporal patterns when it comes to cultural production. One interesting example put forward by Chiang and Wong, is Johann S. Lee's novel *Peculiar Chris* (1992), a coming-of-age story described by them as "Singapore's very own debut of queer writing" (Chiang and Wong 2016, 1647). The author himself draws attention to temporal dislocations in his foreword: "He laments that in the Western gay canon, queer authors can develop beyond a conventional 'coming out' narrative," Chiang and Wong writes (2016, 1647), which is not the case in all literary traditions. Chiang and Wong also cite the author's own foreword: "For this reason, what you are about to read is in one sense, extremely new and yet, in another, very passé" (Lee cited by Chiang and Wong 2016, 1647). This quote highlights that queer literary ecologies may exist in different temporalities, connected to local conditions and nationally coded ideals of gender identities and

sexualities. To acknowledge this can also provide a way to avoid "evaluat[ing] the novel by how closely it aligns with Western queer liberalism" (Chiang and Wong 2016, 1648).

It could be argued that there are two build-in temporalities within queer YA literature in a global context. Firstly, there is a narrative temporality that adheres to YA literature as a genre about identity formation, where protagonists are supposed to develop and mature. This is closely connected to the idea of "chrononormativity" in Freeman's sense, signifying an idea of a natural course of life from childhood to productive and reproductive adult maturity (Freeman 2010). Secondly, there is an idea that queer YA literature has developed in certain ways over time, from the individual (typically gay male protagonist) struggling to come out in a hostile environment to including a more diverse and intersectional representation, and queer collectives. These ideas of development over time, in the narration of the protagonist's life, and in the development of the genre, are clearly not transferrable over different cultural contexts. While critics in the Global North might argue that we need no move beyond "calls for visibility and forward-oriented teleological growth" (Mason 2021, 6), exactly that type of representation may be very important in other cultural contexts. Requests and comments on BookTook also show that positive visibility is still much in demand by readers, as is also the need to hide reading of queer texts, visible in the requests for "discreet covers". Here, there is also a great divide within Western cultural contexts. Readers in the US may experience an urgent need of hiding queer reading considering the growth of a value-conservative opinion for example expressed in the "Don't Say Gay" legislation bills (Barbeauld 2014, Mazzei 2022); a clear example that there is not an unambiguous progressive development towards increasing inclusivity, diversity, and visibility.

In her text about how queer texts and queer reading practices make LGBTQ readers "feel public," Wallace describes "a transhistorical lesbian experience" through readings of *Nightwood* in different time periods and contexts (2016, 84). The question is, can a Western canonised texts speak to readers globally over time, and make readers globally "feel public"? To avoid that queer literature, for example from the Asias as discussed above, is measured against a Western idea of development, the problematizations of linearity and teleology within queer theory is helpful. Wallace discusses Love's critique of a "linear, triumphalist view of history," (Love 2007, 3); one could extend this critical position to include a resistance to the idea that LGBTQ+ representation should develop in certain ways over time and move from coming-out themes in heteronormative contexts to more inclusive queer representations. In a global context, there is clearly a need to be wary of normative Western chronologies.

6 Conclusion

Despite the importance of travel and transnational reception of texts for queer communities, it is striking that gender and sexuality to such a large extent has been excluded in foundational work within world literature. Moreover, this field of research also has shown a lack of interest in children's and YA literature. When global aspects are explored, it is in research by scholars in these fields (queer studies and young adult literature respectively), not by those engaged in world literature. While universality has been seen as a central criterion for world literature from Goethe's idea of *Weltliteratur* to recent theories (Mufti 2016, 1–5), both queer literature and YA literature is perceived as a concern for certain readers, and scholars in field specialized in these areas. As Mufti points out "[c]oncepts and categories of European origin are at the core of literature as a worldwide 'space' of reality, including long-established ways of thinking about the alien, the exotic, or the other" (Mufti 2016, xi). Although this may not have been Mufti's intention, "the other" can also in this context be understood as subject not conforming to compulsory heterosexuality or normative gender identities. Queer readers have struggled to find texts representing queer experiences, both due to a marginalisation of those such themes and characters in literature, and to obstacles in finding this literature, and despite increased access this question is still acute in many cultural contexts. Building on Beecroft's idea of literary ecologies constituted by the reception of texts by readers, this chapter has explored a queer literature ecology formed by queer readership.

Following Beecroft's statement that technology has the potential to disrupt literary ecologies, queer readership on BookTok was traced, and showed to provide a space for the sharing of affective reading experiences and knowledge of queer literature, but also to solidify the position of English as a global language. Furthermore, a mainstreaming of literature with queer loves stories is visible in the general reception of book successes on BookTok such as *The Song of Achilles* and *They Both Die at the End*, but this kind of reception is also criticized by queer readers on BookTok. In this critique it becomes visible that queer BookTok can create a space of belonging, even though it is a digital space, far removed from the local contexts where queer readership thrived in the past. BookTok also serves readers specifically looking for a different kind of representation, including queer literature by authors from specific nations or regions. While access to queer literature in the past has been closely connected to local small-scale communities and social environments, digital media, such as TikTok, provide spaces for queer readers to connect on a larger scale. This digital belonging means easier access to relevant literature for young queer readers, but it can't replace more local communities, only provide an alternative kind of belonging.

Queer YA literature and young queer readership is still controversial in many contexts. The continued demand for queer themed coming-of-age stories testifies that the longing for acknowledgement in texts, or the possibility to "feel public" through texts is as strong now as in the past. However, that queer literature is more mainstream today changes the way queer belongings are constructed. Palekar points out that in translation of queer texts, the translator is faced with the "temptation to try and make explicit a certain kind of globally legible and homogenizing queerness" (2017, 15). For all the benefits of TikTok to empower and connect queer readers, there is a risk that the kind of queerness you may encounter in such spaces is precisely that "globally legible and homogenizing queerness". This is something to also be wary of when exploring the temporalities of queer YA literature. The historical development of Anglo-American YA literature featuring queer characters and motifs becomes cannot be taken as a norm, and an assessment of literature globally against a Western idea of development within the genre needs to be avoided. The literary ecology of queer YA literature functions both in different social spaces (large-scale digital, and small-scale around physical communities), and in different temporal frames.

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Firat Oruc

Space and Agency in the Petrocolonial Genealogies of Cinema in the Gulf

Following the discovery of oil in Bahrain in 1932, the Gulf entered a new phase in its history.[1] As hydrocarbon modernity gave rise to new spaces of urban culture, the interest in the moving image was invigorated, stimulated also by the growing popularity of sound film as a global phenomenon of entertainment (Gomery 2005). Despite hydrocarbon modernity's promise of what Mark Simpson calls "lubricity" (2017) to refer to oil's enabling capacity of smooth flows of people, material resources, life styles, and cultural forms, the circulatory energies made possible by the discovery of fossil fuels in the Gulf were managed through a new logic of governance that I call petrocolonial in so far as it captures the very intersectionality of bureaucratic imperial power and capitalist energy extraction. If carbon-based energy – coal in the nineteenth century and oil in the twentieth century – played a fundamental role in shaping modern governance (Mitchell 2011), in the Gulf context, it led to the constitution of the petrocolonial state as a result of the coming together of British imperialism and American venture capitalism.

The embeddedness of cinema in the formation of hydrocarbon modernity in the Gulf generated a set of characteristics that were resonant with, but also different from, other cinematic formations in the Middle East and South Asia. The petrocolonial configurations of cinema in the Gulf were refracted through three spheres of moving image culture: private, corporate-sponsored, and commercial public cinemas. Although these moving-image practices are often examined separately, in this chapter I show that in the Gulf context they were intricately connected. What was common to these three spheres was a certain logic of exclusion and restricted access norms. The private cinema sphere was exclusive to the colonial and indigenous elite; the corporate cinema was confined to the Euro-American staff of the oil companies; and the commercial public cinema was reserved for the local and labour migrant audience. The triumvirate of the Political Agent, the

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1 Throughout the chapter, "the Gulf" is used as a geographical designation to refer to the Arabic-speaking coastal areas (*al-khalij*) of the Persian Gulf. Today, it comprises the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman.

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Government Adviser, and the Oil Company in Bahrain regulated each cinema sphere and the processes of socialisation, interaction, and acculturation they facilitated using legal codes as well as restricted access norms, adopting, in particular, patterns of colonial paternalism already well established in India.

In contextualising the emergence of cinema in the Gulf within the broader comparative histories of colonial cinema culture and spatial planning, this chapter aims to foreground a complex interplay of space and agency. The arrival of cinema in the Gulf took place along three spheres of moving image culture, each of which was shaped by multiple local and transnational actors, including British colonial officers, American oil company managers, South Asian entrepreneurs, indigenous merchants and ruling elites. These agents participated in multiple configurations and regulations of the emergent cinematic experience in terms of defining the physical spaces of film exhibition, undergirding the urban segregation of different audience groups, and administering the transnational traffic of films and film bureaucracy (licensing, censorship, sales, and so on).

This chapter traces the formative years of cinema in the Gulf and the configurations of cinematic spaces by multiple agents through the colonial archives. Whether in the form of official circulars, correspondences, or personal writings, the objects of the archive are riddled with prejudices, silences, and elisions that their authors usually did not even bother to hide. Therefore, rather than treating these records as authoritative and objective sources for constructing the history of the emergence of cinema in the Gulf, I approach the internal and often times confidential exchanges in these documents as literary texts emerging from the imperial cultural archive as a storehouse of "a particular knowledge and structures of attitude and reference" (Said 1993, 52) as well as an ethnography of the archive that Ann Laura Stoler and Nicholas Dirks, among other historical anthropologists, have proposed for the study of colonial administrative apparatuses. "To engage in an ethnography of the archive," writes Dirks, "entails going well beyond seeing it as an assemblage of texts, a depository of and for history. The archive is a discursive formation in the totalizing sense that it reflects the categories and operations of the state itself" (Dirks 2002, 59). The primacy of official records in the study of the colonial histories of cinema, including that of the Gulf, is in itself a symptom of the extent to which colonial administrations regulated its arrival and engineered the logic of control. Equally important, the archive (often against the will of the administrative power) is inherently polyphonic and heteroglossic. In the case of the records that I study in this chapter, the voices of various "other" actors appear through the correspondences they have with the British political agents as well as the American oil companies.

1 The Question of Cinema in Imperial Circulation

> I hear a rumour that an "Arab" is arranging to establish a cinema here . . . If the rumour is true, I think that prohibiting the establishment of a cinema should be carefully considered, and in any case that censorship should be provided for. I cannot but think that His Excellency Shaikh Hamad would regard with distaste the type of film which experience elsewhere tells me is likely to be shown. ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [2r] 3/200)

Thus begins the first correspondence in the "Bahrain Cinemas" file of the India Office Records (Fig. 1), a confidential letter (dated April 7, 1934) from Lieutenant-Colonel Percy Gordon Loch, the Political Agent in Bahrain, to Charles Dalrymple Belgrave, the British Advisor (*al-mustashar*) to the Government of Bahrain. The "Arab" whom Loch mentioned in the circulating "rumour" was Hussein Yateem, a local merchant, who had approached the government of Bahrain to obtain a licence for establishing a public cinema. Hussein Yateem belonged to a well-established merchant family that was particularly interested in importing new media technologies of that time period such as gramophones and cameras ("Kingdom Mourns Death of Builder of Modern Bahrain").
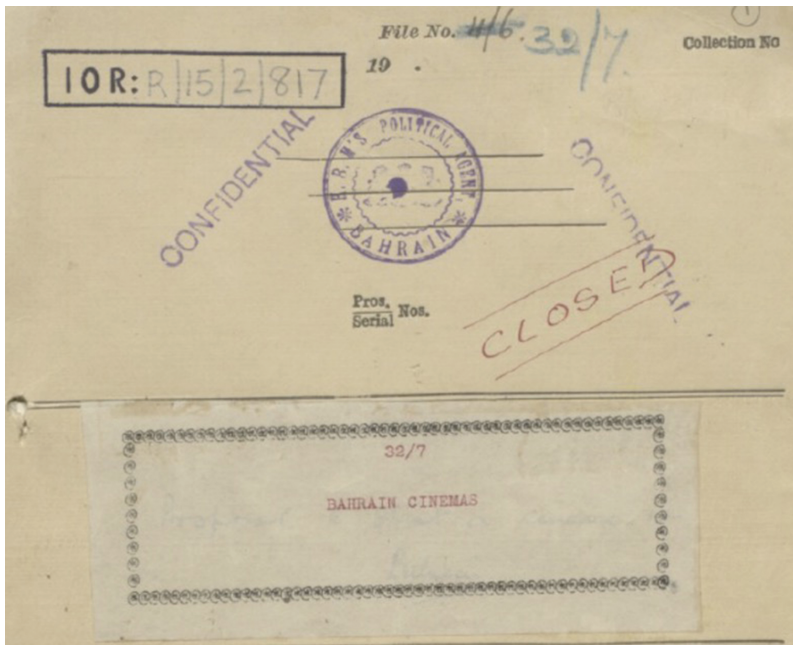
Fig. 1: "Bahrain Cinemas" cover page.

But what was Political Agent Loch referring to by "experience elsewhere"? His point of reference was none other than India. As a circulating imperial officer, Loch had held numerous posts in India between 1919 and 1932 in the Multan, Gilgit, Rewa, Kathiawar, and Mysore regions prior to his appointment to Bahrain from 1932 to 1937 (Rich 2009, 223). Loch was in India during precisely the time period when there was an acute controversy over the moral and political effects of film in the Empire. Strikingly enough, Belgrave's diary notes during a recruitment trip to India in late 1927, approximately a year after his arrival in Bahrain, show that Advisor Belgrave also encountered that "experience elsewhere." While in Karachi, Belgrave attended several silent era films, including Henry Otto's *Dante's Inferno* (Fox Film, 1924) and Alexander Korda's *The Private Life of Helen of Troy* (First International, 1927). Critiquing those adaptations of two major European classics to the screen as "decadent," "depressing," and "dreary," Belgrave ended this diary entry as follows: "I can't imagine what an Indian audience made of it" (Belgrave 1993, 118; 123). Belgrave did not elaborate further on his remark; but we can safely infer that he was convinced that those films were not fit for a "native" audience.[2]

Loch and Belgrave's initial reactions to the rumours about the opening of a public cinema in Bahrain reflected a set of anxieties that were circulating in the late imperial period among the British colonial administrators who were alarmed by the increasing appeal of cinema as a popular form of entertainment among colonial subjects. The "Bahrain Cinemas" files of the India Office Records illustrate clearly the extent to which the experiences of colonial India shaped the formative years of cinema culture in the Gulf. Administrators in Bahrain looked to how cinema was handled in India for models and ideas to create actual policies on the ground. The arrival of cinema in Bahrain was closely monitored and regulated by the British colonial network of administrative personnel who followed meticulously the general film policies that were implemented across the Empire. The bureaucratic traffic over the case of early public cinema petitions in Bahrain shows how regulatory practices and norms of governance over cinematic spheres circulated from one colonial context (South Asia) to another (the Gulf).

The story of the opening of the first public cinema in the Gulf, therefore, constitutes a significant, yet so far overlooked, episode in the transregional history of the circuits of cinema across South Asia and the Middle East. Bahrain Cinema

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2 Throughout the chapter, "native" is meant to be in quotation marks as a colonial administrative term used to describe the local peoples administered by the Empire.

opened its doors to the local audience under the rules of censorship and conduct adopted from the Government of India to screen as its first film the Egyptian iconic singer Umm Kulthum's first musical *Wedad*. Prior to film industry exchanges in the 1960s and 70s, circulation from South Asia to the Middle East started in the Gulf with censorship manuals, segregation systems, and anxieties over the influence of cinema on native populations. The films that were screened across the Euro-American exclusive club house theatres of the oil company settlements in the Gulf were obtained from distributors in India. Indian entrepreneurs, moreover, were the first foreign investors to petition for a licence to operate a commercial cinema open for the local Arab population as well as South Asian migrant communities in the Gulf. This was the natural result of the increased labour flow from South Asia to the Gulf after the rise of the oil economy as well as the strong historical connections between South Asian and Gulf merchants, as Bombay and Karachi began to emerge as central hubs of film industry in the early twentieth century.

As cultural anthropologist Brian Larkin points out, to the extent that Empire functioned as a network of repeating and multiplying circulations afforded by "a ceaseless movement of persons, laws, administrative practices, commodities, texts, [and] images," the panic over the new medium was characterised by "the diversity of situations in which cinema found itself, and the regularity of the stories narrated about those films" (Larkin 2010, 174; 155). It was, therefore, not a coincidence that Loch and Belgrave shared the same discomfort about how colonial subjects viewed and interpreted films with, for instance, governor Sir Henry Hesketh Bell in Northern Nigeria, expatriate journalist George Bilainkin in Malaya, or writer Aldous Huxley in Java.

But the anxiety over cinema as a new space and form of visual media did not remain limited to a mere epistemological curiosity about what the colonial audiences were thinking about the images they saw on the screen. As popular cinema, particularly Hollywood, was making its way to the colonies, it was also accompanied by the metropolitan concerns about governance and mass culture. The British Empire strove to control, survey, and supervise the emergent circulation of films in the colonies, responding to the question of how moving images affected "the mind and morals" of individuals and destabilised proper citizen conduct (Grieveson 2008, 5). As Larkin argues:

> Controversy over the effects of film in the empire was part of a wider moment in which cinema was constituted as a public sphere of regulation, with intense efforts made by governmental and private bodies to control and limit its exhibition. By 1914, domestic debates in England about the demoralising effects of film on "immature minds" (most especially children) were being transferred into concerns about the influence of films in colonial territories. The concern for the influence of film in Empire was in part an outgrowth of debates about the moral effects of film within Britain itself. (Larkin 2010, 164)

But in the colonial context, the cinema question was not merely a sociological issue; rather, it was a politically-charged question that challenged "white prestige" (Stoler 2002).

In 1927 (while Loch was still posted to India), the Government of India formed the Indian Cinematograph Committee (ICC) to report on the influence of films on the native subjects and their ability to properly decode them. Cinema presented a paradox for the colonial order: on the one hand, it provided "an unprecedentedly efficacious means for conveying the blandishments of civilization," on the other hand, however, it embodied an overwhelmingly powerful "visceral appeal to the senses" (Mazzarella, 2009, 66). As a sensuous experience, cinema stimulated feelings of excitement and passion that challenged Victorian notions of civilising mission and imperial pedagogy in the colonies. The concerns over the effects of the cinema were predicated on the idea that native spectators (at least, the uneducated, non-Europeanized lower classes) were not ready to process the sensory stimuli of the cinema. To prove its point empirically, the ICC conducted a massive opinion poll project based on interviews with more than a thousand respondents in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Lahore, and Burma (Jaikumar 2003). The interviews of the ICC centred on rhetorical questions that implied that the new visual medium could not be properly understood and decoded by colonial subjects: "Do you consider that the differences in social customs and outlook between the West and the East necessitate special consideration of films in this country?" "Have any of the films exhibited in India a tendency to misrepresent Western civilization or to lower it in the eyes of Indians? Is it a fact that films representing Western life are generally unintelligible to an uneducated Indian or are largely misunderstood by him?" (quoted in Sinha, 2009, 291–292). The expected answer to each of these questions was "yes."

As scholars of late colonial cinema have consistently shown, although framed in cultural and moral terms, the alarmism over cinema was a symptom of deeper concerns triggered by the challenges the new medium posed to colonial governmentality and state control (Jaikumar 2003). More than the images themselves, the question at stake was "how this symbolic flow was reconstituted within colonial power relations" (Larkin 2010, 173). Cinema, after all, brought into contact populations that had been distant to each other, particularly due to its affordances of "spatial intimacy . . . across national, racial, and gender boundaries" (Sinha 2009, 292–293). As such, the social topography of cinema undermined established colonial divisions and hierarchies. Films, specifically Hollywood productions, undermined the white European image established in the colonies over centuries and exposed private metropolitan life to the native viewers (Arora 1995). Just imagine the scandalous gaze of the brown man on the white woman on the screen, or the unsettling experience of sharing the same space with people from lower social

classes in the cinema house. One of the British interviewees for the ICC would express this sense of losing representational superiority as follows: "It is useless to expect the coloured people to respect the white races when they see these false representations of so-called 'civilised life'" (quoted in Chowdhry 2000, 20–21). In response to these colonial anxieties, and in line with the late imperial attitude of British self-insulation, the ICC called for a spatial separation of the cinemas along Western(ised) *versus* local audiences, tastes, exhibition patterns, and literacies.

The Gulf, it must also be noted, differed in one significant aspect from India; that is, the discovery of oil in the 1930s at precisely the time when natural pearling economy that the coastal towns depended on declined irrecoverably due to the global dominance of cultured pearl in the aftermath of the Great Depression. The transition from one extractive mode of production to another came with an epochal intensity (Potter 2017). Oil signified the "marvellous" arrival of a hydrocarbon modernity, which, in addition to a whole set of technological, infrastructural, urban, and economic development, generated a new cultural dynamic that contemporary scholars of energy humanities have termed petroculture to designate oil's shaping influence on the (trans)formation of modern of everyday life in material and immaterial ways (Wilson, et al. 2017; Barrett and Worden 2014). The primary cultural form that came with oil capitalism in the Gulf was film.[3] Cinema was embraced as a key site of leisure for the oil settlements precisely at a time when British administrators' suspicious attitude toward Hollywood's impact in the colonies was at its height. The following sections offer a historical account of the three aforementioned moving image cultures by focusing primarily on Bahrain, which, in the wake of its ascendancy as the regional nodal point in the British colonial network, became the first country in the Gulf where the question of cinema unfolded in multifaceted circulatory forms that I have outlined above.

2 Enclaves of Private Cinema

In his 1935 report on the progress of Evangelical activities of the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church in Bahrain, Rev. Gerrit Van Peursem would observe astonishingly the growing interest in new media technologies and visual culture:

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3 For further scholarship on the role of the oil company in the formation of cinema culture in oil producing countries of the Middle East, see Naficy 2011, 183–186; Damluji, 2015, 147–164; Elling 2015.

> There are still a few of the older men who object to phonographs, radios and musical instruments of any sort. But they are few. The radio is getting very general, and the phonograph is used in the public coffee shop except during the fast month of Ramadan . . . . The same thing can be said of pictures in Islam. Time was when coolies and boys took to their heels at the sight of the camera. Some said pictures were images and thus smacked of idolatry. Others thought there was Jinn [sic] inside the box of the camera. Behold, what a change! It is difficult to exclude the crowd from the photo. The more the merrier. The more poses the better. Kodaks and films are sold in the bazaar to Arabs as well as to Europeans. The Shaikhs are especially pleased to have their pictures taken and the subjects aspire to be near their rulers . . . . There is not yet a public cinema in Bahrain, however, the lantern slides given in our hospital every week and in the men's mejlis are thoroughly appreciated in spite of the fact that the pictures illustrate the Bible story. (Van Peursem 1935, 9–10)

Although Rev. Gerrit Van Peursem's account comes with a strong Orientalist as well as evangelical rhetoric in its description of the "miraculous" attraction of the locals to media technologies (taken as a sign of progress), it also demonstrates how in the absence of licensed public cinemas, private nontheatrical spaces (the political agent's residence, the oil company club house, the ruler's palace, the mission hospital, and so on) played a significant role in the formation of cinema experience in the Gulf.

As such, film exhibition in its early years remained restricted to a highly select group of the British colonial administrative staff, members of the local ruling elite and their entourage, oil company employees, military personnel, and foreign visitors. According to the archival records of British offices in the Arabian Peninsula, "private cinema shows" were the most common form of spectatorship during the interwar period. In the January 1934 report of the British Legation in Jeddah, we read: "Picnics, wireless auditions, private cinema shows, and all the apparatus of occidental civilisation, now compete with the rigours of life among the Wahhabis" (Jarman 1990, 475). The Annual Report of the same year reiterated positively private cinema performances as a new addition to "the resources of Europeans" for enjoyment and leisure, while also stressing that local restrictions on entertainment activities were "as a whole weighed very lightly" on the British subjects (Jarman 1998, 229). The private cinema form also enabled the indigenous ruling elite to enjoy films in the comfort of their own exclusive courtly spaces, without having to worry about any religious or cultural criticism of the moving image.

The leading figure in both producing and screening private cinema in Bahrain was none other than Eleanor Isabel Wilkie-Dalyell, Political Agent Gordon Loch's wife. Following formal receptions, Dalyell would share her actuality films – short fragments of real footage – about local events and public gatherings in Bahrain with invited guests in the "cinema parties" at the Agency residence. Adviser Belgrave was among the regular attendees and recorded these

cinema shows regularly in his diary entries between 1933 and 1936 (Belgrave 1993, 826; 843; 861; 869; 1144; 1152; 1154).

Dalyell was a practitioner of what historian of imperial visual culture Annamaria Motrescu-Mayes calls late colonial home moviemaking. Although amateur moviemaking may not at first glance look relevant to the exclusionary practices in the physical cinematic space itself, Dalyell's films in fact reproduced the segregationist logic not only in terms of where and to whom they were exhibited but also through their formal elements and thematic material. During Coronel Loch's post in Bahrain between 1932 and 1937, Dalyell shot numerous intertitled 16 mm films using the Kodacolor lenticular system – a relatively rare and expensive experimental colour process (Motrescu-Mayes 2013, 48). Following its standardisation in 1923, the portable cine-camera had become a sought-after commodity by non-professionals who wanted to make films. The cine-camera was popular particularly among upper-class colonial expatriates who not only could afford to purchase one but also enjoyed relatively greater mobility than their compatriots.

Amateur filmmaking was notably embraced by women in the colonial outposts for whom it provided a lens for "taking an intelligent interest in the country, in the natives, and in [their] own immediate surroundings" (Procida 2002, 105). Filmmaking encouraged them to come out of the private sphere and participate in public life, and record extensive scenes of "life away from home": administrative, entrepreneurial, and military activities of the Empire, touristic outings in "exotic" landscapes, and ethnographic encounters with native populations and customs. By the same token, Dalyell's short films in Bahrain fell into two categories.[4] The first category included official visits by high ranking British bureaucrats, Imperial Airways planes and Royal Navy warships, official parades, marches of the police force, soldier drills, as well as expatriate leisure activities. The second category reflected the typical ethnographic style of filmmaking about the colonies in the 1930s, with extensive footage of dhow sailing, camel riding, pearl diving, horse racing, hunting, wedding ceremonies, religious celebrations, and royal parades. The anthropological subjects of Dalyell's films included local women drawing water, dancing, singing, and carrying shrines, villagers and vendors in the market as well as "emancipated slaves" playing drums and dancing outside the Agency residence (Fig. 2). In these films, Dalyell followed the major generic visual strategies of colonial amateur filmmaking: (1) panorama shots to emphasise the gap

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4 Now housed in the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum, the Dalyell collection is approximately 230 minutes long and includes 37 short films shot in India (1926–1931) and Bahrain (1932–1937).

between the maker and the subject, (2) sneaking shots of natives to produce the effect of neutrality and authenticity, (3) smooth cinematographic organisation of landscapes to limit the traces of dislocation and disorientation, and (4) shots that would invoke exotic contrasts to life at home (Zimmermann 1996, 89–90).

Fig. 2: Still shot from Dalyell's cine film "Celebration of the 'Id," circa 1934.

The amateur film work of Dalyell and other British women, claims Annamaria Motrescu-Mayes, offers us uncensored and unedited visual texts about life in the colonies beyond the limited view of the official imperial representations. "Such fortuitous records," she writes, "were usually filmed by chance, eluded the film-maker's initial thematic choice, and were never edited . . . .Some of these films now reveal unexpected details of British imperial identities and cultures" (Motrescu-Mayes 2014, 95). Similarly, in his work on amateur filmmaking in the Dutch East Indies, Nico De Klerk maintains that colonial private films – "being the closest visual records of the 'grassroots' level of interaction in the colony" – demonstrate that daily life did not always coincide with colonial ideologies (2008, 152). But it would be a far-fetched argument to defend that Dalyell and other late colonial amateur filmmakers intentionally subverted the colonial governmental framework, except for a few fleeting moments in which the colonial native was "accidentally" recorded as the subject, not the ethnographic object, of the film. As Patricia R. Zimmermann writes:

> Although the argument that these films present resistance to the aesthetic prerogatives predominating this period could be made, their shaky camerawork, inability to change composition, and absence of conscious narrative may more simply demonstrate that amateur camera usage was not situated within the discourse of filmmaking, but operated more within the discourse of hunting – to bag a prize, to get a trophy, to capture the experience, and project it on a screen. (1996, 90)

Late colonial home movies ultimately reasserted the imperial gaze. Their ability to cross over private and public spheres as well as feminine and masculine settings was guaranteed by their privileged status in the exclusive colonial structures.

3 The Corporate Screen of the Oil Company

In tandem with the private cinema of the exclusive domain of the governing elite, the oil company cinema emerged as the second film sphere in the Gulf. In 1935, the Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) – a subsidiary of Standard Oil of California – applied for permission to equip its Club House in Awali with "a modern Talking Cinema for the entertainment of their employees and their friends amongst the British residents of Manama" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [4r] 7/200). Awali was the first oil settlement (*madinah al-naft*) in the Gulf. The company management demanded exemption from censorship on the grounds that BAPCO's cinema would be a non-commercial space "confined to British and American audiences" (ibid.) only. BAPCO's request for exemption from censorship was based on the assumption that only the locals needed censorship. Loch and Belgrave honoured BAPCO's request with slight modifications. While the company management was given freedom over the selection of films, the government reserved a nominal right of censorship. By reserving the right of censorship, Belgrave would be able to prevent the screening of "controversial" films at the BAPCO theatre, which could pose a problem both to the British administration and the government of Bahrain.

In addition to the issue of censorship, Political Agent Loch's private notes on his conversations with BAPCO's representatives reveal that he was still acting on the assumption that the local inhabitants would misconstrue films:

> About the 10th January 1935 I spoke to the Chief Local Representatives Mr. Russell and Mr. Davies on the subject of the proposed B. A. P. C. O. cinema . . . I told Mr. Davies at some length of the unfortunate results which follow the exhibition of films which are perfectly suitable in their own countries in places like Bahrain, where people get entirely wrong impressions from what may be to *us* [emphasis added] a perfectly ordinary film. ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [71r] 141/200)

Loch, in other words, reiterated the colonial claim that films that were otherwise appropriate for, and properly processed by, Western audiences would be understood by native spectators in problematic ways. In Saudi Arabia, where the first movies arrived in 1937 with the so-called early pioneers of the Arabian American Company (ARAMCO), exclusionary measures were in place, too. As Tom Barger, one of the iconic figures of the early "discovery" years, would write in one of his

letters to his family, "Arabs were forbidden to attend" the film screenings (quoted in Vitalis 2007, 60).

Notwithstanding restricted access, during the interwar years, cinema became the primary means of entertainment in the oil company camps.[5] BAPCO and ARAMCO rented films (usually two per week) via the company's agents in Bombay from distributors in India, including Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer, Warner Bros., R.K.O., and Paramount ("File 16/32 VII Correspondence with the Bushire Residency," [25r] 49/380). The films were shown first in Awali, and later in Saudi Arabia's oil towns such as Dhahran, Ras Tanura, Dammam, and Abqaiq in the Eastern Province (Fig. 3). By 1945, BAPCO had to request priority air freight from the British Overseas Airways Corporation in order to transport 120 kilograms of film a week to India ("File 10/17 (10/26) Priority air freight for BAPCO cinema films," [2r] 3/16). Although as a government official Belgrave was painstakingly particular about rules and regulations, he himself was a very regular movie-goer. His diary entries between 1935 and 1947 refer to more than 80 titles of American (and some British) films he saw there. The oil company cinemas received a wide variety of films in the popular genres of the period such as biopics, musicals, dramas, cartoons, and in a steadily increasing number, war films.

BAPCO and other oil companies in the Gulf nevertheless kept their strict measures to ban labourers (local and foreign alike) from the cinema well into the late 1950s. As social historians of oil in the Middle East have pointed out, despite the material welfare and prosperity that hydrocarbon modernity promised, the oil conurbations in the Gulf were structurally influenced by "colonialist, racist ideas about managing a multi-ethnic, overcrowded society" (Elling 2015). All early oil settlements were built on the same model of segregation, "of dual character, partly planned by [the oil company] and partly wild-grown formations that were shaped by a steady influx of job seekers . . . and their families" (Ghrawi, 2015, 243). The degree of segregation in the oil settlements strongly echoed Frantz Fanon's portrayal of the colonial city as strictly compartmentalised in its ordering and geographical layout, enforced by "the principle of exclusivity" (Fanon 1968, 37). This was particularly the case for ARAMCO, which followed a strictly enforced regime of segregation between "the American camp" and "the Saudi Camp":

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5 The Anglo-Persian Oil Company (AIOC) in Iran was the first company to establish a cinema for its employees in 1926. Before the movie theatre, in 1912, AIOC brought the first portable projector to Abadan for the exclusive entertainment of the British employees. In the 1940s, the Company would lead the establishment of fully-equipped cinema complexes such as Taj (Crown) and Naft (Oil) Cinemas in Abadan (Elling 2015).

Americans and Saudis lived in two worlds apart. The fenced American camps provided a living standard similar to that of middle class suburbs in the United States, including lush greenery and ample recreational areas. Saudi workers were housed in tents or concrete dormitories in separate areas that were bare of vegetation and thus directly exposed to heat and dust. Company services such as transportation, hospitals, cafeterias and water fountains were provided separately for Americans and Saudis and differed considerably in quality. (Ghrawi 2014, 19–20)

Fig. 3: ARAMCO company cinema in Dhahran, circa 1951.

Formal classification of the employees in professional ranks – senior, intermediate, and general – overlapped almost entirely with divisions across national, ethnic, and racial lines. American expatriates occupied the top of the hierarchy, various "semi-skilled" migrant labourers (primarily Indians, Pakistanis, and Italians from Eritrea) the intermediate level, and local Saudi workers the lowest ranking. The three staff levels, marked by coloured badges, lived in separate camps with different standards of amenities. By 1953, in the oil towns of the Eastern Province, Saudi workers exceeded 13,500; whereas, the number of Saudi employees at the senior staff level numbered less than a dozen (Ghrawi 2015, 245).

In ARAMCO'S recreated Jim Crow world, not only was work life organised according to "norms of separate and unequal rights and privileges" but also

there was a structural resistance to cross-cultural interaction and socialisation (Vitalis 2004, 154; 163). In so far as it was a privilege granted exclusively to the American senior staff, cinema appeared as one of the strongest markers of the segregation regime of the oil camps. ARAMCO's local employees were not permitted into the movie theatre even as the job-nationality hierarchy began to change slightly with rise of a limited number of non-American staff members to the senior level even in the late 1950s. Abdullah al-Tariki, who was among the first few Saudi nationals to reside in the American camp (and later to become Saudi Arabia's first oil minister and co-founder of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) would recall that ARAMCO's movie theatre displayed an explicit "for Americans only" sign, and that he was questioned each time he wanted to enter the theatre (Danforth 2016, 44; 49).

It was no wonder that during the labour strikes of the 1950s against ARAMCO, access to the cinema became a key site of contesting the types of privileges that only Western staff members could enjoy. As discontent over work and living conditions grew, in 1953, a Saudi staff member, Abd al-Aziz Abu Sunayd (Director of the Permits and Contracts Division of ARAMCO's Labour Department in Dammam), wrote a letter of protest to ARAMCO's president. In his letter, Abu Sunayd objected to having been denied entry to the Senior Staff movie theatre in Dhahran to see Charlie Chaplin's *Limelight* (1952). He censured ARAMCO for implementing a Jim Crow system in his native country, recalling how he had also been banned from entering a movie theatre when he was training in the United States, due to the colour line then in place (Vitalis 2007, 153). Three years later, in 1956, as ARAMCO workers held another general strike for better working and living conditions, and union rights, they stormed the cinema in ARAMCO's Intermediate Camp – which housed middle level foreign employees – in Ras Tanura (Vitalis 2007, 159). The movie theatre, open to white attendees only, epitomised the deep-rooted segregation of the oil town. As tensions rose, the workers occupied the movie theatre as a symbolic claim to a range of amenities that they demanded from the company. Storming the cinema was an act of transgressing the system of segregation and the racial colour line, which circulated globally, reproducing itself at each new site of extraction in the US, Mexico, Iran, the Dutch Indies, and the Gulf. In Stephanie LeMenager's words, "the growth of U.S. oil interests into Bahrain and Saudi Arabia followed closely on Mexican oil development of the 1920s, and racial lessons learned in Mexico carried into the Middle East" (94). Yet the oil company responded harshly to the strike, fearing in particular that it could spread to other oil conurbations. The workers were severely beaten, leaders were jailed, and unions were banned (Matthiesen 2014).

4 The Public Cinema in the Colonial Circuit

Rewinding back to 1935: In his final letter to the BAPCO Club Manager, Belgrave stressed that the company had been granted an exclusive privilege denied to "various persons asking permission to open cinema" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [7r] 13/200). He was not exaggerating. Until 1937, he and the British political agent did reject all requests to establish a commercial public cinema for local citizens and foreign immigrant workers. During this time period, the British officials received four petitions from South Asian entrepreneurs outside Bahrain: from Abadan, Bangalore, Bombay, and Karachi. All the petitioners were essentially trying to convince (often in an excessively reverential tone) the British officials with a more positive and inclusive discourse on cinema, modernity, and mass culture, dwelling on three main points: (1) A public cinema would enhance the rising image of Bahrain as a modern country in the Gulf; (2) Cinema would meet the popular demand for leisure, created by the increasing urbanisation, prosperity, and mobility that was taking place in Bahrain; (3) Cinema would enable labourers to break away from the alienating monotony of industrial work.

Just two months after BAPCO's cinema was approved, on June 3, 1935, two entrepreneurs named Mohammed Faqir and Daulatram Rochiran applied for a licence to establish a public cinema in Manama. In their letter, they made their case in the idioms of *laissez-faire* liberalism. But despite their experience and commercial success in Iran's oil cities (Khorramshahr – then Muhemmarah –, Ahwaz, and Abadan) as owners of the Koh-i Nur Cinemas, they wrote, trade restrictions towards foreign merchants in Iran were becoming unbearable: "We hardly feel safe to invest large sums of money in Business in Iran nowadays" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [9r] 17/200). A public cinema in Manama, they claimed, would not only enhance the rising image of Bahrain as "the most progressive" country in the Gulf but also provide a leisure outlet for the increasing "influx of large numbers of foreigners who are migrating to Manamah day in and day out" (Ibid.). Cinema, in other words, would demonstrate Bahrain's modernity as well as its openness toward foreign labour. Two days after the petition, Rochiran travelled from Abadan to Bahrain to make their case in person. But Political Agent Loch told him firmly in a brief interview that "there was not a hope" and directed him to Adviser Belgrave. Belgrave noted in his diary on June 6, 1935 that the application was categorically rejected: "A M[erchant?] from Abadan came & asked if he could open a cinema here – I said no" (Belgrave 1993, 1099).

Roughly one year later, an Indian named M. A. Sam, who worked as a sound mechanic in "The Paramount Talkies" in Bangalore, wrote a letter to the Political Resident in Bushehr for a licence to establish a public cinema in Bahrain. Sam's

rationale was quite similar to Faqir and Rochiran's. "With large influx of foreigners and the general improvement on the Bahrain island," he wrote, "the presence of such amenities of life as a Talkie Theatre would, I have no doubt, be very welcome" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [28r] 55/200). Sam also emphasised the labour-leisure nexus: "After a day's hard work," he argued, "one requires some sort of amusement and diversion from the humdrum routine of life, in common with the rest of the world" (Ibid.). Hence, the general public as well as immigrant workers deserved access to films. He also referred to BAPCO's successful petition "to have a Talkie for their European and American personnel only" (Ibid.) Based on this precedent, M.A. Sam asked the British Political Resident in Bushehr "to extend the same privilege to the general public on the Island [to] fill a crying need" (Ibid.). Concluding his letter on a more pragmatic note, he indicated that he would be content with limiting admissions to foreign residents only.

The Political Resident in Bushehr forwarded the request to the Political Agent in Bahrain, who in turn passed it to Belgrave. Sam was told that the question of establishing a public cinema was under consideration, but no decision was made. Meanwhile, Coronel Loch contacted the Political Resident in Mysore to inquire about Sam, the financial situation of the firm he worked for and "whether the firm in question [was] reputable, in particular as regards the type of films that they show[ed]" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas, [32r] 63/200). Four months later, the residency in Mysore sent a report on Sam, which had been prepared by the Chief Secretary to the Government of the Maharaja of Mysore. The report confirmed that Sam belonged to a respectable family in Bangalore, that he owned two houses, and that he intended to "make his fortune by running a Talkie House of [h]is own investing the cash he has at present and supplementing the same by raising a loan" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [42r] 83/200). More importantly, it included a signed statement by Sam himself that if he were to be granted a licence to operate a cinema in Bahrain, he would "exhibit only English films [approved] by Bombay and Bengal Censor Boards" (Ibid.). But in the end, despite this "clear" background check, Sam failed to acquire a permit.

Meanwhile, the local "Arab," Hussein Yateem, and his business partners, came up with a new strategy for acquiring a licence to establish a commercial public cinema. They solicited the patronage of two nephews of the Shaikh of Bahrain – Ali bin Mohamed al-Khalifa and Ali bin Abdullah al-Khalifa. As members of the ruling family, these two had a natural advantage to pressure the British on Yateem's behalf. The petition once again began to circulate in the British administrative circuit when Shaikh Hamad forwarded his nephews' request to Charles Belgrave. Although Belgrave was still adamant that Bahrain was not "sufficiently advanced for a cinema" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [15r] 29/200), he also began to accept

that it was getting increasingly difficult to delay its arrival. He sent a memo to the political agency for input. The officiating agent – Tom Hickinbotham (who was supervising the office in Loch's absence) – passed it to the Persian Gulf Residency in Bushehr. Like Belgrave, Hickinbotham submitted that it would not be possible to officially prevent the establishment of a public cinema in Bahrain. But the government of Bahrain would have to agree to a Board of Censors that would be authorised to revoke the operation licence and/or fine the cinema management "in case a really undesirable film was shown" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [17r] 33/200). Despite these conditions, Hickinbotham reassured his supervisors that his experience "in other parts of Arabia" (Ibid.) had shown him that movies never caused trouble or complaint from a moral and religious point of view. Accordingly, he embraced public cinema as a sign of opening the Gulf to the outside world: "I . . . do not think that we can live out of the world forever here" (Ibid.).

In turn, Trenchard Craven William Fowle, the Political Resident in Bushehr, contacted O.K. Caroe, the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in Shimla, for guidance on the idea of starting a cinema in Bahrain, exclaiming half-sarcastically: "Such is progress in the Gulf!" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [18r] 35/200). Although in principle Fowle was against the idea, he also acknowledged that as it was increasingly difficult to "prevent a cinema being started," the only alternative was "to try and censor the films" (Ibid.). Once again, for the colonial administrators, the question of cinema was about maintaining control over the film experience of local spectatorship. Due to the absence of any established cinema guidelines in the Gulf, the Resident asked the Government of India's advice on censorship rules and movie house regulations. In response, in September 1936, the Foreign and Political Department sent two copies of the "Manual of the Bengal Board of Censors" to Bushehr.[6] The Manual included the 1918 Cinematograph Act, and more strikingly, a copy of the Report of the Indian Cinematograph Committee, 1927–1928. The ICC report gave detailed instructions for film inspectors in charge of making censorship decisions in India.

The most striking feature of the ICC report was the extent to which it was based on what we might call a reception theory of colonial difference. The report reminded inspectors that movies would have a different impact on "an average audience in India, which includes a not inconsiderable proportion of illiterate people or those of immature judgement" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [22r] 43/200). Crime films, for instance, could "normalise" certain illegal

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6 Following the Cinematograph Act of 1918, censor boards were set up in major provinces of India – Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Rangoon, and (later) Lahore. Each board was headed by the British commissioner of police and was composed of representatives from each local community (Chowdhry 2000,19).

conducts as recurring incidents of everyday life, and thus "undermine the teachings of morality" among the native populations by "casting a halo . . . round heads of the vicious" (Ibid.). Films that represented British or Indian officers "in an odious light, and otherwise attempt[ed] to suggest the disloyalty of Native States or bringing into disrepute British prestige in the Empire," that were "calculated . . . to foment social unrest and discontent," that depicted "the violence that results in an actual conflict between capital and labour," and that "promote[d] disaffection or resistance to Government" (Ibid.) were all subject to forms of censorship. In such cases, the inspectors were authorised to remove subtitles, modify the narrative, or cut out portions of the film. Moralistic concerns aside, censorship in the colonial context reflected deeper political anxieties. As Babli Sinha notes, "although it was felt that licentious films were undermining British rule, the censorship board did not ban them. Most of the films that were banned outright . . . had overtly political content that was thought to promote revolution" (Sinha 2009, 296–97).

Two copies of the manual reached the Political Resident's office in Bahrain on October, 14, 1936. In January 1937, the Shaikh's nephews approached Belgrave again for a cinema permit. Reluctantly accepting the inevitable, Belgrave obtained one of the copies and began drafting the contract for Bahrain's first public cinema. On April 12, 1937, he sent the contract to the Political Agent in Bahrain and then the Political Resident in Bushehr. The contract granted a non-transferrable five-year exclusive licence and mandated that the cinema begin operations within eleven months of the date of the letter, according to the regulations in India and any other regulations required by the Government of Bahrain. Again providing direction, the Government of Bombay dispatched copies of licence forms and electrical installation guidelines outlined in a booklet titled "Rules for places of Public Amusement in the city of Bombay 1914." Finally, on August 2, 1938, the British Commandant State Police of Bahrain (who was authorised with suspending or closing the cinema) met with the owners to inspect the films scheduled to be shown the following week. After more than a decade of deliberations, the first commercial public cinema in the Gulf, "Bahrain Cinema" (Fig. 4), opened in Manama with Umm Kulthum's 1936 debut film *Wedad* (Sarhan 2005, 15). A musical based on a story from *The One Thousand and One Nights*, *Wedad* was Studio Misr's first international success on its path to becoming the leading force in the Egyptian film industry under the directorship of German expatriate Fritz Kramp.

Bahrain Cinema remained the only public commercial cinema in the country throughout the interwar period. Only after World War II, another entrepreneur from India, S. M. G. Badshah (apparently encouraged by the physical dilapidation and permit expiration of the Bahrain Cinema) applied for a permit to open a new cinema.

Fig. 4: Bahrain Cinema, the first commercial public cinema in the Gulf.

His letter was the same in tone, content, and rationale as the earlier petitions of foreign entrepreneurs:

> The fact that Bahrein [*sic*] Islands are lacking in Public entertainments of any kind is keenly felt by the ever increasing local population and foreigners, like Indians etc., and this is a great hindrance for the social uplift if no recreational facilities are forthcoming in a country . . . . After a hard day's work, if a man never gets any sort of entertainments, thereby enabling him to refresh himself, his life will be nothing but a morose and melancholy one. The present only one Cinema Theatre of an antique type now running in Manama, instead of giving some entertainments to the public, has become a source of nuisance, for want of modern machinery equipment and sanitary conditions . . . . In view of the above mentioned circumstances, I would like to state that I am prepared for the construction of an up to date Cinema Theatre, with well furnished furniture, and equipped with the most modern up to date machinery . . . . [M]y aim is to exhibit Indian and Arabic Films and also some English Pictures at intervals, so that the public may derive the best benefits for the money they spend . . . . I need not mention that the exhibition of pictures has its own educational value also. ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [58r] 115/200)

What is striking in Badshah's text is the *strategic repurposing* of the discourses of cinema as a functional, harmless, and hygienic space of leisure fit for working-

class spectatorship. In the new post-World War II cultural climate, as a certain understanding of "useful cinema" (Wasson and Ackland 2011) was being steadily embraced by the colonial administrators and the oil companies, Badshah's application was quickly approved.

Yet Belgrave and the British administration continued to remain distant from local cinemas. But this time, they were not as much concerned with Hollywood films as they were with Indian and Arabic ones. The following passage from the memoirs of British journalist H.V. Mapp, who arrived in Bahrain in 1950 to work as an editor for BAPCO's magazine *Bahrain Islander*, illustrates strikingly that even after three decades, the early alarmist discourse on the bad influence of film was still in circulation (this time projected on Hindi films):

> Belgrave had no qualms about attending Awali's open air free cinema [at the BAPCO Club], making occasional visits to see Hollywood epics as a sophisticate without fear of corruption, but was distressed by films shown in Manama – probably Hindi productions with their emphasis on dramatic events such as suttee, where a widow perishes on her husband's funeral pyre. Films had a bad effect on a comparatively primitive people, in Bahrain causing deterioration in manners and morals, even to committing suicide pouring petrol over their clothes and setting them alight, he said. (Mapp 1994, 86)

Although I could not locate any record that confirms Belgrave's claim, his invocation of petroleum, film, and sati in the same breath is telling. Hindi films, in his view, encouraged bad customs such as sati and the use of oil for self-inflected violence. For those who work on the history of colonial discourse in South Asia, the reference to sati cannot be missed here. When the practice was abolished in 1829, the British colonial rulers in India had celebrated the act as a landmark moment in their moral civilising mission and reform. But as postcolonial critics have argued, the prohibition of the rite of sati was based on the imperial superior discourse of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1994, 93). In effect, Belgrave's dismissal of the films shown in Bahrain's cinemas was reiterating the same idea as "saving brown audiences from brown cinemas."

Moreover, although film scholars such as Brian Larkin and Babli Sinha rightfully argue that in the colonies Hollywood subverted the British Empire's media and communication order and generated an alternative infrastructure (Sinha 2013), the above anecdote shows that during the formative decades of cinema in the Gulf, the British colonial personnel would still prefer Hollywood to the emergent regional South Asian and Egyptian film industries. Thus, the late British reliance on Hollywood presents an important and overlooked dimension of the phenomenon of competing imperial infrastructures. In fact, during wartime and its aftermath, as the British administration in the Gulf (reflecting a pattern in other colonies and protectorates across the Empire) became more concerned about

maintaining the support of the local population, the Public Relations Office in Bahrain began to screen the predominantly Hollywood films that BAPCO rented from distributors in India in various local clubs, administrative buildings, schools, and private residences in Manama as part of its publicity efforts ("File 16/63 Cinema Programmes").

5 Conclusion

Yet the decades-long negative discourse and regulatory practices could not prevent the steady increase in the number of public cinemas across the Gulf. Cinema eventually became a permanent component of "the repository of new patterns of leisure" (Fuccaro 2013, 62) in hydrocarbon urban life. Both local and South Asian entrepreneurs established new cinemas, which screened a variety of Hollywood, Egyptian, and Indian films in a range of popular genres. By the 1950s, Bahrain already had a total of five cinemas: Al-Lu'lu, Al Hamra, Al Nasr, Al-Ahali, and Al Jazeera. In Kuwait, the Kuwait Cinema Company opened Al-Sharqiah in 1954, followed by Al-Hamra and Al-Firdous cinemas. The cinemas functioned as key public "spaces of diversity" not only for the screening of Arabic, English and Hindi films but also for holding large meetings organised by the emergent nationalist middle classes (Al-Nakib 2016, 48; 165). In the 1960s and early 1970s, cinema as an affordable popular medium of entertainment spread to other Gulf cities, including Dubai (Al-Nasr, Plaza, and Deria), Muscat (Al-Hamra and Rivoli), and Doha (Gulf and Doha). Meanwhile, as the rising nationalist movement in Bahrain demanded more say in the ruling of the country, Belgrave (once hailed as "Chief of the Gulf") became increasingly unpopular. In 1957, after 30 years of running the government of Bahrain single-handedly, it was time for him to depart.

Film scholars such as Lee Grieveson have shown that in the formative decades of North American and European cinema, the discourses and regulatory practices of cultural and political elites focused on containing the film medium as "harmless and culturally affirmative entertainment," that catered to "the common interest" (Grieveson 2004, 33–34). The colonial history of the regulation of cinema shows how these early structures were carried over to other contexts of governance. In the oil colonies of the Gulf, the primary concern across the different kinds of moving-image practices and spheres that were covered in this chapter centred on *who* was entitled to cinema in *what* type of space. The core political issue of the emergence of a cinema culture in the Gulf was the restriction of cinematic medium and space to certain populations. As such, "policing cinema" was linked to the question of managing the social forces of hydrocarbon

modernity that the discovery of oil unleashed. In short, the arrival of cinema in the Gulf took place in an exclusionary and uneven world, entangled with circulations of colonial practices, regimes of segregation, expansionist oil capital, international labour, and of course, film cans. Equally important, the petrocolonial structures of space and agency along the spheres of private, corporate, and public spheres and actors have left a long-lasting impact that continues to structure the cultural field in the Gulf.

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SCALE

SYSTEMIC APPROACH, WHERE IS IT USEFUL? OR NOT?

THE NOVEL IS PHILOSOPHICAL GROUND
INCREASED CAPACITY OF COMPASSION

HUMANIST EXCEPTIONALISM
IDEA OF INFINITE PROGRESSION

19th CENTURY EXCEPTIONAL HUMAN

I AM NO MACHINE I AM A DARWIN!

GRADUALISM
DARWIN... GEOLOGY

HUMAN AGENCY BUT NOT EXCEPTIONALITY
CATASTROPHISM

ANTHROPOCENE
A NEO CATASTROPHISM

THE REALIST NOVEL ADDRESS

NON HUMAN PLANETARY FUTURES

HOW CAN THE REALIST NOVEL?

VAST FINITUDES

THE SCALE of REALISM
IN THE GLOBAL NOVEL

A JOURNAL of the PLAGUE YEAR
THE END of OCTOBER

EMULATES REPORTING
DRAWS FROM NON FICTION

FORMAL REALISM on a SPECULATIVE ROLL

1800's 1900's THE MEDIUM WAS PRINT...

THE WEIGHT of the MACRO

DATA becomes DOCUMENTARY
NEWSROOM becomes REALITY

GLOBAL WARMING
SUBTORIC... "THE BIGGEST" "HOTTEST" "MOST SPECTACULAR"
TIME MENTALITY THAT CAUSE?

MODELLING SIMULATIONS & NOVELS
ADD WORLDS TO THE WORLD

IN THIS TECHNOPLANETARY ERA WE NEED THE REALIST NOVEL

VANTAGE POINTS   MULTI LINGUAL
PLURALITY   KEYWORDS   SPACE
LOCATION   ORIENTATION

REORIENTATION & SHIFTING SCALES

EXPANSIVE GEOGRAPHY

REAL & IMAGINED

SIGNIFICANT GEOGRAPHIES
LOCATION & AGENCY IN WORLD LITERATURE

LOCATED MICROHISTORY MAGAZINES

ARABIC & SPANISH

TRANSLATION IN BOTH DIRECTIONS

THE COMPASS EXPERIMENT

EMOTIONAL NARRATIVE CREATES REALITY OF SPACE

THE GLOBAL IS NOT A DISTINCT SCALE...

MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

THE SHADOW LINES

SEGOU

GRAPHIC RECORDING by @ BLANCHE ILLUSTRATES

Part II: **Scale**

Francesca Orsini

Significant Geographies: Scale, Location, and Agency in World Literature

1 Significant Geographies, Space, and Location

> World literature invariably invokes the question of totality.
>
> Ben Etherington

World literary studies, Ben Etherington (2018, 56) notes, have turned decisively away from the critical humanism of Eric Auerbach or Edward Said, who took the literary work as the point of entry and of departure (*Ansatzpunkt*) for explorations into world literature. Instead, they have embraced social science models which posit the empirical existence of world literature – whether as a capitalist world system (WREC 2015) or as a world literary field (Casanova 2004 [1999]) – with a universally recognized currency of value.[1] In the process, the world of the global capitalist system simply becomes the world of world literature, with global consecration measured in the number of translations or major literary prizes.[2] The world itself is posited as an empirical reality rather than as something that looks very different depending on one's location and perspective. "World literature invariably invokes the question of totality," Etherington writes, and it raises expectations of plenitude, connectivity, broad recognition, and wide reach (2018, 62). Yet the postulate at the basis of the South-South comparative literature project that I have just concluded, called "Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies" (MULOSIGE), has been that neither the world nor world literature can in fact ever be a totality but are always, inevitably, partial. There is no single world or world literature, we have argued, but many criss-crossing significant geographies, i.e. geographies, stories, and references that recur and that matter to texts and people (as in "significant others") in specific locations, whether these locations be concrete places or intellectual, ideological, and aesthetic orientations (Orsini and Zecchini 2019). Even when we call these significant geographies "world," they always include and exclude: they make visible some connections and some parts, texts or traditions of the world while actively invisibilizing others (Laachir, Marzagora and Orsini 2018b).

Consciously anti-systemic, our project aimed for neither completeness nor closure. Rather, our attempt was to open new ways, archives, and methods of "doing

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1 For a "literary standard that is universally recognized," see Casanova (2004, 17).
2 Etherington (2018, 57). See James (2005) and Sapiro (2009).

world literature" from our located and multilingual perspectives.[3] In the process, several keywords have emerged, many to do with space and location, like significant geographies and multilingual locals. Taking the cue from geographer Doreen Massey (2005) and historian Sebastian Conrad (2016), we consider space a dynamic and pluralising concept. For Massey (2005, 5) space is, at whatever scale, "the product of interrelations": it is "constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny". It is "the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; [. . .] the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist". "If space is genuinely the sphere of multiplicity, if it is a realm of multiple trajectories," she continues, "then there will be multiplicities too of imaginations, theorisations, understandings, meanings. Any 'simultaneity' of stories-so-far will be a distinct simultaneity from a particular vantage point". Massey's plural understanding of space (as stories and trajectories) and her insistence on particular vantage points (locations) lie at the basis of our understanding of world literature. They underwrite our understanding of multilingual locals as local but heterogeneous literary spaces whose actors often move in different circles that may or may not overlap (Laachir, Marzagora, and Orsini 2018a). And they underwrite our notion of significant geographies, which immediately raises the question – significant *for whom*? Significant geographies urges us to consider which geographies, circuits, and references recur and/or matter for specific authors, texts, groups, or traditions. As a result, questions of location and agency interest us more than the questions of hierarchy, connectivity, and consecration foregrounded in systemic approaches.[4] Significant geographies (always in the plural) implies that geographies and circuits will always be many, that the larger ones will not necessarily be the most important or meaningful, and that there will be some geographies and circuits that are not, or no longer, significant.[5] "Recur" acknowledges the persistence of specific positions and imaginaries, while "and/or matter" stresses the imaginary possibilities of reinvention and reorientation that literary texts offer. Finally, if recent world literary and global history studies have tended to focus on dynamics of integration, the plurality of locations

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[3] The project aimed at rethinking world literature "from the ground up" and from the located and multilingual perspectives of northern India, the Maghrib, and the Horn of Africa. This immediately invalidated the premise of Eurocentric comparative literature that equates language with nation, thereby conceiving of comparative literature as traffic between languages and literatures through border-crossing translations; see http://mulosige.soas.ac.uk.

[4] For the question of individual agency in the visibilisation, circulation and translation of literary texts across borders, see Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts (2018).

[5] This chimes with Beecroft's observation that the nodes of transnational *literary* circulation are often not the largest global publishers but small publishers who specialise in translations.

and significant geographies draws attention to lines of connection but also of disconnection, and to processes of invisibilisation as well as visibilisation. The result, we think, is a more "modest, honest, and accurate" account of world literature, which an "increasingly integrated world demands" (Lewis and Wigen 1997, 10).

This essay asks how the concept of significant geographies may help us revisit the question of scale within world literature "from the ground up". How do texts, authors, and literary institutions imagine and make the world visible in ways that are always partial and located? What do they include and connect, but also exclude and invisibilize? How do texts shift scale so as to represent their significant geographies and connect multiple scales of place and time? In order to answer such questions, the essay itself shifts scales while thinking through examples drawn from our research project. It starts with a novel that reflects on the imaginative and cognitive process through which geographies become significant and one finds one's place in the world. It next moves to narrative scale to reflect on how narratives shift scale and connect specific significant geographies, for instance by interlacing several simultaneous stories in one larger narrative through plot (*entrelacement*).[6] It then considers scale in relation to an author's location, understood as intellectual orientation, and shows how shifts in their political position also shift their orientation to the world, thereby making different geographies significant. Finally, the essay considers two examples of literary magazines that show how their remarkable literary activism produce new and expansive visions of world literature that nonetheless foreground location and some significant geographies. As such, these magazines produce their own visions of the world and of world literature rather than simply plugging into an already existing global network.

2 Scale in World Literature

Scale was first raised in relation to world literature as an epistemic problem – "The question is not really *what* we should do, the question is *how*," Franco Moretti (2000, 54–55) suggested, before offering two simple "laws" that together explained the evolution of world literature (Moretti 2006). "*How* can we know something so big?," echoes Etherington (2018, 52). The first serious reflection on scale was by Nirvana Tanoukhi (2010), who urged literary scholars and comparatists to ponder

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6 Beecroft (2015, 286) uses *entrelacement* to describe contemporary novels that employ the "plot of globalisation". These, he notes, are not necessarily bland or devoid of a thick sense of and commitment to local spaces; rather, they tell "global stories, each with a localised focus but larger implications".

on the different meanings geographers attribute to the term: cartographic scale refers to the level of a map's abstraction; methodological scale is determined by the research problem and available data; and geographic scale refers to the dimension of a particular physical or human landscape. Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel* (1997), for example, matches narrative and cartographic scale to locate, but also to gauge the horizons of nineteenth-century realist novels; his *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (2005) reflects on scale in terms of analysis and critical method. When thinking about distances and large scales, Tanoukhi (2010, 85) adds, comparative literature must "develop both a critique of *scale* [. . .] and, eventually, a phenomenology of scale which would help us grasp the actually existing landscapes of literature". This phenomenological and critical project was brilliantly undertaken by Alexander Beecroft in *Ecologies of World Literature* (2015). His treatment of the largest, global scale combines an empirical discussion of the finite and shrinking number of world literary languages (in the light of "minimum viable" population theory, 243) and of the asymmetry between numbers of speakers and translation flows within the "emergent global literary ecology," with some points about global scale within texts, or what he calls "the plot of globalisation".[7] Finally, Harsha Ram (2016) has intervened on the question of scale in world literature by suggesting that a single scale is insufficient to account for local manifestations of global phenomena. For example, the earlier emergence of Georgian poetic modernism in Tbilisi compared to Russian modernism in Moscow and St. Petersburg/Leningrad can only be explained, he argues, by combining a global scale, which focuses on transnational circulation and on vertical flows between local epiphenomena and global phenomena, and a local scale, which frames Georgian modernism horizontally in the context of other regional linguistic and cultural traditions within the Caucasus.

On the whole, though, the question of scale in relation to world literature has largely been considered in terms of transnational circulation and consecration (Sievers and Levitt 2020). This is understandable, but it does reduce the scope of world literature to those few authors and works that manage to obtain such consecration (while at the same time excluding the most widely circulated texts from the purview of literature). In the field of history, for example, are there appropriate units, sites, locations for global history, is the global a "distinct sphere"?, Sebastian Conrad asks (2006, 133). No, is his definite answer, which

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7 In keeping with the speculative-predictive tone of this chapter (rather than descriptive, since the object is an elusive one), Beecroft (2015, 279) ends by suggesting two possible landscapes: one dominated by some kind of homogenization (as predicted by Erich Auerbach and more recently lamented by Tim Parks and Vittorio Coletti), or a landscape of "greater connection without greater homogenization". For world novels that resist the violence of globalisation, see Ganguly (2016).

will come as a surprise to world literature scholars: "no unit is by definition better suited to study global processes than another," and "different units direct our attention to different processes" (133). "The global is not a distinct sphere, exterior to the national/local cases: it is rather a scale that can be referenced even when we look at individual lives and small spaces" (140).[8] Even microhistories can be global history, since "micro-perspectives are able to reveal the heterogeneity of the past and the stubbornness of historical actors" (131).[9] In fact, Conrad continues, the most innovative studies have *not* been total histories but have sought to locate their objects of study in historical spaces alternative to the nation. Some have constructed large transnational regions like oceans (Armitage, Bashford, and Sivasundaram (2017); this is also true of literary studies to an extent, see e.g. Hofmeyr 2007; Ganguly 2021). Other studies have used the paradigm of "following," typically a commodity or a question, to connect people, ideas, and processes and link often distant and disparate locations in the process. As Conrad notes, such studies "are able to capture the regularities of large transborder processes, while remaining attentive to the local levels" (2006, 123).[10] The collective volumes on global modernism, or those that map poetic genres like the ghazal and the qasida that cross many languages over a very long period of time, come closest to this paradigm.[11] For Conrad, in fact, "the most fascinating questions are often those at the intersection between global processes and their local manifestations" (129), though in fact the scales can be multiplied.[12] And since "the forces that make each space cannot be found entirely within the unit itself," and "different scales of inquiry are mutually constitutive" (137) in the historical process, he advocates that one shifts scales, as Harsha Ram shows in the context of Georgian and Russian modernisms.[13] In this essay I shift the scale not in order

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8 Conrad's book includes a chapter on "Global History for Whom?," which points out that while global history is particularly popular in the US, NW Europe, East Asia, historians outside the Anglosphere actively avoid using "global" (218) and are quite suspicious of its totalizing ambitions. He also notes, usefully for us, that global literature "has to move beyond the fetishization of mobility" (225).

9 On microhistory, see also Ginzburg (1993).

10 This is what our book on local print cultures in the Cold War context also shows: Orsini, Srivastava, and Zecchini (2022).

11 Eatough (2010). The qasida is a poetic panegyric, the ghazal is a poem comprised of couplets all ending in a shared refrain, with the exception of the first (Sperl and Shackle 1996; Bauer, Neuwirth et al. 2006). Ram (2021) "follows" the genre of the physiology in Paris, St. Petersburg and Tiflis.

12 Thornber (2009) "scale ups" literary history on a regional level in her study of the East Asian literary nebula.

13 The point was already made by Revel (1996).

to shed light on a single historical process or literary work or phenomenon, but as different scales of analysis. Together, they show how location as orientation and space as the "multiplicity of stories and trajectories" produce multiple and (to a point) disjointed significant geographies rather than a single, "combined and un-equal," world literature. But first, how do places become significant?

3 How do Places Become Significant?

For the narrator and protagonist of Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* (1989), who grows up in middle class, postcolonial Calcutta obsessed with the Tresawsen-Price family in far-away London, family friends for three genera-tions, and who is ostensibly provincial compared to his well-travelled and well-read cosmopolitan cousins, places acquire reality and meaning only after they are narrated by others and imagined by him, often several times, even before they are experienced directly:[14]

> Tridib [his elder cousin] had given me worlds to travel in and had given me eyes to see them; [Ila, another cousin], who had been travelling around the world since she was a child, could never understand what those hours in Tridib's room had meant for me, a boy who had never been more than a few hundred miles from Calcutta. I used to listen to her talking [. . .] about the cafés in the Plaza Mayor in Madrid, or the crispness of the air in Cuzco, and I could see that those names, which were to me a set of magical talismans because Tridib had pointed them out to me on his tattered old Bartholomew's Atlas, had for her a familiarity no less dull than the lake had for me and my friends. (Ghosh 1989, 26)

Familiarity dulls the mind, while curious ignorance excites it and transforms distant toponyms into "magical talismans". Whether Tridib is or isn't a reliable narrator, as a passage just before this quote suggests, is in fact of no conse-quence. What matters is that he can conjure places and the histories and stories that are connected to them, making them alive and meaningful to the listener. At a more general level, this and Ghosh's subsequent novels make the case that *any* process of learning and discovery – of the world, and of the self in the world – requires an investment of the imagination beyond the familiar; it in-volves reckoning with one's position and realising that distance and closeness are relative and subjective. It also means remembering forgotten histories, actively looking for resonances and connections, and – particularly in his climate novels – (re)orienting one's entire life.[15] As such, *The Shadow Lines* lays out what we may

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14 This section draws on Orsini (2021).

15 Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and *Gun Island* (2019).

call Ghosh's poetics of space, and provides a wonderful example of how geographies become significant.

Space, time, and self in the novel are always mirrored, reflected or refracted through others. To the other characters, and to Ila in particular, the narrator's ability to recognize places in London he has heard about only through Tridib's stories though he has never been there appears pathetic and reflects the typical tendency of a provincial subject to live life vicariously. In other words, it is a product of his location. (By contrast, cosmopolitan Ila, who "had been travelling around the world since she was a child" (Ghosh 1989, 26) lives intensely in the present). We can read his stance as a subjective characteristic or as a narrative strategy. But we can also view it as an epistemological argument about the process by which any space, event, or person becomes significant, and hence real and close, through stories and emotional investment:

> I could not persuade her that *a place does not merely exist, that it has to be invented in one's imagination*; that her practical, bustling London was no less invented than mine, neither more or less true, only very far apart. (Ghosh 1989, 27, emphasis added)

Yet while the imagination invents places and makes them real, it is nurtured – in this novel and one could say in Ghosh's whole *oeuvre* – by prolonged research and attentive observation. "The sights Tridib saw in his imagination," the narrator recalls, "were infinitely more detailed, more precise than anything I would ever see" (35). In this sense, imagining is not phantasising but rather, literally, archaeology, an excavation of historical layers to recover buried knowledge, as Foucault would put it.[16]

Resonance is the other element at work in the equation. Events and places become significant and impose themselves upon the imagination not directly or through a single encounter, but rather refracted through other events – "looking glass events" (Ghosh 1989, 225). This is as true for public as for private events. The riot that kills Tridib in 1964 in Dhaka (when it is still part of East Pakistan) gets finally narrated, years later and at the end of the novel, first through a dream by Tridib's younger brother Robi and then by May Price (Ghosh 1989, 244, 250). It resonates powerfully with the narrator's own childhood memory of another riot in Calcutta at the same time, though it takes him fifteen years to realise that the two events were in fact not just coeval but connected, linked to the unrest following the theft of the sacred relic of Prophet Muhammad's hair from a

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16 "I tried telling Ila and Robi about the archaeological Tridib, the Tridib who was much more contemptuous of fairylands than she would ever be; the Tridib who pushed me to imagine the roofs of Colombo for myself, the Tridib who said that *we could not see without inventing what we saw, so at least we could try and do it properly*" (Ghosh 1989, 37, emphasis added).

shrine in Kashmir. In what is for him a startling insight, he discovers that the terrible Dhaka riot which wrecked his entire family barely registered with his friends in Delhi:

> Suddenly, for no reason that I can remember, I said: What about the riots [. . .]?
>
> Which riots? said Malik. There are so many.
>
> Those riots, I said. I had to count the years out on my fingers. The riots of 1964, I said.
>
> Their faces went slowly blank, and they turned to look at each other.
>
> What were the riots of 1964? Malik said with a puzzled frown. I could tell that he really had no idea what I was talking about.
>
> I turned to the others and cried: Don't you remember?
>
> They looked away in embarrassment, shaking their heads. It struck me then that they were all Delhi people; that I was the only person there who had grown up in Calcutta.
>
> Surely you remember, I said. There were terrible riots in Calcutta in 1964.
>
> I see, said Malik. What happened?
>
> I opened my mouth to answer and found I had nothing to say. All I could have told them about was of the sound of voices running past the walls of my school, and of a glimpse of a mob in Park Circus. The silent terror that surrounded my memory of those events, and my belief in their importance, seemed laughably out of proportion to those trivial recollections.
>
> There was a riot, I said helplessly.
>
> There are riots all the time, Malik said.
>
> This was a terrible riot, I said.
>
> All riots are terrible, Malik said. *But it must have been a local thing. Terrible or not, it's hardly comparable to a war.* (Ghosh 1989, 221–222, emphasis added)

This exchange prompts a meditation on the different scales of history: History with a capital "H," the history of wars and political events that everyone remembers, against local events that are remembered only by the individuals involved. All the friends remember the border war with China in 1962, whereas riots in Kashmir, Calcutta, Khulna, and Dhaka in East Pakistan are local events not "comparable to a war" even when they reverberate across national borders. "Khulna [in East Pakistan] is not quite one hundred miles from Calcutta as the crow flies: the two cities face each other at a watchful equidistance across the border" (Ghosh 1989, 242), and yet in the old Calcutta paper that the narrator consults in the archive "there was not the slightest reference to it to any trouble in East Pakistan, and the barest mention to events in Kashmir. It was, after all, a Calcutta paper, run by people who believed in the power of distance no less than I did" (228). Even in the case of public events, he discovers, emotional and imaginative investment are necessary for them to register and become significant. The shock of the missing hair of the Prophet in Srinagar reverberated immediately among Muslims in Karachi and Dhaka, and its recovery prompted riots in Khulna,

Dhaka and Calcutta irrespective of the real distance and of borders ("a land out-side space, an expanse without distances; a land of looking-glass events," Ghosh 1989, 225). Ideological and affective investments acknowledge the reality of national borders, but also transgress them; and imaginative investment in significant geographies works not just for individuals but also for groups or communities, who experience places as relatively close when they are significant to them, however geographically distant they may be.

This realisation prompts the narrator to undertake an experiment with a compass that pits objective, cartographic distance against an orientation to the world honed by *habitus*. That Muslims in Khulna should react to an event in Srinagar does not strike him as strange since "the space between the points of my compass was 1200 miles, nearly 2000 kilometres. It didn't seem like much". But it is the same distance "as Tokyo is from Beijing, or Moscow from Venice, or Washington from Havana, or Cairo from Naples" (Ghosh 1989, 232) – cities that in his mind are not only very far but belong to completely different worlds. He then draws a circle "with Khulna at the centre and Srinagar on the circumference. I discovered immediately that the map of South Asia would not be big enough. I had to turn back to a map of Asia before I found one large enough for my circle". "It was an amazing circle," which begins in Srinagar, takes in half of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Indian Ocean up to Sumatra, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, half of China and Inner Asia – "more than half of mankind must have fallen within it" (232). Yet this map has little to do with world geography as actually experienced:

> Chiang Mai in Thailand was much nearer Calcutta than Delhi is; [. . .] Chengdu in China is nearer than Srinagar is. Yet *I had never heard of those places until I drew my circle*, and *I cannot remember a time when I was so young that I had not heard* of Delhi or Srinagar. It showed me that Hanoi and Chungking are nearer Khulna than Srinagar, and yet *did the people of Khulna care at all* about the fate of the mosques in Vietnam and South China (a mere stone's throw away)? I doubted it. But in this other direction, it took no more than a week . . . (Ghosh 1989, 232–233, emphases added)

This realisation leads to a further experiment, which confirms the contrast between significant geographies – geographies that matter – and the cartographic world of "states, and no people at all":

> In perplexity I turned back through the pages of the atlas at random, shut my eyes, and let the point of my compass fall on the page. It fell on Milan, in northern Italy. Adjusting my compass to the right scale I drew a circle which had Milan as its centre and 1200 miles as its radius. (Ghosh 1989, 233)

This is "another amazing circle" that cuts through Helsinki, Sundsvall in Sweden, Mold in Norway, takes in a large chunk of the Atlantic Ocean till Casablanca

in Morocco, the countries of the Maghreb, the Mediterranean, Crete and Turkey, the Black Sea, the then USSR till Crimea, Ukraine and Estonia, and back to Helsinki. "Puzzling over this circle," he tries an experiment about scale:

> With my limited knowledge, I tried to imagine an event, any event, that might occur in a city near the periphery of that circle (or, indeed, much nearer) – Stockholm, Dublin, Casablanca, Alexandria, Istanbul, Kiev, any city in any direction at all – I tried to imagine an event that might happen in any of those places which would bring the people of Milan pouring out into the streets. I tried hard but I could think of none.
>
> None, that is, other than war.
>
> It seemed to me, then, that within this circle there were only states and citizens; there were no people at all. (Ghosh 1989, 234)

We may read this passage in several different ways: as another critique of History with a capital "H" and the arbitrariness of nationalism and national borders that dictate that we should feel belonging towards a particular territory and not care at all about what befalls others. Or we may read it as a reflection on how things are: Chiang Mai *may be* nearer to Calcutta than Delhi is, or Chengdu nearer than Srinagar, but it does not *feel* that way, and that is, according to the narrator, a "more real" level of reality than the map. Or we can read this experiment as a call to reorient and scale-up our spatial attachments so that they incorporate more and different places – people in Milan should care as much about Casablanca, Alexandria and Kiev as they do about Rome, Paris or London. Either way, the passage once again shows how it is emotional and narrative investment that makes places real and significant, and it does so always for particular, located subjects. It is a very different – located, oriented, subjective, creative – understanding of the map and the atlas from the objective understanding of the globe and of cartography that support systemic models of world literature.

Every space in *The Shadow Lines* – whether in Calcutta or in London – is "the product of interrelations" (Massey 2005), and every story is pieced together by multiple narrators across several interactions. And although the postcolonial axes of Calcutta-London and Calcutta-Dhaka loom largest, and index the two inter-related histories of colonial entanglement and of the "long partition" of Bengal, there are other geographies that briefly surface and hint at other histories and entanglements, some of which Ghosh would take up in later novels. There is Lionel Tresawsen's imperial career as an overseer in Malaysia, Fiji, Bolivia, the Guinea Coast, and Ceylon (Ghosh 1989, 56), mirrored in a minor way by the narrator's grandfather career as a civil engineer in Burma (137). Then there is the diplomatic geography of decolonization with the (mostly) Non-Aligned postings of Tridib's diplomat father: Colombo, Algiers, Indonesia, Addis Ababa, Conakry, and Dhaka (150); and the geography of World Bank economic interventions of Ila's economist father (Dar as Salaam, 157). These significant geographies

speak to the geopolitical and economic alignments of post-independence India and its leading role in the Non-Aligned movement and decolonisation, which is also a history of economic ties and new opportunities, signalled by the brief but telling anecdote of the narrator's father's trip to Conakry due to his "rather sudden professional success" (46). In his other novels Ghosh would go on to unearth the involvement of Bengalis in imperial trade and imperial wars (Burma in *The Glass Palace*; China and the plantation colony Mauritius in the *Ibis Trilogy*), as well as the transnational history and geography of the Ganges Delta (*The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island*), to great effect and acclaim. But already in *The Shadow Lines* he shows us that the world is not one map with centres and peripheries but is crisscrossed by multiple trajectories and significant geographies. In the novel, the world is neither just the postcolonial metropolis nor the bland cosmopolitanism of non-places (the international schools and airport lounges associated with young Ila) or of the narrator's atlas daydreams. It is unearthed, imagined, produced, evoked, and narrated by located subjects through recursive acts that make geographies significant as they unmask and unmake established cartographies and query the relative weight of memories and events.

4 Plotting Scale

Significant geographies are places that recur and/or that matter to texts and authors, and plotting and characters are usually the way by which texts draw and connect them. This is Franco Moretti's "geography of plot": drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's fundamental distinction between the epic and the novel, in his *Atlas of the European Novel* Moretti argues that "*what* happens depends a lot on *where* it happens" (1998, 70). By contrast, Bakhtin had argued, in Greek romances spaces are interchangeable, and "what happens in Babylon could just as well happen in Egypt or Byzantium and viceversa" (Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," cited in Moretti 1998, 70). But distant or famous toponyms in epics, romances, and story cycles still create significant geographies, whether it is the Holy Land of the Italian and Yiddish *romanzo cavalleresco,* or the mixture of real and fantastic toponyms in the *Arabian Nights* (Baumgarten 2005, 183–192; Mazolph and Leeuwen 2004, 567–570).

In Moretti's *Atlas* scale works in the "geography of plot" in relation to genre (Hellenistic novels, pastoral novels, gothic tales, colonial romances, the picaresque, the *Bildungsroman*), to specific authors (Jane Austen, Walter Scott), and to the different literary and political fields: "Where the symbolic role of the national capital is strongest (as in France), travels abroad have a peripheral function

([Stendhal's]*The Red and the Black* [*Le rouge et le noir,* 1830], [Gustave Flaubert's] *Sentimental Education* [*L'Education sentimentale,* 1869]), or are completely absent ([Honoré de Balzac's] *Lost Illusions* [*Illusions perdues,* 1837]). By contrast, foreign journeys play a major role in [Fernando Gómez de Bedoya's] *The School of the Great World* [*La escuela del gran mundo*, 1849], [Ippolito Nievo's] *Confessions of an Italian* [*Confessioni di un italiano*, 1867], and especially [George Eliot's] *Middlemarch* [1871], where the encounter with Europe transforms in depth the three central characters, making them impatient with the narrowness of provincial life" (1998, 67).[17]

Critics have posited the emergence of the global novel as a twenty-first century sub-genre that effectively plots the connectivity, challenges, and butterfly effects of contemporary globalisation.[18] As already mentioned, Alexander Beecroft points to multi-strand narration or *entrelacement* as the key narrative strategy of the global novel. He also notes that some of these novels offer "more nuanced versions of the globalisation plot" by shifting between global and local scales: their stories "are global in reach" but the texts "are also strongly committed to notions of place" (2015, 283, 286–287). Beecroft singles out Roberto Bolaño's *2666* (published posthumously in 2004) and Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis* trilogy (*Sea of Poppies*, 2008, *River of Smoke*, 2008, and *Flood of Fire*, 2015) – to which we may add *Gun Island* (2019), which connects climate change in the Bay of Bengal, Venice, and California to the migrants' boats perilously crossing the Mediterranean.

We may also read the *Ibis* trilogy as an exercise in "following" (Conrad 2006) opium and revealing – through intense research and an oceanic imagination – the hidden significant geographies of the British opium trade and other colonial commodities like sugar. Similarly, Paulo Lemos Horta (2022) urges us to read Bolaño not as a "born translated" global novelist but as a child of the Latin American and Catalonian avantgardes, whose novels shift between intense and very local group narratives and long-distance travelogues, thereby tracing and connecting very specific significant geographies. Reading *2066* or *The Savage Detectives* (*Los detectives salvajes,* 1998) through the prism of location and of significant geographies instead of globalisation draws attention to the late-Cold War political

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17 "On the other hand," Moretti continues, "the protagonists of the *Bildungsroman* seldom embark on long-distance journeys, and travel outside Europe is usually left to their alter egos" (67). In his book, the European novels operating at the largest geographical scale are colonial romances (69).

18 Barnard (2009); Kirsch (2016); Ganguly (2016). Other critics, like Coletti (2011), have instead defined the global novel in terms of circulation and easy translatability, what Parks (2010) famously called "The Dull New Global Novel".

context of their author and of the marginal and countercultural radical protago-
nists, their movements and their brand of internationalism.[19]

Works that seek to reconstruct the experiences and travels of African peoples
engulfed by the slave trade, or whose histories have been written by others, require
"critical fabulation" (Hartman), involving intense research and an oceanic imagi-
nation that conceives of the ocean "as material force and a conceptual frame"
(Ganguly 2021, 431). *Entrelacement* here works both geographically and genera-
tionally, and often combines significant geographies and scale shifting between
the micro-personal and the macro-historical. Maryse Condé's masterpiece *Segu*
(*Segou*, 1983–1985) is a broken family saga, an exploration (and explanation)
rather than a celebration, as Condé herself has declared. The Francophone novel
spreads out from its original centre in the Bambara capital Segou in western Africa,
and sends its characters, members of successive generations of the disgraced patri-
arch Dousika, to Timbuktu; to the slave fortress on Gorée island on the west Afri-
can coast; on the transatlantic slave passage across to Brazil and back to the "free
coast". One character becomes a successful trader in Fez, another socialises in
London. While moving the characters over this large geographical expanse, *Segu*
mostly stays close to them and their immediate locales, occasionally scaling up in
brief passages that insert historical information and commentary. For example,
Dousika's second son, Naba, is trapped by slavers and becomes a gardener for the
mistress of the fort on Gorée Island:

> He stood up now and took the bowl of tomatoes into the kitchen, where the slaves had
> resumed their gossiping. Now he had to go to the public garden which had been founded
> some years back by Dancourt, a director of the trading company. [His mistress] Anne
> Pépin allowed Naba to hire his services out for a small sum – enough to buy a few leaves
> of tobacco and a drop of brandy. (Condé 2007, 99)

The narration then scales up to provide a broad historical overview:

> Gorée had developed considerably over the years. When the French captured it from the
> Dutch, who had taken it from the Portuguese, there were only two forts, mere stone re-
> doubts some forty-five yards square with seven or eight cannon [. . .]. Then the French
> turned Gorée into the headquarters of the Senegal Company, which succeeded the West

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19 "[W]hy should one automatically look at Bolaño from New York, as if it is his passage into
English that first marks his entry into world letters? Such a spatial and temporal view produces
distorting assumptions about the nature of his appeal to an American audience. If one looks *at
Bolaño from Barcelona and Catalonia*, where he pursued his literary career and penned all his
fiction, a different constellation emerges – of literary actors, activities, collaborations, maga-
zines. From a radicalised and disenchanted Barcelona underground scene at the tail end of
the Cold War a different world was viewed, *a distinct set of contacts across borders* and hence
mode of internationalism" (Horta 2022, 296, emphases added).

India Company and gave priority to the slave trade. The latter, though it did not enrich the companies themselves, did enrich the individuals in them who falsified accounts, made fake customs declarations and employed false weights and measures (99).

Such an expansive and precise "geography of plot" (Moretti) and shift of scale from individual characters and family relations to brief historical overviews allow the narrative to connect the overlapping histories of Islamic as well as colonial expansion and the slave trade, and to link them to the creation of new and multiple (gendered) subjectivities. Given that the slave trade and colonialism underpin modern capitalism, one can indeed call *Segu* a global novel.[20] But, again, reading it through the prism of location and significant geographies alerts us to the precise workings of scale, but also to the author's own problematic positionality as an Antillais from Guadeloupe who, after moving to Paris, experimented with "going back" to Africa in the 1950s and lived in various newly-independent African countries – a positionality she reflects on in a book of essays and interviews (Condé 2017). It is interesting, for example, that the significant geographies of *Segu* do not just include the movement from the inland empires to the coast and across the Atlantic to the American plantation colonies.[21] The long narrative sections devoted to Gorée island, Timbuktu, and Fez in the novel implicate French colonialism, signal the longstanding cultural and religious centrality of Timbuktu, and adumbrate the trade links between the Maghreb and Subsaharan Africa.

The last two sections of this chapter retain the emphasis on location and the production of significant geographies while shifting scale. The next section expands on the idea of location as orientation to the world by presenting former MULOSIGE project member Sara Marzagora's reading of the Ethiopian writer Käbbädä Mikael (c. 1914–1998), whose books trace the trajectory of his political and historical thought while realigning his orientation to the world and producing different significant geographies.

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20 The same is true of Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016), another broken family saga which follows the different paths taken by the descendants of two sisters, one enslaved and sent to America, and the other free but nonetheless touched by the slave trade; the narrative linkages across generations and across the two lines are left implicit here, with each new chapter switching to a new character from the next generation.

21 And to the later migration of African students and workers, like Gyasi's *Homegoing*, for example.

5 Location as Orientation

As already mentioned at the beginning, significant geographies stress that the world is not a given but is discursively produced by different, embodied, and located actors. Location is for us the starting point of an exploration, a way of looking at and being in the world that is always partial and limited (though it may be surprisingly far-reaching), or that may be far-reaching and ambitious even from a peripheral locality (Orsini and Zecchini 2019). The latter is the case of the Amharic writer and public intellectual Käbbädä Mikael, whose education (in Ge'ez and French) was disrupted by the Italian invasion, but who rose through the ranks of the Ethiopian civil service after WWII to become director-general in the Ministry of Education, director of the National Library, and founder of the Addis Abäba Archaeological Museum. "Many of his works became school textbooks and were very well known by all those who attended school in the post-liberation decades" (Marzagora 2019, 108).[22]

Thanks to Emperor Menelik II's activism in international relations and the European scramble for Africa, between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth "Ethiopia had been catapulted upon the modern world stage. [. . .] Such a planetary scale offered a dazzling and exciting potential for cultural, literary, and geopolitical alliances and affiliations" (Marzagora 2019, 112). During Käbbädä's long life, "Ethiopia's symbolic geographies shifted and were the object of intense debates" (107). Until the Italian aggression and occupation (1936–1941), the Ethiopian educated intelligentsia "drew confidence from Ethiopia's victory against Italy at the battle of Adwa (1896) and from their country's membership in the League of Nations," and imagined Ethiopia, as a "millenary and Christian nation," the smallest of the great nations, lagging behind only in economic terms (Marzagora 2019, 107 and 115, citing Käbbädä Mikael's *Ityoṗyanna*). But disillusionment with international inaction over Italy's aggression and concern over the "fraught power relations" between old European colonialism and the new Cold War led intellectuals like Käbbädä Mikael to test through their writings the different possible configurations in which Ethiopia could belong (Marzagora 2019, 112).

Käbbädä Mikael thought about the world through both historical and fictional genres. In the first major work, *Ityoṗyanna Mäəhrabawi Sǝläṭṭane* (Ethiopia and Western Civilization, 1948/49), he critically appraised Ethiopia, as the title

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22 As Marzagora notes, "Käbbädä's initial relation to Western colonialism contained several elements of ambiguity, as he famously started his career as a radio broadcaster for the Italian occupiers" (2019, 122) before being promoted as part of Haylä Sǝllase's post-liberation policy of making use of the skills of those who had served the enemy.

says, primarily in relation to Europe. Although he argued that "Ethiopia, in her present march towards a greater civilization, [. . .] has not yet reached that evolutionary stage which produces the men of genius" (Käbbädä, *Ityopyanna*, quoted in Marzagora 2019, 113),[23] he also considered Western civilization imperfect, and asserted that "the Ethiopian people, granted that they have progressed less in material civilization, keep abreast of the others and may be ahead of all of them when it comes to *moral* civilization" (115, emphasis added). Moreover, Käbbädä blamed the great powers that were "blaming us for not having modernised" but were "hampering our advance towards progress and trying to make us stumble," for example by maintaining Ethiopia's geopolitical and economic isolation through the colonial occupation of the coastal areas of the Horn (116). As Marzagora argues, "The West was a central concern for him, but he often displaced its centrality in his arguments and refused to define his positionality in peripheral terms" (2019, 126).

So in his second major work of civilisational comparison, *Japan Əndämən Sälättänäčč* (How Japan Achieved Civilization, 1953/54), Käbbädä harked back to the significant geography of the interwar generation of the "Japanizers" (see Bahru Zewde 2008). Japan, which had successfully hybridised Western technological modernity with local traditions (both "material" and "moral civilization" in Käbbädä's terms), held particular appeal for Ethiopian intellectuals as a model for "successful top-down, monarchy-driven progress" (Marzagora 2019, 119). The book deals mostly with the similarities between Japan's and Ethiopia's histories – their ancient and putatively uninterrupted ruling dynasties, their successful repulsion of Catholic conversion, their long-standing international isolation, the political decentralisation during the Tokugawa era (1600–1868) and the Ethiopian "Age of the Princes" (Zämänä Mäsafənt, the 1769–1855), and the reassertion of centralised imperial power with emperors Meiji and Məniläk II (Marzagora 2019, 120). Japan had lost its appeal for Ethiopians, though, after it allied itself with Mussolini's Italy, as Marzagora notes, so the timing of Käbbädä's work is odd. Why did he turn to the Japanizers again? Marzagora reads it as a way to escape the negative vertical comparison with the West and to "circumvent the peripheralization of Ethiopia in the bipolar world of the Cold War" (120). Unlike the West and more like Ethiopia, in Japan "hard work was not aimed at individual success and gain" but "for the wellbeing of the nation," a trait that had allowed Japan to modernise much more quickly than Europe (121).

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23 Indeed, Marzagora notes, all the named "men of genius" (Socrates, Homer, Aeschylus, Virgil, Horace, Shakespeare, Milton, Michelangelo, Tasso, Corneille, Racine, Molière, Chopin, Spinoza, Newton, Beethoven, Mozart, Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche, Pushkin, Galileo, Columbus, Leopardi) are European (if the ancient Greeks can be considered thus).

Finally, Käbbädä's 1955 historical verse-play *Hannibal* reveals another significant geography. It stages Hannibal's defeat at the hands of Rome as the result of internal betrayal, indirectly suggesting that Haylä Səllase's defeat had been caused by the lack of support from Ethiopian leaders. The play stages the contest, proleptically, as one between white Europeans and black Africans. Before the decisive battle at Zama, one Carthaginian soldier explains to another:

> There is, moreover, the question of race and posterity. If the Romans are victorious, the whites will rule. They will possess all wealth and knowledge, and their power over the world will be eternal. They will guide the world. Europe will be the mistress of all nations. To her will go prosperity, science, and power. On the contrary, if Hannibal triumphs, then prosperity will change camps, leave Europe and come to Africa. If splendour, intelligence and grandeur are transferred to the other continent [i.e. Europe], this will lead to the decay of our [African] people. Think of it: this war between Rome and Carthage, this merciless struggle, does not concern the two cities only. The victory of one or the other side will decide the fate of the peoples of the world. If Rome resists successfully, she will be able to break the development of Africa and to block Africa's way to the future. (English translation adapted from Gérard 1971, 325–326, cited in Marzagora 2019, 124)

Again, the timing is interesting, since the play was written several years before Ethiopian political elites fully embraced anticolonial Pan-Africanism.[24] Käbbädä's identification of Carthage/Ethiopia with black Africa departs from "decades of intellectual production characterising Ethiopia as Europe's kith and kin," though it also claims Haylä Səllase/Hannibal as the leader of all Africans (Marzagora (2019, 125).

The shifting significant geographies of Käbbädä's works – Europe, Japan, Carthage/Africa – draw our attention to Ethiopia as the tip of the compass, to rehearse the example from *The Shadow Lines*. This raises the question of motivation, not just for the shifts, but for the orientation to the world in the first place. "The 'world' was not a globalist cosmopolitan endeavour for Käbbädä, but rather a strategy for particularist nation-building," Marzagora (2019, 112) concludes. Instead of inserting Ethiopia within a global system, "he looked at 'outside' geographies in ways that were, for the most part, assimilationist and reductionist" (126). Orientation to the world need not speak of a desire to integrate or to form or join an international network, but may rather aim to mark one's difference.

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24 Jane Plastow remarks that Annibal "is highly unusual, in that it emphasises the need for pan-Africanism at a time when the Amharas tended to see themselves as isolated from, and superior to, the majority of Africans" (Plastow 1996, 59), cited in Marzagora (2019, 125).

This takes me to the final section, which considers location and world-making by literary magazines. Literary magazines typically combine local, national, and transnational scales. At the same time, their production of world literature is more provisional and situated than, for example, that of world literature anthologies. The first case I consider may be read in terms of action-network theory, since the two magazines concerned forged and fostered literary networks that were both local and transnational, and multilingual.[25] The second case instead shows the magazine editor drawing freely but selectively on available translations to put forward his own, radically reoriented version of world literature. While the first case highlights the radical potential of literary activism from a provincial location, the second shows that magazine activism need not be read as the desire for assimilation into global movements or a global literary space.[26] Shifting between individual (local) stories and the macro scale of international politics, the Hindi magazine *Sarika* bypassed questions of minority and produced powerful versions of world literature.

6 Magazine Activism, Location, and Scale

"Northern Morocco has tended to be cast as a provincial hub in scholarship about Morocco and colonial Maghreb because it fell under the tutelage of a minor colonial power such as Spain – unlike the rest of the country, which by and large became a French Protectorate, or an international zone, such as the nearby city of Tangiers," writes Itzea Goikolea-Amiano (2022). But the bilingual literary journals *Al-Motamid. Verso y Prosa* (1947–56, ed. Trina Mercader) and *Ketama* (1953–59, ed. Jacinto López Gorjé) founded in the very small town of Ketama and in the regional capital Tetouan played a pivotal role in making contemporary Arabic poetry available in Spanish and translating contemporary Spanish and other European poetry into Arabic.[27] They also published pioneering essays on modern Moroccan

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25 For the use of Bruno Latour's action network theory in world literary studies, see Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts (2018).

26 For literary activism as an activism on behalf of literature that scrutinises its function and status, see Chaudhuri (2016).

27 "One of the main aims of the journals became to make contemporary Arabic poetry known among their Hispanophone readers". Thanks to the writings and translations by Jamil Shuwaqi (who contributed from Chile), Muhammad al-Sabbagh and Leonor Martínez Martín, "contemporary Arabic poetry entered the realm of Spanish Arabism," which had until then almost exclusively focused on al-Andalus (Goikolea-Amiano 2021).

literature and short stories by local Arabic and Spanish authors.[28] As Goikolea-Amiano (2022) argues, thanks to their particular location outside the French zone, the magazines used Franco's ideological invocation of Hispano-Moroccan brotherhood and the shared history of al-Andalus to plug into, and in some case initiate, networks that "made visible and enabled the circulation of contemporary Arabic poetry between the Arabic-speaking Middle East, the Maghreb and the Mahjar (Arab American diaspora); and of contemporary poetry between Arabic, Spanish, and other European languages". *Ketama* in particular grew into a bilingual literary platform where Arabic and Spanish texts and authors shared equal space and importance, and where the vector of translation went both ways. The magazine published Nobel-prize winner Salvatore Quasimodo's poems in Italian with translations in Arabic and Spanish, but also the poems of Mahjar author Mikhail Naimy (Goikolea-Amiano 2022). Moreover, the fact that these colonial journals translated more from Arabic into Spanish rather than the other way round, Goikolea-Amiano argues, "challenges customary understanding of colonial culture as systematically excluding the colonised and their production, and of literary translation moving from the literary "centre" to the "periphery" [. . .] and from "more endowed" to "less endowed" languages and literatures (Sapiro 2011)". In fact, in this case a peripheral location acted as a privileged site of encounters, and a node in overlapping networks between different significant geographies – the Arabic Mashreq and Maghreb, Morocco and Spain, and the Maghreb and Latin America.

Finally, like other Hindi magazines of the 1950s–1960s, *Sarika* (Starling, 1969), a commercial literary magazine published in Bombay by the Times of India group, published short stories for general readers (Orsini 2022). It was definitely *not* a little magazine. Until the Hindi writer Kamleshwar (1932–2007) became editor, world literature in *Sarika* had meant stories by contemporary western and eastern European writers, but Kamleshwar exploited the financial resources of its publishers and the format of the magazine special issue to practise what I have called a spectacular internationalism which made Asian, Arabic, Latin American and African literatures visible together to an unprecedented degree. Special issues

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28 Including writer, critic and anthologist Muhammad al-Sabbagh and Abd Allah Guennoun, the author of the pathbreaking *Al-Nubūgh al-Maghribī fi al-Adab al-'Arabī* (Moroccan Genius in Arabic Literature, 1938) and commonly regarded as the father of modern literary criticism in Morocco, who moved from Fez to Tetouan. See also Amina al-Luh, "We Want a Moroccan Literature" (Nurīd adaban maghribīyyan); the story "The Wretched" (Tu'asā') by Al-Tuhami al-Wazzani, best known for *al-Zāwīya* (*The Lodge*, 1942), considered by many the first Moroccan Arabic novel; and "La Frontera" and "Neffah" by Dora Bacalcoa Arnáiz; texts and translations available at http://mulosige.soas.ac.uk/resources/translations/translations-essays/bilingual-literary-journals-from-colonial-morocco/short-stories/, all accessed 9 December 2021.

were devoted to the world story (Jan 1969, Jan 1970), or to themes of general interest (The Courtesan in World Literature, Nov 1973), but quite a few were framed in political terms, like Third World literature (Jan 1973), India's neighbouring countries (Aug 1973), African literature (Jan 1975) or Palestinian resistance literature (Mar 1977). The January 1969 International Story issue, for example, features Heinrich Böll and Alain Robbe-Grillet, but among thirty Asian, African, and Latin American writers, including Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Mahmud Taimur, João Guimaraes Rosa, Mario Benedetti, Mohammad Hijazi, Mochtar Lubis, and so on. And if spatially *Sarika* re-oriented world literature towards the literatures of global South (*dakshin golarddh*), as Kamleshwar himself called it, its present- and future-oriented temporality lifted older stories like Jorge Luis Borges's "Emma Zunz" (1949) into the present.[29] Nor were most stories political in theme, despite the political framing. Rather, stories tended to be about the everyday lives of ordinary people (office romances, hoping for a payrise) and written by writers across the political spectrum. This interesting combination, or rather juxtaposition, between the tricontinental political framing and the everydayness of the stories reflected Kamleshwar's own original definition of Third World literature. Kamleshwar explicitly framed the Third World in political and economic terms, foregrounding the shared experiences of colonialism and underdevelopment and the need to make new voices heard; he then rejected this definition as "superficial and two-dimensional," though: third rather meant *beyond*, beyond the two blocs but also beyond the material plane, as in João Guimaraes Rosa's haunting philosophical story "The Third Bank of the River" ("A Terceira Margem do Rio," 1962).[30]

Kamleshwar's spectacular special issues were made possible by the profusion of printed materials and translations produced by Cold War initiatives, which he sourced without acknowledgement or attribution as was the norm in Hindi magazines.[31] But this should not lead us to underplay Kamleshwar's remarkable magazine activism and the way in which he assembled and reframed stories in order to produce an original and located articulation of world literature, drawing connections and pressing for particular readings. The medium of the story magazine, the agency of the editor as literary activist, and the form of the special issue held together very different scales and played off the macro scale of non-Aligned and Third Worldist international politics with the micro scale of local stories.

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29 *Sarika*, Jan 1969.

30 Kamleshwar, "Donon taton se ubkar" (Tired of both Shores), International special issue (*Deshantar ank*), *Sarika*, January 1969, 7.

31 Some of the stories seem to come from *Short Story International,* others from *Lotus,* and several of the African stories came from Faber's *Modern African Stories.*

7 Conclusion

Thinking through significant geographies and drawing attention to the location and orientation of actors and texts, this essay has argued, help us to think about world literature not as a single global or transnational scale or a movement towards global integration, but as many criss-crossing trajectories and articulations. This is not an argument about the utopian, ethical recognition of all literatures as equally deserving attention (though there is nothing wrong with that), but rather about the recognition that location matters: it produces particular constructions of the world (and of world literature), for example in terms of aesthetics, ideology, or familiarity; and it enables conditions of visibility that would not be available elsewhere. For this reason, rather than working with scale in terms of different literary ecologies, as Beecroft does, I have chosen to work with individual texts, authors, and magazines as different scales of analysis, and in each case I have stressed location and orientation in their articulation of the world, and the way they creatively manage, shift and combine scales. Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* underscores the process of perception and how places become familiar or strange to us; the compass experiment invites us to step back from an unthinking relationship with the map as a *source* of objective scale. Maryse Condé's *Segu* reveals the work of critical fabulation not just through its sprawling cast of characters, but also through the shift of scale between the local spaces characters intimately inhabit and swift historical explanations and connections. The Moroccan bilingual journals *Ketama* and *al-Motamid* reveal the potential of small, peripheral locations, their keenness to connect and to make the best use of their contacts. Arguably, the equality between Spanish and Arabic, the preference for contemporary Arabic and European poetry, and the connections between Spanish, Latin American, Maghrebi, and Levantine intellectuals were possible precisely because of the particular geo-political location, marginality, and agency of the magazine's collaborators. Finally, the spectacular special issues of *Sarika* show how, thanks to the nimble re-use of translated stories, a magazine can combine small-scale, non-political human stories with the macro-scale of international politics (whether global or regional) to produce unprecedented visibility for literatures from the Global South. Through these examples, of which only some have circulated beyond their original context, the essay has argued that transnational circulation is not the only scale of world literature, but also that each articulation of the world consists of significant geographies.

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Debjani Ganguly
The Scale of Realism in the Global Novel

This essay explores nested scales of realism in the contemporary global novel as this form confronts cataclysmic technological and environmental changes. We are now witnessing a fundamental mutation both in the modern realist mode and the modern conception of the human. The figure of the human is perceived as increasingly entangled in and co-produced by biochemical, technological, and geological phenomena. Marx's idea of the *social*, reprised by Lukács and Durkheim in the twentieth century, has begun to be reformulated in Latourian terms to include not just human actors, but non-human species, material and technological agents or *actants*. The idea of an unbroken human evolution into an infinite future is seriously challenged by climatologists and scholars of artificial intelligence. What the philosophical and theoretical ground of humanism now is as urgent a question as it has been since the sixteenth century. Marx's and Lukács' idea of human exceptionalism is located in the sphere of modern history with the rise of Europe in the sixteenth century and the global advancement of industrial capitalism through the colonial era. One remembers Georg Lukács' Marx-inspired account of history as a progress of the human species whose three features include an unbroken upward evolution of mankind into an endless future; the complete human personality; and the "organic, indissoluble connection between man as a private individual and man as a social being" (Lukács 1950, 8). The Hegelian idea of *Gattungswesen*, a species-being thoroughly in itself and for itself, constitutes the bulwark of such theory. What we find in Lukács' work is a modern epistemology of human exceptionalism: that is, the human is specifically *not* animal or thing or machine. The realist novel is the genre in which this exemplary human figure takes aesthetic shape. Our post-War histories of postcolonial transformation and globalisation are a continuation of this modern and deeply humanist literary paradigm.

Climate historians talk of two other histories that now press against this human-centred history: the history of the earth system (earth sciences), and the history of life including that of human evolution on the planet (life sciences). "Humans," Dipesh Chakrabarty notes, "now unintentionally straddle these three histories that operate on different time scales and at different speeds. The very language through which we speak of the climate crisis is shot through with this problem of the human and nonhuman scales of time" (Chakrabarty 2014, 1). Eugene Thacker's philosophical tract, *In the Dust of this Planet* is pertinent here for it explores the power of speculative genres, particularly supernational horror, in grasping the cascading climatological and geological disasters of our era. In parallel

with Chakrabarty's three historiographical scales, Thacker identifies three forms of world-making that impinge on each other today: world-for-us (the humanist realm), world-in-itself (the earth with its myriad lifeforms), and world-without-us (the planet). He conceives this last in both speculative and spectral terms, as something that haunts us as even as it inhabits a zone of speculative fabulation. The world-without-us, notes Thacker, lies "in a nebulous zone that is at once impersonal and horrific . . . [it is] a dark intelligible abyss that is paradoxically manifest as the World and the Earth" (Thacker 2011, 6–8). Such a perspective invites us to confront not only the non-human foundations of life on earth, but also the radical alterity of Earth as a planet that existed before us and will last beyond our species. Representations of human form and agency clearly appear to be on the threshold of colossal transformations – technological, chemical, biomedical, geological, and planetary – scarcely conceivable in the era of scientific enlightenment and industrial capitalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and the post-industrial era since World War Two. Ian Baucom's dramatic words capture this transformation powerfully: "Entangled with the screen, entangled with nonhuman biotic forms of life, entangled with data, entangled with surging oceans, entangled with equity bundles, entangled with the geological, entangled with algorithms, entangled with gene-coding, entangled with sun flares, entangled with derivatives – the human in the epoch of the contemporary . . . can no longer be imagined to hold its humanist core" (Baucom 2020, 26).

The problem of scale has emerged as a site of scholarly contention and deliberation, one that is of particular relevance to thinking the realist novel.[1] The issue I address in this essay is one of temporality, form, and magnitude of human experience and the problem of their plausible representation in realist novels. While I am aware of an emerging *new formalist* scholarship on scale, my focus here is on the ontological upending of the realist novel's humanist ground by megascale nonhuman forces.[2] "The scale of human observation and experience," notes evolutionary biologist, D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, "lies within the narrow bounds of inches, feet and miles, all measured in terms drawn from our selves or our own doings. Scales that include light-years, parsecs, Angstrom units or atomic and subatomic magnitudes, belong to other order of things and other principles of cognition" (Thompson 1992, 17). The realist novel that has hitherto been ensconced in a plausible empirical realm attuned to human-scale cognition and sensory world, is now compelled to reckon with scalar variations in "modern terraforming assemblages," to use Derek Wood's words, that are non-anthropocentric, where the

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1 See Ghosh (2016 "Stories"); McGurl (2017); Heise, (2016); Ganguly (2020).

2 For a formal analysis of scale, I recommend Caracciolo (2021).

human subject is one among a multitude of nonhuman agents such as animals, insects, atmosphere, water, earth, and technology (Woods 2014, 138). Moving from the individuated human to the assemblage is not just a matter of a linear movement from the micro (biographical) to the macro (planetary), but of reckoning with their unpredictable enjambment, nonlinear juxtaposition, dramatic jumps, and discontinuities. As Wood puts it: "What is needed to accommodate scale variance is a horizontal assemblage theory of the relations among humans, nonhuman species and technics rather than a vertical, phylogenetic account that traces all causal chains back to the embodied intelligence of *Homo Sapiens*" (138).

The scale of the *global* undergoes a shift too. Founded primarily on the idea that the world can be perceived as a single interconnected whole, the global in the post-War era has drawn its conceptual valence from a world-systems model based on the entanglement of political economy, media and technological infrastructures, and mega-scale socio-cultural shifts. In recent years, the idea of the global has been compelled to reckon with geobiophysical systems that are planetary in scale. The global fossil-fuel economy and global warming now feed on each other. In the words of the historian of science, Paul N. Edwards, this planetary dynamic of the global is "intricately interconnected, articulated, evolving, but ultimately fragile and vulnerable." He goes on to add: "Network rather than hierarchy; complex interlocking feedbacks rather than central control; ecology rather than resource; these are the watchwords of the new habit of mind" (Edwards 2010, 2). What bearing might these insights have on the scale of realism in the global novel?

My essay explores questions of scale in relation to two realist modes: formal realism and planetary realism. By formal realism I mean the novel's correspondence with an extra-diegetic world that serves as a plausible documentary evidence of the novel's thick description of quotidian worlds focussed on individual lives and subjective experience. In the history of the modern English novel such evidence has typically consisted of a plethora of facts and factual genres: newspapers, historical archives, legal briefs, medical autopsy reports, book-keeping ledgers, readily identifiable socio-cultural practices of ordinary people, and a period's infrastructure and built environment.[3] What, I ask, now constitutes the ground of

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3 The term "formal realism" was proposed by Ian Watt in his classic study, *The Rise of the Novel*, to account for the emergence of the eighteenth century English novel. Essays in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel* by leading novel theorists Paul Hunter, Claude Rawson, and Maximillian Novak broadly agree that despite the apparent heterogeneity of novels produced in that century, almost all display typical features of formal realism: deep focus on the particularities of everyday life and subjective experience, recognizable conventions of behaviour, and a sense of immediacy as unprocessed circumstance.

formal realism when the very meaning of quotidian human life is shot through with geophysical phenomena – pandemics, floods, wildfires – appearing at a scale and intensity that upends notions of the ordinary and the everyday? How might one reckon with the gap between the multitude affected by such geophysical upheaval and the subjectivity of individuated lives that is the traditional focus of formal realism? I explore these questions by juxtaposing Lawrence Wright's *The End of October* (2020) with an eighteenth century novel, Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722). By planetary realism I mean the impingement of nonhuman forces on the novelistic imagination that insights from earth systems science, oceanography, geology, and information technology bring to the fore. Scientific imagination at this scale has not typically featured in theories of realism until recent advancements in techno-planetary modes of apprehension have made us aware of the staggering scale of catastrophes that engulf the globe. "The representational challenges are acute," writes Rob Nixon in his pathbreaking book *Slow Violence*, for novels now confront "catastrophic acts that are low in instant spectacle but high in long-term effects." Such acts demand an unprecedented degree of legibility and aesthetic labour for they can only be made "apprehensible to the senses through the work of scientific and imaginative testimony" (Nixon 2011, 10). What might such apprehension entail for a contemporary novelist? What are its literary prehistory and philosophical ground? I seek to answer these questions by exploring Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) and Namwalli Serpell's *The Old Drift* (2019).

1 Technosphere, Formal Realism, and Speculative Mode

> It was now the beginning of August, and the plague grew very violent and terrible in the place where I lived, and Dr Heath coming to visit me, and finding that I ventured so often out in the streets, earnestly persuaded me to lock myself up and my family, and not to suffer any of us to go out of doors; to keep all our windows fast, shutters and curtains close, and never to open them. (Defoe 1722)

> I have no idea how Eustis got sick. But when he abruptly flew back to New York and missed opening night on February 20th, I knew something was wrong. Texas was thought to be outside the danger zone that month, but retrospective modelling suggested that the virus likely had been infecting at least ten people a day since the middle of the month . . . By the end of February, there was probable local transmission in thirty-eight states. (Wright 2021, 37)

Three hundred years separate the first excerpt from the second. The first passage appears in Daniel Defoe's 1722 publication, *A Journal of the Plague Year: Being Observations or Memorials of the Most Remarkable Occurrences as well as Public as Private which happened in London during the Great Visitation of 1665*. The second excerpt is from a long-essay called *The Plague Year* by the non-fiction writer and journalist, Lawrence Wright, that appeared in a January 2021 issue of the *New Yorker* magazine. This latter is an episodic public history of the Covid pandemic since it struck the world in December 2019. Consisting of twenty-one journal entries, it is an exercise in factual reporting with personal case studies, a step-by-step account of the cascading disaster as it unfolded throughout 2020. Defoe's *Journal* is a verisimilitude of factual and eye-witness reporting, an imaginative foray that deceived readers at the time into thinking it was a work of non-fiction even though it was published in 1722, nearly fifty years after the bubonic plague struck London. The novel features extensive numerical tables of the sick and the dead, and a detailed exposition of extant medical research on pestilential contagion. Defoe's work appeared so authentic to the reading publics that popular journals at the time featured his novel alongside medical treatises by Richard Mead (Fellow of the Royal Society), Thomas Phayer (who wrote a treatise on plague in the sixteenth century), and Nathaniel Hodge (author of *Loimologia* on the 1665 plague and the primary source of Defoe's text). As Richard Mayer notes, "There is no reason to believe that Defoe's *Journal* was perceived any differently from the works by Bradley, Mead or Hodge" (Mayer 1990, 532). Things changed somewhat in the nineteenth century as distinctions between the factual and the fictional gained literary currency. Defoe's first major biographer, Walter Wilson, wrote in his *Memoir of the Life and Times of Daniel Defoe* (1830): "Defoe has contrived to mix up so much that is inauthentic with the fabrications of his own brain, that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other; and he has given the whole such a likeness to the dreadful original, as to confound the sceptic, and encircle him in his enchantments." John Richetti calls the *Journal* a "pseudohistory," "a thickly factual, even grossly truthful book" in which the "imagination flares up occasionally and dominates those facts" (qtd. in Mayer 1990, 541–542). The critic widely credited with the view that Defoe's work ought to be seen as a novel rather than a historical treatise on plague is Everett Zimmerman. In 1975 he wrote: "It is the intensity of the focus on the narrator that makes *A Journal of the Plague Year* . . . more like a novel . . . than history" (Zimmerman 1975, 124).

While the form, mode, and even the title of Wright's *New Yorker* essay is inspired by Defoe's paradigmatic fictional journal, it is Wright's novel *The End of October*, published barely a month before the onset of the Covid pandemic, that exemplifies almost every feature of what novel theorists call "formal realism" after Ian Watt's classic study: novels that offer a strong verisimilitude of a recognizably

plausible texture of life and within which run a double-text story – documentary evidence that "confirms or chronicles the guise of authenticity to the stories at hand" (Seidel 202). The protagonist in *The End of October* is an Anthony Fauci-like figure, Henry Parsons, an infectious diseases expert and viral immunologist who works at the CDC in Atlanta. He is alerted to a strange viral outbreak in an internment camp in Indonesia and is sent to investigate it. The pandemic's unfolding across the globe – from Indonesia to West Asia and the rest of the world – draws extensively from the experience of virologists and epidemiologists who tracked the outbreak of SARS, H1N1, H5N1, MERS, and Ebola. References to the 1918 Spanish flu and comparisons with the genetic structure of the coronavirus that caused it, factual details about the spread of SARS in 2004, and the abysmal state of pandemic preparedness in the United States, are uncanny. As is this description of the virus that causes the pandemic: "a spiky round ball, tinted in red and green, looking like a Christmas ornament" (108). A reviewer of the *New York Public Radio,* Scott Detrow notes: "Wright clearly did his homework researching this book, and given his reporting background, couldn't resist sharing every fact about pandemics, infectious diseases, public health planning, government disaster contingencies, and vaccines that he dug up" (Detrow 2020). The novel's acknowledgements page is a Who's Who of the epidemiological world. Luminaries include Dr. Philip R. Dormitzer, chief scientific officer of viral vaccines at Pfizer, and Dr. Barney Graham, a viral immunologist and the creator of Moderna's mRNA vaccine.

What makes *The End of October* exceptional is the same quality that marks Defoe's *Journal*: deep, thorough research with the author's reporting skills bringing alive a contemporary world of pestilence, war, and social collapse that cuts to the bone. There is one significant difference. The ground of verisimilitude – the notion of what constitutes real evidence both scientific and social – in each work is fundamentally different. Defoe's *Journal* emulates genres of factual reporting of his era and captures in graphic detail the bubonic plague that ravaged London in 1665. Wright's novel is about *what could plausibly happen*. The novel reads like a pandemic simulation exercise that generates a probabilistic scenario based on available scientific data, epidemiological variables, and the history of global public health. This is formal realism in a speculative mode, signalling a near future.

Ironical as it may seem, given that the United States has the highest Covid death numbers in the world, the country's biosecurity regime was unusually active between 2001 and 2019 in leading the world in preparations, mobilizations, and simulation exercises on pandemics. Some of these simulations include *Dark Winter* (2001), *Atlantic Storm* (2005), *Clade X* (2018), and *Crimson Contagion* (2019).

The most widely discussed simulation exercise is *Crimson Contagion*.[4] On March 19, 2020, *The New York Times* published a story entitled, "Before the Virus Outbreak: A Cascade of Warnings Went Unheeded." Here is the simulation scenario in *Crimson Contagion*:

> An outbreak of the respiratory virus began in China and was quickly spread around the world by air travellers, who ran high fevers. In the United States, it was first detected in Chicago, and 47 days later, the World Health Organisation declared a pandemic. By then it was too late: 110 million Americans were expected to become ill, leading to 7.7 million hospitalised and 586,000 dead. That scenario, code-named "Crimson Contagion" and imagining an influenza pandemic, was simulated by the Trump administration's Department of Health and Human Services in a series of exercises that ran from January to August 2019. 19 federal agencies, 12 states, 74 local health departments, and 87 hospitals participated in it. (Sanger et. al 2020)

According to the report available on the website of the Department of Health and Human Resources, officials at the National Security Council in the White House were briefed during the exercise. The simulation's sobering results drove home just how underfunded, underprepared and uncoordinated the federal government would be for a life-or-death battle with a virus for which no treatment existed. Mayor Lori Lightfoot from Chicago was blunt in a telephone briefing with reporters. "It is clear to me the federal government will not help us," she said. "They are not the cavalry." The recommendations offered in this simulation exercise went unheeded. The United States was after all ranked first in the 2019 Global Health Security Index among 195 countries with a score 83.5 in terms of its pandemic preparedness.

In Wright's novel, the coronavirus, Kongoli, is far more virulent than the Covid-19 or the influenza virus featured in *Crimson Contagion*. The outbreak of Kongoli reveals a mortality rate close to forty percent. It eventually plunges the world and the United States into a horror whose intensity exceeds what we have experienced so far – complete social breakdown, governmental collapse, and a raging world war conducted with bio- and cyberweapons. And yet the story is deeply plausible when we read of school closures, lack of ventilators, looting of ATMs, racial savagery, and mass death. Much like pandemic simulations, Wright says, "I am merely extending trends I see in the world to certain logical conclusions . . . I made some lucky guesses, but for the most part, what people are reading as prophecies is just what experts told me would happen." Expertise, briefing

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4 Details of this simulation exercise appear in Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Crimson Contagion 2019 Functional Exercise After-Action Report, 2020.

books, scenario exercises – "all of that stuff was on the table. It was there for anybody who was interested, and I was interested" (qtd. in Horton 2020).

Wright's novel registers a fundamental shift in the moral and aesthetic lexicon of catastrophe in our time. Even though the novel depicts a heroic protagonist – the virus hunter Henry Parsons who single-mindedly pursues the origins of the lethal Kongoli virus and cracks the mystery at great personal loss – the human is no longer perceived as a sovereign agent nor is the novel saturated with visions of progress and moral uplift. The anthropocentric fallacy is foregrounded repeatedly in the novel. In an episode on a submarine while trying to escape the deadly virus, Henry Parsons is shocked by a large clattering sound coming through the sonar and thinks they are in danger of being torpedoed by the Russians. The sound, he learns, is caused by a dangerous shrimp. The captain explains to Henry:

> We think humanity has the best weapons, but the snapping shrimp has a claw that closes so fast that it creates a shock wave that kills its prey. The noise you hear is the air bubble popping when the claw snaps. They create a microburst of heat that is about the temperature of the sun. (Wright 2020, 320)

Another passage from the novel that depicts a conversation among White House officials about the dangers of cyberwarfare and the nonhuman scale of infrastructural paralysis:

> Imagine the damage you could do if you controlled the valves and meters of utilities all over the country. The water plants, the nuclear facilities. Many of them were governed by those same Triconex systems, which were designed to keep Saudi utilities safe. They'd be blowing up transformers and generators, knocking off power for months or even years. Russian subs sniff around undersea cables. They could cut off the internet or compromise it to the point that it becomes unusable. Pretty much everything this country runs on could be brought to a halt. (122)

The exchange highlights the extent to which our techno-scientific and socially engineered systems have overtaken our ability to control them and their runaway impact on the earth system. We find ourselves in the realm of the nonhuman as we take the measure of our limits in controlling what we have created. Anthropocene, as this new geological phase of our earth system is provisionally called, is profoundly technospheric. The scientist merited with popularising the idea of the technosphere is the geologist and environmental engineer, Peter Haff. Here is how he conceives it:

> The technosphere includes the world's large-scale energy and resource extraction systems, power generation and transmission systems, communication, transportation, financial and other networks, governments and bureaucracies, cities, factories, farms and myriad other

'built' systems, as well as all the parts of these systems, including computers, windows, tractors, office memos and humans. . . . . The technosphere represents a new stage in the geologic evolution of the Earth. It is a global system whose operation underpins the Anthropocene and therefore merits special attention in our attempts to understand the role of humans in a nascent geologic epoch. (127)

A related concept, "Fallout," formulated by Joseph Masco, captures the nonhuman temporality of nuclear and toxic industrial accidents. Fallout is the long-drawn negative effect on earth dwellers of unexpected catastrophes such as nuclear accidents, oil spills, and industrial disasters. These foul up air, water, and soil to such an extent that their damaging effects last well beyond a human being's lifetime. "Fallout," writes Masco, "is an invention of the nuclear age, appearing in the English language soon after the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 . . . .[it] refers to the radioactive debris put into the atmosphere by a nuclear explosion . . . Fallout is thus an environmental flow that matters to health and safety, but that also demands a *new form of everyday perception and governance*" (Masco 2021, 20–22, emphases mine). The idea of a risk society proposed by Ulrich Beck (1992) is pertinent here. A risk society is a new iteration of the biopolitical, one dedicated to managing life by constantly modelling scenarios of future threat within a globally networked financial, bioinformatic, and natural systems. Such a society is governed by identifying mechanisms that may help large populations acquire immunity against probable catastrophes when systems are stretched to their very limit. The emphasis here is less on the intrinsic intensity of a threat than its potential to engulf the entirety of the globe. Such a technospheric planet is perceived as an uncontrolled science experiment; that is, there is no spare planet on which we can conduct a nuclear war; no second atmosphere which we can heat and observe the results. We live, in the words of the climate scientist, Will Steffen, in a "no-analogue world" (Steffen 2015, 94).

How, I ask, might we reimagine formal realism in the face of the impossibly vast finitudes that various scientific modelling exercises throw in our face? Coronaviruses are so small that 10 trillion of them weigh less than a raindrop. As of April 18 2022, 420.49 parts per million of carbon dioxide appear in our atmosphere. The last time the planet's air was so rich in carbon dioxide was millions of years ago before the Stone Age. The annual rate of increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide over the past 60 years is about 100 times faster than previous natural increases, such as those that occurred at the end of the last ice age 11,000–17,000 years ago. When Ian Watt wrote in his celebrated treatise of 1957, *The Rise of the Novel,* that the realist novel was the aesthetic equivalent of a more "dispassionate and scientific scrutiny of life than had ever been attempted before," he was not talking of time-scales associated with geological and evolutionary phenomena that are unassimilable to the relatively miniscule

scale of modern human history (Watt 1957, 2). Nor was he thinking about quantum, molecular, or nano scales. The alignment of science and literature that Watt envisioned was less about a deeper engagement with scientific breakthroughs than with a particular mode of apprehension of the world: dispassionate, objective, deliberate, and detailed. This investment in a factual and rational everyday matrix was not meant to accommodate implausible shifts in scale that threatened the collapse of a newly forged rational and demystified novelistic universe.

The speculative mode of realism adopted in Wright's *The End of October,* offers an impetus to argue that digital modelling and simulations constitute the ground of formal realism in the twenty-first century in the way that newspapers, bureaucratic reports, medical case histories, and print inventories of population and public health constituted the ground of formal realism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Further, the calculation of the extent of risk through various modelling exercises that have exponentially grown in our digital era, has scarcely any room for individual experience or for practical judgement. These models only tell us what will happen in general. The mysterious historicity of the singular life dissolves in risk modelling. In recent decades we have witnessed a global shift from standard statistical models to Bayesian models, to chaos theory in physics, and to catastrophe theory in mathematics. These theories, widely used in the non-human sciences dealing with mega phenomenon (geology, evolution, meteorology, astrophysics), now have to factor in the "human" as a planetary force. Applications of Bayesian theory have grown exponentially in many probability models where relevant statistics are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. These are stochastic models aimed at capturing the spiralling effects of random variables. A stochastic model typically has a random probability distribution or pattern that can be analysed statistically but not predicted precisely. In the context of both the Covid pandemic and climate change, we daily witness the tremendous authority accorded to such stochastic models. The realm of everyday experience becomes indistinguishable from its representation in newsrooms, laboratories, digital models, proxy data, and simulation exercises.

The ground of the "real" shifts in risk modelling as it does in theories of formal realism. Data sets and simulations become our documentary evidence and realist forms. The speculative novel and the simulation exercise can be both perceived as working at an intermediate level of abstraction between phenomena, the phenomenological, and mathematical forms of representation.[5] There is an emerging scholarship on models and simulation as animated social theory and as a mode of world-making (Edwards 2010, Opitz 2017). Scientific models, notes Joseph Rouse,

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5 See Nersessian (2005).

are "transformations of the world . . . [they]transform the available possibilities for acting . . . by materially enabling some activities and obstructing others, and also by changing the situation that some possible actions or roles lose their point, while others acquire new significance" (Rouse 1999, 449–450). In the context of my discussion of formal realism in Wright's novel, it behooves noting that simulations are seen to provide not a mimetic representation of the real world but a doubling of reality, or what Niklas Luhman calls "*Realitatsverdopplung*" (Luhman 1982, 131). They add worlds to the world. They function not only as "a means of prediction but also as a technology of premediation, producing a series of present and plausible futures in order to map the space of contingency" (Opitz 2017, 409). We also see a dramatic transformation in ontologies of the *real* in simulation exercises. The *real* is not empirical where every data set derives from sensory experience. Nor is it mimetic in the sense of providing an adequation or verisimilitude of an outer stable reality. It is not simulacral either in Baudrillard's sense, where the very ground of the real has disappeared. What we witness is a fundamental *doubling* of the real, a hypothetical real of a magnitude (often catastrophic) that could be a logical outcome of the contingent realities of the present.

Simulations and, concomitantly, novels like *The End of October,* generate not a phantasmagoric scenario of apocalypse, but a mode of realistic apprehension that purports to take uncertainty, indeterminacy, complexity, and vast finitudes into account. Instead of inviting us to contemplate end times in an apocalyptic mode, we are urged to recognize that these vast finitudes, these sublime indices are all around us. "Think of the sheer numbers with which global warming is thrust on us," writes Tim Morton, "like something from a book of records, global warming is spectated as the biggest, the most, the hugest." "Earth and actually existing beings," continues Morton, "that live here are bathed in a giant sea of numbers . . . I need no special props, no *deus ex machina*. I don't need the apocalypse . . . the trivially mathematized fact of hyperobjects' longevity is all the help I need." (Morton 2013, 137).

In novel studies today, the ground of formal realism is no longer mimesis, if by this we mean the reassuring intermediate world of embodied experience, human-scale reality to which our perceptual, cognitive, and affective apparatus is attuned. We move into the realm what Peter Boxall calls the "prosthetic" imagination, and what I call the "speculative" or the "virtual" where the novelistic world, much like the world of big data, acquires an artificial life that shapes our phenomenological apprehension of the world (Boxall 2020). This artificiality or virtuality is not a deficit of reality but its doubling in a highly formalised speculative mode where we can see nested scales of the real from the everyday to the vast nonhuman futures. Rendering risk invisible and tolerable to the general public through purported management by scientific, technological, and political

expertise, I argue, has only intensified our everyday consciousness of the unimaginable and inexperienceable. The epistemic stakes of the *real* in anticipating catastrophes in novels such as Wright's *The End of October* is that they seriously address and give flesh to the incalculable and the inexperienceable that lie at the heart of realist epistemologies underpinning modelling and simulation exercises. As Wendy Chun says, "if we are convinced of their verisimilitude, we may act in such a way that their predicted results can never be corroborated by experience" (Chun 2015, 678).

In this era of increasing indeterminacy, we enter a realm of speculative experience marked by what Derrida calls the *undecidable*, the experience of that which, though "foreign and heterogenous to the order of the calculable and the rule" must nevertheless deliver over to a range of "impossible decisions" (Derrida 2002, 252). Here is deconstruction morphing into a planetary ethic – an attunement to a catastrophic mode that can no longer derive consolation from the secular theology of end-time narratives. We are urged instead to act within an immanent realm of vast nonhuman pasts and futures. This is what novels like *The End of October* bring to the fore when epidemiologists discover the origins of the virus Kongoli in an extinct woolly mammoth discovered by paleobiologists in Siberia that is then reengineered in a lab for use in biological warfare. Such literary works also challenge the trope of mastery one often finds in the scientific modelling exercises. Risk calculation is a Promethean enterprise, one that holds on to the illusion that we are masters of the earth. An exchange between Henry Parsons and his renegade colleague, Jurgen Stark, in *The End of October* is apposite here: "Jurgen gave him a quizzical look. 'I make no apology for our work here. Playing at God is the only choice we have if we want to save the earth. Consider what humanity has done to the planet.'" (Wright 2020, 368) Jurgen refers to a secret bioweapons project that he and Henry Parsons were both involved in before the latter abjured it on ethical grounds and moved to the kind of epidemiological research that he hoped would benefit humankind rather than destroy it. Jurgen, in contrast, is a radical misanthrope and an environmental fascist. He loves the planet so much that he would rather destroy all humans with nature's weapons (i.e. viruses) than have them destroy the earth system.

Wright's novel reminds us that although we humans think we are dominant within our ecological niche, many other niches exist that overlap with our own, and they operate by entirely different rules over which we have less and less control. Henry Parsons muses at one point:

> It was pointless to ascribe consciousness or intentionality to a disease. It was not remorseless or cunning. It simply was. Its purpose was to be. But he also knew that viruses

were constantly reinventing themselves, and there would never be a freezer large enough to contain the manifold weapons nature employs to attack its own creatures (354–55).

In our risk societies where catastrophes are ever on the horizon, science becomes more and more necessary, but less and less sufficient to account for the inexperienceable that lies at the heart of vast nonhuman finitudes of our techno-planetary era.

2 Planetary Realism: Geology, Hydrology, and the Techno-Human

I now turn briefly to an explication of what I call planetary realism by exploring a facet of nineteenth century literary history that links the rise of geology to the realist novel. In 1833, Charles Darwin's mentor, Charles Lyell, author of *Principles of Geology,* mooted the idea of a new interglacial interval of the Quaternary period that was relatively stable, and highly habitable, and that began about 11,700 years ago. He used the terms "Recent" for this new geological epoch in which, as he put it, "the earth has been tenanted by man."[6] In 1867, a French palaeontologist, Paul Gervais named Lyell's idea the "Holocene." These marked three key developments: the victory of gradualist views in the sciences, a denunciation of catastrophism as unmodern, and an affirmation of the figure of the man of science as one who writes in the style of the "ethically and socially humble recorder of reality" (Buckland 2013, 16).[7] Charles Lyell's rise to the pinnacle of scholarly achievement in geology in nineteenth century Britain is marked by a distinctive turn away from cosmological and speculative approaches to thinking earth history, and to geology as an empirical science marked by a meticulous accumulation of factual data from fossils and rock layers. Key to this shift were extensive debates about the appropriate narrative form in which to present this *factual* history of the earth. Earth's form was only beginning to be scientifically excavated. What narrative form would be equal to this task?

Not only does Lyell go on to write in a deliberately factual and realist mode, he also advocates a theory of gradualism for geological history under the term, "uniformitarianism." This concept valorizes patterns of incremental change over a vast span of time and pays attention to minute causal chains. It also makes the

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6 See an account of the Holocene in Roberts (1998).
7 The words are attributed to Sir Thomas Sprat, the founder of the Royal Society. Cited in Buckland (2013, 16).

"human" the measure of all past geological transformation; not the human as a disruptive geological agent conceived by the term Anthropocene, but the species that thrives at the scale of the ordinary and the everyday due to the interglacial habitability and stability of the Holocene. Darwin's idea of the evolution of species as a slow and gradual event spanning millennia and even millions of years, owes its origins to Lyell's theory of gradualism. This scientific consensus on gradualism emerged in tandem with the consolidation of the status of the realist novel, and of realism itself, as the epitome of literary fiction – a formal development that broke definitively with the generic conventions of the catastrophic and the unnatural that shaped other literary modes, such as fantasy, gothic and science fiction.

By the year 2000, the pervasive gradualism of Lyell and Darwin falls away and a new catastrophism emerges that, in the words of Jeremy Davis, inaugurates "a new geology . . . that lets into the picture abrupt die offs and bursts of species formation" (Davis 2016, 9). A decided rhetoric of catastrophism marks Paul Crutzen's and Eugene Stoermer's celebrated inauguration of the idea of the Anthropocene at the turn of the century:

> The expansion of mankind, both in numbers and per capita exploitation of the earth's resources has been astounding . . . more than half of all accessible fresh water has been used by mankind; human activity has increased the species extinction rate by thousand to ten thousand fold in the tropical rain forests . . . .mankind will remain a major geological force for many millennia, may be millions of years to come. (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000, 17–18)

This is a catastrophic vision of humankind's impact on the planet that is couched not in a speculative or fantastical mode, but in a realist one. The challenge of thinking realism in the Anthropocene, I contend, is to confront the limits of a paced-out, gradualist, and granular discourse of interiority and social change, and to re-cast its "antinomies" – speculation, scalar experimentation, improbable occurrence, hypernaturalism – as belonging in its sphere. The critical gesture called for is not so much an overthrow of the distinction between realist fiction and science fiction, but a careful tracing of mutations in the former as it discovers its new generic provenance without losing its two foundational attributes: one, the ability to capture a "sense of the ontology of the present as a swiftly running stream;" two, an orientation toward a collective social destiny. A synthesis of both has been its hallmark, as Fredric Jameson reminds us (Jameson 2015, 146).[8] The novel's collective social destiny now spans

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8 See also, Jed Esty's comment from a related perspective in his essay "Realism Wars": "If new realist novels find ways to represent 'combined and uneven development' in the global

the planet. Its temporal frame extends far beyond an individual's or a society's lifetime.

The contemporary global novel of the realist variety, I have suggested in a recent essay, can begin to be conceived as a mutant form that not only has its pulse on our catastrophic present but also one that encodes futurity in the present as it registers the shock of unpredictable biosocial and geological transformations on a planetary scale. I urge us to pay attention to these mutations in realist novels that encode, not an imaginary future of humankind (the realm of sci-fi) but non-human planetary futures that are already being written into the earth's stratigraphy by our radioactive and carbon-intensive lifeworlds.[9] I'd like to add another idea derived from the earth sciences here: the concept of *drift* as a planetary phenomenon in the way things move "within the extended body of the earth"; biological and genetic drift that generates unexpected patterns across species; and drift as aimless wandering across time and space as against locomotion that is deliberate, focused, and goal-oriented (Szersynski 2018, 136).[10] The idea of drift as a planetary force is particularly resonant when one turns to fiction around large water bodies, especially oceanic and hydrological histories that have had such dramatic terraforming impacts.

That oceanic histories of the capitalist world system are intertwined with the history of climate change is now global commonsense. Hundreds of years of fossil fuel use that powered the modern world have come back to haunt us in the form of warming oceans, coral bleaching, plastic contamination of marine life, inundated islands, hurricanes, tsunamis and floods. The scholarship on oceanic literatures and planetary humanities ranges across postcolonial and submarine histories of the Caribbean hit by frequent hurricanes, narratives about nuclear waste dumping and disappearing islands in the Pacific Ocean, climate fiction on the impact of sea level rise on coastal landmasses around the Atlantic, the Pacific and Indian Oceans, climate change and security narratives in the South China Sea, refugee life-writing on Mediterranean crossings by the climate displaced, histories of deep-sea extractivism, reef ecologies, interspecies aesthetic forms, and literary/artistic capture of environmental collapse in the polar regions.

The planetary turn in oceanic studies envisions a nonhuman temporal arc going back to our evolutionary past and into a geological future hurtling toward a catastrophic warming of the planet and the sixth largest extinction of species

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frame where it cannot be mediated into the destiny of a single people, this may well explain the rising force of apocalyptic and Anthropocene models as ways to identify collective problems operating at planetary scale" (2016, 336).

9 See Ganguly (2020).

10 See also Nuttall (2021).

the earth has ever witnessed – an attempt to place pre-modern and modern histories of oceanic crossing within assemblages of natural phenomena such as regional climate terrains, monsoonal zones, tidal ebb and flow, flooding rivers, hurricanes, tsunamis and snow storms. These natural forces are foregrounded as active agents in the making of human history. Planetary oceanic studies engage with what Elizabeth Deloughrey calls "sea ontologies," an immersive way of being in the *more-than-human* temporality of the ocean, as also a conception of "maritime space as a multispecies and embodied place in which the oceanic contours of the planet, including its submarine creatures, are no longer outside the history of the human" (Deloughrey 2017, 36, 42).

An immersive, multispecies aesthetic world, that of the Indian Ocean, and more specifically the region around the Bay of Bengal, features in Amitav Ghosh's novel, *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and his latest work, *Gun Island* (2019). Both novels blend natural, historical, and planetary time in their narratives, and are formally shaped by the ferocity of tides and oceanic drift, not to mention the entanglement of human and nonhuman species. Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* appeared at a time when the idea of catastrophe was associated with geopolitical upheavals like 9/11 and the global war on terror. The term "climate change" had just about begun to emerge into public consciousness. Before the emergence of "climate change" as an overarching frame, concerns about population growth, industrial pollution, nuclear contamination, endangered species, and resource shortage dominated perceptions of ecological crisis. Climate change brought the phenomenon of global warming into focus as also catastrophic scenarios of sea-level rise and inundation of large coastal zones. Ghosh's novel prefigures this shift and works formally at the cusp of this transition in global environmental consciousness. The novel is a powerful depiction of the role of non-human actors such as tides, rivers, bays, tigers and dolphins in shaping the precarious lives of a community of refugees, social activists and fisher folk in the mangroves of Sundarbans in the Bay of Bengal at the eastern most edge of India. Sundarban's uncanny ecoscape functions as a metonym of our planet's alterity to the human scheme of things. An aspect of the novel's planetary aesthetic is its displacement of human exceptionalism and its breathtaking scientifically-informed depiction of multispecies relationality through the figure of the endangered Irrawady dolphin, the cetologist, Pia Roy, the fisherman, Fokir, and the tides in which they explore, swim in or even fatally encounter a world teeming with cetaceans, crabs, shrimps and other aquatic creatures.[11]

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11 For a detailed analysis of Ghosh's novels see Ganguly (2020).

Ghosh's latest novel *Gun Island* takes up the challenge he offered to literary novelists in his non-fiction tract, *The Great Derangement*: *Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016), that they seriously rethink their conventional realist modes and engage with the uncanny force of the non-human and the larger planetary world in their creative work. Scalar experimentation in Ghosh's latest novel is quite breathtaking. The mystery of the gun island unfolds in an extraordinary tale of climate upheaval and mass migration stretching from the perturbations of the "Little Ice Age" in the seventeenth century to our contemporary crisis of climate displacement. The current refugee and migration problem – attributed to climate change – that has led to the rise of the far right and neo-fascist groups across the Americas, Europe, and the Anglo-Pacific world, resonates throughout the novel. The novel–part thriller, part folklore, and part treatise on climate change–revolves around the mystery of a folk figure, *bonduki sadagar* (literally, gun merchant) featuring in a pre-modern Bengali text, and the protagonist, Deenu's quest for the origin myth that begins in the Sundarbans – the deltaic region in the Bay of Bengal that Ghosh portrayed with such power in *The Hungry Tide*. What follows is a layered story of climate upheavals, natural disasters, unpredictable encounters, and philological discoveries across an oceanic realm stretching from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean over four hundred years. Venice is revealed as the source of the term "bonduki" for its long history of gun and warships manufacture, hence *Gun Island*. Ghosh plays adroitly with early modern mythographies of sea power that converged in and around Venice. Venice's Arsenale was the largest industrial complex in the world before the Industrial Revolution. Ghosh situates Venice at the heart of his cataclysmic oceanic adventure tale, thus reviving its mediaeval and early modern glory as an imperial naval power whose reach extended to the waters across South and South East Asia. The novel traces a marvellous geography of encounters across this Indo-Mediterranean terraqueous zone. It offers an oceanic aesthetic at a scale that not only exceeds post-Mercator realist cartography, but also breaks apart the latter's carefully calibrated continental boundaries. One is reminded here of a short story by the Tanzanian novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah, "Mid Morning Moon," that features a fifteenth century *mappa mundi* created by a Venetian cartographer-artist, Fra Mauro. A copy of this map hangs in the apartment of a tutor in Zanzibar who teaches the protagonist East African history. The map features the Indian Ocean world in all its cultural, material, and environmental complexity before the rise of the Europeans. The East African littoral and the Cape, in particular, feature at the centre of a *dhow* trading culture that eventually morphed into a capitalist world system with the flow of Iberian trading ships. Scalar variations figure in stunning ways in Gurnah's work as it does in Ghosh's novel. The Venetian map creates a world that was all but lost a century later. The Mercator projection enlarged the Euro-Atlantic

region and rendered Indo-Mediterranean littoral societies peripheral and invisible. Significantly, the *mappa mundi* in Gurnah's story invokes a shipwreck in which the tutor's ancestors perished. An inscription on Mauro's map indicates that this shipwreck was the source of his knowledge of the Cape. Filial history and cartographic aesthetics merge in this story as does the nonhuman oceanic world, for, "the *mappa mundi* renders the ocean thick with human and nonhuman activity: waves and currents are inscribed, whales and fish sport between dhows and junks and are interspersed with banners containing the narratives Mauro collected from travellers in Venice" (Samuelson 2017, 23). Gurnah and Ghosh illuminate an oceanic aesthetic that encompasses planetary space-time, natural logic, and human-nonhuman entanglement.

In the final pages of this chapter, I turn to a Zambian novel that experiments with the realist mode in a hydrological register that animates what I have been calling the speculative realm of the techno-planetary. Namwali Serpell's *The Old Drift* is a spectacular mash up of myriad genres – the postcolonial novel, magical realism, speculative fiction, and Afrofuturism. The work is epic in scope, spanning Zambian lives across four generations from the early twentieth century to the mid-twenty-first. The title is derived from a drift on the Zambezi river five miles above the Victoria Falls, the port of entry into North-western Rhodesia, and the place where the Zambezi river is at its deepest and narrowest, the best spot for "drifting a body across". It was from here that earlier white settlers ran a transport service across the river. By 1958, settlers and colonial officers are displacing local people, harnessing African labour and building a huge dam, to be named Kariba, on the site of the Old Drift. The river is flooding earlier than usual in the season, and the huge hydrocolonial construction project is conceived in a non-heroic language as "crawling with men, fly-like amongst the beetling machines. It looked like a mammoth corpse, half-dissected or half rotten." As the river waters seeps through a fault line and floods the dam cavity from the inside, "a swirling thrusting deluge, red as blood because of the copper in the dust here, a crane they hadn't managed to move swivelling wildly in the gushing torrents" barrels through the flood plains (Serpell 2019, 70). Parts of the novel are narrated by a non-human collective intelligence, a mosquito swarm that emerges as an afrofuturistic take on the Greek chorus, "*thin troubadors, the bare ruinous choir, a chorus of gossipy mites.*" A mosquito swarm takes up the story of the hydrological disaster that is the Kariba Dam: "The feckless *bazungu* continued building the dam. When the flood came again, it lifted four men, plastered them to the dam like insects. The concrete was wet; the workers were dead; in the end, they built the dam around them. Strange tomb!" (78).

In a dazzling scalar interplay, the song of the swarm forms a *"weird and coordinate harmony"* of nonhuman times both ancient and futuristic – at once an

insect world from time immemorial and a cyborgian consciousness that has *"woven a wordly wily web . . . spindle bodies strung in a net of spacetime"* (19). The swarm buzzes, glides, and sways through the pages as it feeds us stories of its planetary intimacies that precede human existence by millions of years. These intimacies eventually enfold the human and appear far from pestilential, at least from the swarm's point of view:

> *We have a hundred eyes, we smell your scent plume, we sense your heat as we near you. You might hear us sing as we wing through the dark, alighting on knuckles and ankles, but our feet are so tiny, we land without notice, the gentlest of natural surgeons. We use the thinnest, most delicate needles . . . counted in grams, the boon is a droplet, but it weighs up to three times our mass . . . ducking the swat of a hand or a tail, we aim for a vertical surface . . . we've done our deft haematology, dripping away the watery broth and storing the solids for later. These we feed to our babies in need and this you become our wet nurses.*
> (318, italics original)

The swarm's choric voice laments the folly of humans in treating mosquitoes only as disease vectors. Viruses carried by mosquito swarms are part of our evolutionary history, it tells us. "*And what do we leave you in kind of recompense? A salivary trace, a gum to stop your blood clotting. It's harmless but foreign, and your body is foolish, so it attacks itself in dismay . . . it sparks a histamine frenzy*" (318). Human exceptionalism is flipped on its head as it were and we catch a glimpse of a world defined by symbiogenesis – a process of speciation more fundamental than genetic mutation, one that reconstellates the individual body as a hive of evolutionary traces from the simplest molecule to the most complex. A symbiogenetic paradigm of life is an ultimate affront to human individuality and its unique sociality.

In an audacious technoanimist narrative move, the mosquito swarm becomes the inspiration for a technological and medical marvel. Joseph, an epidemiologist and scientist, discovers a vaccine for a viral affliction that remains unnamed in the novel. Those infected are referred to as having caught "The Virus." The spectre of AIDS haunts the novel. Jacob, a tech wizard, designs drones inspired by the size and anatomy of the mosquito and sells them to the government. The purpose is not war. Jacob's automated swarm – named Moskeetoze – becomes the medium of mass vaccination of a population ravaged by the epidemic. Unlike drone acoustics in war zones that portend incineration with its whirring sound above, the cyborgian mosquito swarm evokes awe as it elegantly choreographs its descent, not to kill but to heal.

> Then a new sound. At first Naila thought it was the congregants again, humming their way through the crowd. But this was closer to a ringing, the electric sound of pylons growing steadily unbearable. It looked like smoke was pouring through the air, cutting in

and out of the cone of light. People shouted and the mother next to Naila pointed. Her boy nodded. *Mulilo*, he said. Fire.

But there was no burning smell, no searing heat, no flame. The smoke's syrupy sweep through the cone of light reminded Naila of a starling murmuration. It swung around, its ringing sound drawing near, then far, flooding thick, spiralling wide. Its outer edge swept past her and she saw tiny buzzing bits within it. Not smoke, microdrones.

Naila felt the cumulative touch of them on her face and neck – a whispering feeling, as if a furry wind were passing by. Then she felt the gentle needling. A dozen twinges, a hundred, a thousand, each no more painful than a normal mosquito bite. The swarm – they were Jacob's Moskeetoze, she was sure of it, the one's he had sold to the government – had landed upon the crowd and begun to puncture them. (542–43)

Having accomplished its mission, the drone swarm ascends in "measured spirals" and "skitter [ed] up in the cone of light." (544). The vaccinated people look for the usual signs of a mosquito bite and find painless welts that don't itch. They have apparently been rendered immune by the collective sting of the Moskeetoze.

The Moskeetoze perform yet another feat in the novel, that of eco-political sabotage. The drone swarm is mobilised in a political cause by a group of activists protesting the ecological ravages of the Kariba dam. The leaders, Naila, Joseph, and Jacob, place solar-powered transmitters in the dam's sluices and program the Moskeetoze to find the transmitters: "Within minutes the sluice's inner surface would be lined with their tiny bodies. Sluices often got jammed this way with detritus like leaves and sticks that the workers had to clean out, so the infiltration had to be subtle" (555). Thousands of drones are released by this group through the night to cause a slight malfunction. Unexpectedly for its human creators, the swarm's mechanic logic takes over as it blocks the sluices completely. This unleashes a catastrophic flood that swallows the dam and all the inhabitants nearby, including Naila. The Zambezi begins flooding and the ecological landscape changes irrevocably: "Lake Kariba would soon become a river. The Dam would become a waterfall. And miles away, the Lusaka plateau, the flat top of Manda Hill, would become an island" (559).

Swept away by the flood are all pretensions of a human-centred world: its little vanities, its delusions of grandeur, its quest for intimacy, its sense of political urgency, its moral righteousness, and its overweening need to control the nonhuman sphere. The novel ends with the swarm chorus, but is the voice that of mosquitoes or of the Moskeetoze? We enter a techno-animist realm where insects and drones are indistinguishable actants:

Are we red-blooded beasts or metallic machines . . . are we truly man's enemy, Anopheles gambiae, or the microdrones Jacob designed? If that's who we are, then this tale has explained our invention. The problem is we'll still never know because . . . we have joined up

with the local mosquitoes. We get along fine, but can't tell us apart in this loose net of nodes in the air. We just buzz about and follow commands and live lives of tense coordination. Half insects, half drones; perhaps all drones or none; maybe something will emerge, but what a joke! What an error! What a lark indeed! A semi-cyborgian nation! (562, italics original)

The swarm's volatility exceeds all efforts at meaning-making. Human finitude is stripped of its existential carapace and folded into the swarm's techno-planetary churn: "*And so roil in the oldest of drifts – a slow, slant spin at the pit of the void, the darkest heart of them all*" (563, italics original).

My essay has traced radical shifts in the scale of realist aesthetics in our techno- planetary era by analysing anglophone novels across America, Asia, and Africa. Drawing on one one extant realist mode – formal realism – and an emerging one – planetary realism – I have traced the kind of aesthetic labour that is required of contemporary novelists to keep multiple scales in play. Temporally, these range in a non-linear fashion from the everyday to deep time. Ontologically, they render the human plural and in a continuum with nonhuman entities such as viruses, oceans, drones, animals, and birds. Unlike digital apps such as Google Earth or Google Maps that enable us to zoom in and out of multi-scalar spatial configurations at the slide of a finger, scalability in realist works, as this essay has demonstrated, is neither smooth nor frictionless. It can shape shift like the swarm and the miniscule can shatter the gigantic, much like the Kongoli virus.

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Marco Caracciolo

Glocal Epiphanies in Contemporary Literature: Material Elements, Narrative Strategies

1 Introduction

> Consider the snow globe. Consider the mind that invented those miniature storms, the factory worker who turned sheets of plastic into white flakes of snow, the hand that drew the plan for the miniature Severn City with its church steeple and city hall, the assembly-line worker who watched the globe glide past on a conveyer belt somewhere in China. Consider the white gloves on the hands of the woman who inserted the snow globes into boxes, to be packed into larger boxes, crates, shipping containers. Consider the card games played belowdecks in the evenings on the ship carrying the containers across the ocean. (Mandel 2014, 255)

In a postapocalyptic world, even a snow globe has an interesting story to tell. Emily St. John Mandel's novel *Station Eleven*, from which this passage is lifted, revolves around a global catastrophe, a pandemic, that causes the collapse of society as we know it in the West. The snow globe is on display at a self-described "Museum of Civilization," where it serves as a reminder of planetary forces that are no more: the forces of capitalism and global trade. The scene inside the globe is an idealised version of Severn City, the fictional North American city whose ruined airport hosts the makeshift museum. This kitschy object thus offers a figuration of its local surroundings, despite having been designed and crafted on another continent. The snow globe is local in another sense: it is a human-scale object that can be directly manipulated. Yet, by asking us repeatedly to "consider" this humble object's history, the narrator helps us connect its materiality to the complexity and scale of the global supply chain.

The physical globe in Mandel's novel hints at a globalised reality destabilised by a catastrophic pandemic – an idea that certainly sounds eerily familiar in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the relationship between the physical globe and the global turns out to be a rather complex one: the artefact is a *product* of globalisation and recalls the physical form of the Earth, yet the object's self-contained nature clashes with the fragility of the historical and economic processes

that made its existence possible. Globalisation is anything but simple or sealed off from other factors, as the catastrophe at the centre of *Station Eleven* demonstrates. Thus, this passage illustrates the conceptual tensions of what I call in this article a "glocal epiphany" in a narrative context: it surveys the material history of a physical object (from an assembly-line somewhere in China to North America) in order to bring local and global scales into a dialogue. This gesture creates the conditions for an "epiphany" – that is, a revelation of interscalar connection that highlights continuities and discontinuities between local experiences and global phenomena.[1] Materiality – a concept foregrounded by current debates in the environmental humanities (Alaimo 2010; Iovino and Oppermann 2014) – thus bridges the gap between local and global realities, even as it highlights their mutual irreducibility. Materiality is a broad notion that refers to the physical makeup of things, the textures of the nonhuman world (such as the weather and the land), as well as the physicality of animate bodies.

This chapter explores a strand of contemporary fiction that strategically positions materiality at the intersection of local and global scales. This strand includes *Station Eleven* and numerous other novels and short story collections that engage with planetary catastrophes (including, but not limited to, those related to climate change). My discussion reflects broader assumptions within the field of narrative theory, and (more specifically) within current scholarship on the interplay of narrative form and environmental issues – the approach inaugurated by Erin James (2015) under the heading of "econarratology." Therefore, I situate my case studies as instances of fictional narrative that participate in a specific Western narrative practice (the literary novel). My contention is that, as contemporary literature probes the tension between the human scale and planetary processes that transcend the world of everyday experience, narrative forms that have become entrenched within the novelistic tradition come under pressure. The foregrounding of material objects, or of the materiality of the human body, accompanies this rethinking of both narrative forms and novelistic conventions.[2]

In the next section, I expand on some of the theoretical issues brought into view by my discussion of Mandel's passage, particularly the difficulties involved in imagining the global and how material objects may disclose perspectives that

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1 The term "epiphany" was first used in a literary context by James Joyce. See Langbaum (1983).

2 Because my contribution is primarily grounded in narrative theory, I will not be able to do justice to the significant body of work that has explored similar questions about literary form and global scales from the perspective of novel theory (see, e.g., Marshall 2015). Nevertheless, I hope my discussion in the following section will at least go some way towards bridging this gap between theorizations of narrative and the novel.

bring together local and global scales *without fully integrating them*. Indeed, the "glocal" as I understand it in this chapter is not a seamless fusion of local and global concerns but rather a platform for uneasy and problematic coexistence between scalar levels. After unpacking these theoretical issues, I turn to two contemporary novels in English that use materiality to disclose glocal perspectives: Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being* (2013) and David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004). I tackle these narratives in this order because, as we will see, Mitchell's engagement with materiality is more layered than Ozeki's. In *A Tale for the Time Being*, the narrative progression is tied to the physical circulation of a diary, which brings together two characters on either side of the Pacific. In *Cloud Atlas*, it is a material mark on the body, a birthmark, that evokes a mysterious connection between six characters who are spread out in both space and time. In another epiphanic emergence of materiality, these six characters are linked to the climate through a recurring comparison with wandering clouds.

2 Thinking with the Global: Discontinuities and Nonlinearity

My point of departure is an insight emerging from recent discussions in the environmental humanities. The current climate crisis presents human societies with an existential challenge that is profoundly different from previous environmental threats, such as the widespread use of pesticides denounced by Rachel Carson in her seminal *Silent Spring* (1962). While atmospheric or water pollution can be addressed at a local or regional level, climate change is an irreducibly global phenomenon: a long history of greenhouse gas emissions in the Global North can cause flooding in Bangladesh, or wildfires in Australia, or a drought in California. Put otherwise, while the catastrophic manifestations of climate change can be pinpointed at a local level, no local intervention can prevent the rise of sea levels or average temperatures, because these are planetary phenomena – that is, they are complexly distributed in space and time. A global problem can only be successfully addressed on a global scale, with solutions that match the complexity of the crisis.[3]

There are issues with this reference to the planetary or global scale, though, as scholars in the environmental humanities have been quick to point out. First,

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3 I refer to Dale Jamieson's *Reason in a Dark Time* (2014) for a wide-ranging discussion of the challenges the climate crisis raises for our collective meaning-making.

highlighting the abstract, global nature of climate change carries a significant risk: it diverts attention from the historical responsibilities that are bound up with the climate crisis – responsibilities that originate in the Western world, and more specifically in colonial exploitation, the industrial revolution, and the advent of capitalism. As Eileen Crist (2013) notes, the bland language of "human impact on the climate," which is widespread in scientific publications, elides major differences between the Global North and the developing world. Such differences have to do with history, patterns of consumption, but also exposure to the consequences of climate change: despite being historically accountable for a vast percentage of greenhouse gas emissions, developed countries are also the *least* vulnerable to climate-change related devastation, for infrastructural and economic reasons. On closer inspection, the concept of the global thus starts breaking down, revealing discrepancies and asymmetries that complicate a straightforward understanding of the climate crisis. Recall the passage from Mandel's novel and how it contrasts the simple, self-enclosed form of the snow globe and the long, meandering history of its production: if we consider historical differences and moral responsibilities, the global starts looking more like a complex and highly differentiated system and less like a closed and stable form.

Another thinker active in the environmental humanities, Timothy Clark, takes this problematization of the global even further in *Ecocriticism on the Edge* (2015). Clark distances himself from environmental thinkers such as David Abram (1997), who see embodied experience as a springboard for ecological insight. For Clark, this focus on sensory experience goes hand in hand with the traditional emphasis on place of the environmental movement in the United States, because place (as opposed to the more abstract notion of space) is something that speaks to the senses directly.[4] Clark writes: "The personal scale of the human body and of its immediate inherence in things . . . underlies the localist programmes of much environmentalist thinking" (2015, 38). But this "personal scale" can only go so far, Clark argues, because it cannot fully embrace or encompass the global dimension of the climate crisis. Put otherwise, the human body and the sensory knowledge it provides cannot be "scaled up" to planetary realities. In a sense, this disconnect is a very common experience: because climate change is so vast, our individual actions – grounded in bodily experience – are bound to irrelevance. Surely, my decision to drive to work every day (instead of cycling or taking the train) is "causing" climate change in some sense of the word: but this thought spreads the notion of causation so thin that the link between my

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4 For more on the localist nature of environmental thinking in North America and the need to rethink the global, see Ursula Heise's influential *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet* (2008).

embodied practice and the global crisis appears trivial at best. Clark's account centres on this kind of discontinuity between the personal (or local) and the global (or planetary): "To contemplate the sight of the whole Earth is to think the disjunction between individual perception and global reality" (2015, 36). If the global is a totality, that totality remains out of imaginative reach; instead, the global becomes thinkable through the tensions and disruptions that define our relationship with it. In effect, Clark's discussion of the global expands on the argument, advanced by Crist and others, that problematizes the idea of an undifferentiated "global impact" of humankind. If that argument underscores a significant discontinuity between developed and developing nations, Clark sees discontinuities, in the plural, as shaping our understanding of the global as an unimaginable totality.

In another contribution to the debate on scale in the environmental humanities, Derek Woods (2014) develops a "scale critique" that is remarkably convergent with Clark's discussion. Woods focuses on what he calls "scale variance": "the observation and the operation of systems are subject to different constraints at different scales due to real discontinuities" (2014, 133). Scale cannot be thought of as a spatial continuum similar to the smooth zooming in and out made possible by digital maps such as Google Maps. On the contrary, as we move across scales (from the personal to the regional to the global) we encounter a number of gaps and discontinuities that reflect the complexity of the systems we are traversing.

Indeed, complexity is a key word here, and not just in the loose sense of the term. Scalar discontinuities (or "scale variance") suggest that the global is a complex system in the specialised sense of complex systems theory: it exhibits nonlinear or "self-organising" behaviour – that is, its outcome is not completely determined by the initial setup of the system.[5] Perhaps the most concrete manifestation of this nonlinearity of the climate crisis is the way in which it destabilises scientific prediction: given the staggering number of human and nonhuman factors involved in the climate crisis, it becomes impossible for science to decide between optimistic and worst-case scenarios about the future (see Cooper 2010). Local catastrophes (for instance, the wildfires in Australia in early 2020) can emerge from a plurality of material processes that are distributed in space and time. This is, incidentally, why scientists who talk about the link between climate change and local disasters have to use the language of probability: "human-induced climate change increased the risk of the weather conditions that drove the fires [in Australia] by at least 30%," reads an article on the *Nature* website

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5 For an application of this idea of complexity to narrative theory, see Pier (2017) and Grishakova and Poulaki (2019).

(Phillips 2020). The causal link between the global scale and a regional disaster is not deterministic but probabilistic – a sure sign that we are dealing with a complex, nonlinear phenomenon. Nonlinearity and discontinuity are intimately related: it is because global warming emerges nonlinearly from patterns of extraction, industrial production, and consumption that we experience a gap between human-scale reality and climate change as a scientific abstraction.

A number of scholars have raised doubts about the Western novel's ability to capture these dimensions of the climate crisis. Perhaps most influentially, Amitav Ghosh has argued in *The Great Derangement* (2016) that climate change, because of its deeply discontinuous and nonlinear nature, resists the concept of probability that is at the heart of the modern Western novel. As noted by Ursula Heise (2019) among others, Ghosh's discussion problematically ignores novelistic work that draws inspiration from genres such as weird, speculative, or fantasy fiction, which deal with the "improbable" and may offer a productive way forward for contemporary literature's engagement with climate change.[6] Nevertheless, one important idea that emerges from this body of work on the contemporary novel is that the genre cannot confront the scale and ramifications of climate change without a significant rethinking of its conventions. Here is where broader considerations on the theory of narrative may prove useful. Building on current work in narratology (including James's econarratology) shows how the resources of narrative form may help the contemporary novel move beyond the impasse highlighted by Ghosh.

A particularly promising narrative strategy in this regard is nonlinearity. As I argue in my case studies, nonlinearity is a narrative form that matches the nonlinearity of climate change itself and is well suited to capture its spatiotemporal discontinuities. In many Western narrative practices (including the novel), the form of narrative closely tracks a character's (typically, the protagonist's) desires and intentions. Quest stories or the "hero's journey" (Campbell 1949) are a straightforward example of how narrative progression privileges the link between the protagonist's mental states and their overt actions: the story is triggered by the character's desire to achieve a certain goal (which can be material or psychological) and ends when the ramifications of that desire have been fully charted out, up to a point of closure (which can be more or less complete and satisfying, of course).[7] This structure, as I suggest more extensively in *Narrating the Mesh* (2021, Ch. 2), is fundamentally teleological and therefore linear, and the narratives of Western modernity – including, again, the novel – are strongly attracted to this

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6 Equally relevant in this context is Fredric Jameson's discussion in *Antinomies of Realism* (2015), which also contains a genre-focused close reading of *Cloud Atlas*. For more on literary genre and the climate crisis, see Trexler (2015) and LeMenager (2017).

7 For a narratological argument along these lines, see Ryan (1991).

linear model. Nevertheless, narrative linearity can be challenged in multiple ways: by loosening the link between chronology and human psychology (for instance, when coincidence is foregrounded), or by introducing parallel story lines and sets of characters who do not converge in the plot. David Bordwell (2008, Ch. 7) discusses this possibility under the rubric of "network narrative"; similarly, Alexander Beecroft (2016) sees "entrelacement" (a multistrand plot) as a trope active in fiction engaging with the globalised world. This multilinear narrative set-up expands the novel's confrontation with global realities such as climate change: it puts pressure on the genre's bias towards individual protagonists and also disrupts the teleological nature of the progression, loosening the link between novelistic narrative and human psychology.

One means of achieving nonlinearity and challenging teleology that seems particularly promising in this context is the foregrounding of materiality – because materiality straddles the divide between human embodiment and inanimate things ("matter"). Recall the snow globe in *Station Eleven*: while calling for human-scale, embodied interaction, the material history and appearance of this object bring into focus tensions across global processes and shift the emphasis away from human consciousness and intentionality. The foregrounding of materiality can thus offer what I call a "glocal epiphany" – an idea to which I turn in the next section.

3 Materiality and the Glocal

The concept of materiality is the focus of various strands of contemporary thinking, particularly New Materialism (Bennett 2010; Coole and Frost 2010) and Bruno Latour's (2005) actor-network theory. Materiality should be distinguished from a conventional Western understanding of matter as passive and inert: material things beckon, they attract us not merely as an object of anthropocentric desire but as quasi-agents capable of shaping human practices and cultures. Waste is a particularly fitting example: discarded things change the environment in which human societies live, sometimes dramatically, as with radioactive materials and other pollutants. The extension of agency to nonhuman materiality is not unproblematic, as Andreas Malm (2018, Ch. 3) points out, because it risks sidelining the way in which human action is always bound up with moral accountability: extending agency to the nonhuman is, from this perspective, a convenient way of sweeping under the rug the urgency of human, political action in times of climate crisis. Nevertheless, the connection drawn by New Materialism between agency and materiality should be understood primarily as a provocation, a conceptual

wager aimed at destabilising an anthropocentric conception of things as insensate matter available for human usage. The material world has its own efficacy, and ascribing agency to it – if only metaphorically and strategically – is a means of realising that the fate of human communities is imbricated with processes beyond direct human control.

It is worth bearing in mind, however, that a focus on material things in narrative doesn't necessarily support a New Materialist agenda. In fact, inanimate objects can and often do reflect anthropocentric ideologies. In Annie Carey's Victorian *Autobiographies* (1870) – a didactic book for a young audience – we encounter a lump of coal that remarks: "It is my great desire and constant tendency to unite with my friend oxygen, . . . while by so doing I can in any way benefit your race" (1870, 101).[8] It is hard to think of a more resonant endorsement of a fossil fuel-based culture than a lump of coal looking forward to becoming fuel for the "benefit" of the human species! The anthropomorphism of Carey's nonhuman *Autobiographies* does *not* support an understanding of materiality as "vibrant" – to borrow Bennett's (2010) felicitous term – but rather reinforces notions of human mastery over passive matter. Carey's narrative is no exception: while material objects abound in Western literature – from the Holy Grail of Arthurian romance to the consumer goods of contemporary fiction – they are mostly a projection screen for human affects and meanings. Their participation in human networks of intersubjectivity and value (including economic value) is foregrounded at the expense of their materiality. There are instances in which narrative can deploy material things to decenter human mastery, however. This is the focus of my discussion in this chapter: material elements that circulate in narrative and in doing so disclose the complexity of humanity's entanglement with the nonhuman world – the entanglement that Timothy Morton (2010) refers to as the human-nonhuman "mesh."

My approach has a great deal in common with the "material ecocriticism" advocated by Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann (2014), which revolves around literature's imagination of materiality. As mentioned above, one of the most commonly voiced objections against material ecocriticism (and New Materialism more generally) is that their extension of agency to the nonhuman tends to collapse differences between human subjects and nonhuman realities, thus potentially downplaying ethical and political shortcomings that sit squarely within the human domain (see Malm 2018; Vermeulen 2020). The climate crisis, as we have seen, is the result of historical processes that originate in Western colonialism and capitalism: doesn't insisting on the concept of materiality paper over these historical

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8 For analysis and discussion of Carey's text, see Bernaerts et al. (2014, 83–88).

responsibilities? The question brings us back to the significance of scale in thinking about human-nonhuman entanglement. On the scale of human interactions but also of political decision-making, it is certainly important to retain the distinction between human agency and subjectivity and nonhuman objects – be it the plastic we carelessly discard into the environment or the coal we extract from the earth. But as soon as one shifts the scale to, say, the millions of years during which coal developed from ancient organisms, matter does begin to appear as dynamic and "vibrant." Likewise, in the spatial domain, reconstructing an object's supply chain (as Mandel does in the snow globe passage) reveals how the physical geography of our planet places significant constraints on human production and consumption. Thinking about these vast spatio-temporal scale does not cancel out our ethical responsibilities, but it places them in a broader context and allows us to better appreciate the stakes of the crisis human societies are facing. In other words, highlighting the efficacy of matter is not an end in itself, but only a move in a long game of decentering anthropocentric assumptions – a game whose ultimate goal is to better come to grips with human-nonhuman entanglement, including our ethical responsibilities vis-à-vis material environments and their nonhuman inhabitants.

There are, as Clark and Woods highlight, significant discontinuities between these scales of reality, and these discontinuities matter in ethical terms, too. The concept of materiality is well positioned to probe these discontinuities, because of how it can work across scales. After all, the human body itself is material. Physical things afford direct, human-scale interaction; they are accessible to the senses. Yet their impact can ripple across scales, just as the plastic bag I used for grocery shopping today will vastly outlive me, or – to move from the macro to the micro – end up in the fish I eat, in the form of microplastic particles.[9] Literary narrative is well suited to foster this imagination of material things – or our own body – as hovering between scalar levels.[10] When this imagination is achieved, readers are afforded a "glocal epiphany" – that is, unique insight into the convergence between local and global scales of reality, but also into the tensions and gaps that separate them.

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9 Morton has coined a useful term for these objects that exist across scales: he calls them "hyperobjects," adding that "these materials confound our limited, fixated, self-oriented frameworks" (2010, 19).

10 As observed by one of this chapter's anonymous readers, materiality was already an important concern in Viktor Shklovsky's (1965) seminal account of defamiliarization as a key effect of literature. I won't be able to pursue this line of argument in the present chapter due to space limitations, but it is certainly a worthwhile perspective.

    The term "glocal" originates in business jargon and entered scholarly discussions in the 1990s, largely thanks to Roland Robertson's work in sociology (see, e.g., Robertson 1994). The term serves as a conceptual means of integrating the opposite impulses of localism and globalisation (see Roudometof 2016). The glocal is not to be understood – at least in the context of this chapter – as a seamless blend; on the contrary, the two narratives I will discuss over the next sections are as interested in integrating spatiotemporal scales as in exploring their areas of disjunction and divergence. Further, this clash of global and local processes is anchored to material elements that travel, physically or symbolically, in the narrative and expose the limits of an understanding of reality grounded exclusively in the human scale. These elements – a diary, in *A Tale for the Time Being*, and birthmarks and the "cloud atlas" analogy in Mitchell's novel – provide glocal epiphanies through their material appearance and metaphorical vagaries. Before turning to these case studies, it bears repeating that both glocal epiphanies and the foregrounding of nonhuman materiality are possibilities for narrative, and they can be deployed jointly (as in the texts I discuss below). However, not all narratives that revolve around material things aspire to question anthropocentric assumptions – indeed, in many cases (as in Carey's *Autobiographies*), they serve to reinforce such assumptions.

4 "The Climate Changes in Her Own Body": Entangled Lives in *A Tale for the Time Being*

A cursory glance at the table of contents of Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being* reveals a long list of chapters monotonously titled "Nao" and "Ruth," in alternating order. Nao and Ruth are the two protagonists of the novel: the former is a Japanese teenager struggling with social isolation and bullying, the latter a writer living a secluded life on Vancouver Island, off the coast of British Columbia. Ruth is clearly an autobiographically inspired figure, who shares first name, profession, and domicile with the novel's author (who divides her time between British Columbia and the United States). Via the two protagonists, the novel stages an intercultural encounter between Japan and North America that also reflects the author's Japanese heritage. Buddhist notions of time and selfhood – particularly through the works of the Zen philosopher Dōgen – play an important role in connecting Nao and Ruth. However, their encounter is never realised in the novel's plot – that is, the two protagonists never meet in actuality. Instead, it is a material object that brings them together: Nao's diary washes up on a beach on Vancouver Island, where Ruth picks it up by chance. As "Ruth" and "Nao" chapters take turns in the

course of the novel's four parts, the reader is thus offered alternating insight into the teenager's struggles and the fictional writer's responses to them.

The beginning of the first "Ruth" chapter is of particular significance because of how it frames the diary's discovery vis-à-vis rampant plastic pollution in the Pacific Ocean. This is the chapter's beginning:

> A tiny sparkle caught Ruth's eye, a small glint of refracted sunlight angling out from beneath a massive tangle of drying bull kelp, which the sea had heaved up onto the sand at full tide. She mistook it for the sheen of a dying jellyfish and almost walked right by it. The beaches were overrun with jellyfish these days, the monstrous red stinging kind that looked like wounds along the shoreline.
>
> But something made her stop. She leaned over and nudged the heap of kelp with the toe of her sneaker then poked it with a stick. Untangling the whiplike fronds, she dislodged enough to see that what glistened underneath was not a dying sea jelly, but something plastic, a bag. Not surprising. The ocean was full of plastic. She dug a bit more, until she could lift the bag up by its corner. It was heavier than she expected, a scarred plastic freezer bag, encrusted with barnacles that spread across its surface like a rash. (Ozeki 2013, 8)

The bag, Ruth soon finds out, contains Nao's diary – the first part of which the reader has read in the novel's opening chapter. This object is explicitly linked to the accumulation of plastic in the Earth's oceans. This is a global phenomenon that emerges, complexly, from patterns of human production and consumption. The proliferation of jellyfish hints at a disruption of the ocean's ecosystem possibly caused by global warming or other anthropogenic interventions (although this is not spelled out by the text). Moreover, the plastic bag is physically enclosed by "whiplike fronds" of kelp – a powerful image of human-nonhuman entanglement or "enmeshment," to use again Morton's terminology. Ruth initially mistakes it for a jellyfish, which suggests the impossibility of drawing a sharp line between natural and man-made entities in times of environmental crisis. The confusion is further underlined by Ozeki's similes, which ascribe human, bodily qualities to nonhuman animals and objects: the jellyfish "looked like wounds," the barnacles are scattered "like a rash" on the bag's surface. This metaphorical traffic destabilises everyday notions of embodiment, blurring the boundary between human corporeality and the materiality of the nonhuman world.[11] Metaphorical language thus brings together a more-than-human, planetary phenomenon caused by human activity (plastic pollution) and the intimacy of human embodiment – more specifically, a diseased, damaged body. Yet Ozeki's style does not

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11 In Caracciolo (2021, Ch. 6), which is based on collaborative work with Andrei Ionescu and Ruben Fransoo, I discuss the role of metaphorical language in channelling human-nonhuman enmeshment.

completely collapse the differentiation between things and bodies, the personal/local scale of this encounter with the diary and the global dimension of environmental devastation: the gap between these scalar levels is uneasily bridged by the similes, but it cannot be completely eliminated.

As the novel progresses, Nao's diary comes to signify another large-scale, planetary phenomenon in addition to plastic pollution: Ruth speculates, plausibly, that it may have been swept up by the catastrophic tsunami that hit northern Japan in 2011 and dragged by oceanic currents (or "gyres") all the way to the Canadian island. The diary is thus doubly linked to the planetary, even if remains tied to the human body, and primarily to the body of its fictional reader, Ruth: "The diary once again felt warm in her hands, which she knew had less to do with any spooky quality in the book and everything to do with the climate changes in her own body" (2013, 37). The phrase "climate changes" cannot be coincidental here: the climate – a large-scale phenomenon per excellence – is internalised and presented as a bodily affect that connects Ruth and Nao, despite their spatial and cultural distance. Indeed, throughout the novel, the body continues to mediate between the physical diary – with its material history – and the global scale. Through her long-distance dialogue with Nao, Ruth comes close to developing what Daisy Hildyard (2017) would call a "second body" – an extension of our bodily self that reflects the way in which planetary phenomena are impacted by human activities (for instance, the plastic pollution foregrounded by Ozeki's novel).

In the encounter between scales, a sense of discontinuity comes to the fore, emphasised by the physical separation between Ruth and Nao. The discontinuity also ties in with a gap in knowledge: even as this particular diary was recovered and turned into a "tale" by Ruth, so much else is lost as individual human histories are affected by planetary phenomena. This point is perhaps best illustrated by Ruth's meditation on mediatized images depicting the devastation wrought by the tsunami:

> The tidal wave, observed, collapses into tiny particles, each one containing a story:
> – a mobile phone, ringing deep inside a mountain of sludge and debris;
> – a ring of soldiers, bowing to a body they've flagged;
> – a medical worker clad in full radiation hazmat, wanding a bare-faced baby who is squirming in his mother's arms;
> – a line of toddlers, waiting quietly for their turn to be tested.
>
> These images, a minuscule few representing the inconceivable many, eddy and grow old, degrading with each orbit around the gyre, slowly breaking down into razor-sharp fragments and brightly colored shards. Like plastic confetti, they're drawn into the gyre's becalmed centre, the garbage patch of history and time. The gyre's memory is all the stuff that we've forgotten. (Ozeki 2013, 114)

Typographically and symbolically, the enumeration of images disrupts the progression of Ruth's narrative by evoking *other* stories that could have been told about the tsunami in addition to Nao's. The diary found by Ruth is only a fragment from the vast debris produced by environmental devastation – a devastation, as the novel reminds us, caused jointly by the nonhuman agency of the tsunami and by human recklessness, because houses and even a nuclear plant (the one in Fukushima) had been built where they shouldn't have.[12] The diary connects the local and the planetary, then, but in doing so it also highlights the magnitude of the impact of man-made materiality on the planet. With its list of easily forgotten mediatic images, the passage evokes the shortcomings of human memory compared to the metaphorical "memory" of the ocean, in which nothing material is lost.[13] Despite bridging Ruth, Nao, and more-than-human scales, the diary also reveals the fault lines between these levels, as well as the ethical and epistemic failures of human societies and governments that are complicit in environmental disasters such as plastic pollution or the consequences of the 2011 tsunami.

The diary represents, then, what I call a glocal epiphany: an uneasy emergence of global phenomena (in this case, environmental threats) on the local scale that is favoured by narrative representation. The emergence is uneasy because it doesn't work towards a perfect blending of the local and the global but rather discloses significant tensions and gaps – perhaps most dramatically in *A Tale for the Time Being*, the fact that Ruth (and the book's readers) never find out whether Nao survived the tsunami or not. Just as discontinuities come to the fore in this scalar encounter, so does an impression of nonlinearity. Let us not forget that the novel stages Ruth's and Nao's lives as materially and narratively intertwined: instead of presenting Nao's diary and then Ruth's responses to it sequentially, Ozeki decides to shift back and forth between them in a way that suggests interpersonal and emotional connection even if the two characters never meet in reality. Narrative linearity, as I argued above, tends to derive from the centrality of a protagonist's desires and intentions, which drive the progression of the story. Here, however, it is the peculiar dialogue *in absentia* between two protagonists that takes centre stage. This dialogue is not directly coupled with the characters' intentions, because it is explicitly framed as a

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12 See this passage: "In towns up and down the coast of Japan, stone markers were found on hillsides, engraved with ancient warnings: Do not build your homes below this point! Some of the warning stones were more than six centuries old. A few had been shifted by the tsunami, but most had remained safely out of its reach" (Ozeki 2013, 114).
13 "Ocean memory" is a metaphor actually in use in oceanography, where it refers to the long-term impact of past climatological events (see, e.g., Old and Haines 2006).

coincidence, a chance encounter determined by the circulation of a material object – the diary – across the Pacific Ocean.[14] Further complicating the linearity of the novel, the rotation of "Ruth" and "Nao" chapters gives rise to a sense of dance-like circularity in the form of the narrative, which echoes the circularity of oceanic "gyres" (or currents) themselves – a point explicitly thematized by the novel.[15] The nonlinear relationship between local and global scales in times of climate crisis is thus effectively captured by the way in which Ozeki's plot weaves together two storylines that affect each other only through the mediation of a physical object and its material history. This narrative structure also contributes to the glocal epiphany at the heart of *A Tale for the Time Being*.

5 "Birthmarks an' Comets'n'all": Rethinking Human-Nonhuman Relations in *Cloud Atlas*

If Ozeki's novel disrupts linearity by intertwining two lives, David Mitchell paints on a much broader canvas in *Cloud Atlas*. The novel contains six autonomous story lines arranged in a Russian doll-like scheme: the first story is interrupted in mid-sentence on page 39 of my edition, with the second half of that story closing the novel; the second story continues in the novel's penultimate chapter, the third in the third-to-last, and so on. Only the sixth story is presented without interruptions, in the novel's sixth and "central" chapter. These stories span multiple centuries, from the 19th century of the first and last chapters ("The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing") to the futuristic setting of chapters 5–7 ("An Orison of Sonmi-45") and 6 ("Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After"). Mitchell's style deftly adapts to the historical periods covered by the novel by mimicking various genres, including the travelogue of the "Pacific Journal," the Künstlerroman, the thriller, and science fiction. Likewise, the spatial setting changes with each chapter, covering a significant portion of the globe, from New Zealand to San Francisco, from Europe to East Asia. The global reach of the novel is accompanied by a meditation on the violence inflicted by Western civilization on both the nonhuman world and Indigenous peoples. This commentary is perhaps most evident in the first storyline, with its focus on colonial relations in the Pacific, and in the sixth story ("Sloosha's Crossin'"), which is set on the Big Island

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14 In Caracciolo (2020), I call this type of narrative structure "object-oriented plotting."
15 See Caracciolo (2021, Ch. 1) for more on nonlinear forms in narrative, including loop-like circularity.

of Hawaii after technological modernity has fallen under the weight of environmental exploitation: "Old Uns tripped their own Fall" (2004, 272), we read in this section, where the unconventional spelling and grammar reflect a possible future evolution of the English language.

The juxtaposition of multiple story lines puts pressure on narrative linearity by making it difficult (but certainly not impossible) for the reader to keep track of the various characters' goals and situations, especially when a story resumes hundreds of pages later. Yet the nonlinearity of Mitchell's novel runs much deeper, and has to do with the specific way in which the stories are interlinked. The diegetic justification for this sequence of stories is that, in each chapter, the protagonist encounters a manuscript containing the previous chapter, or sometimes its audiovisual adaptation: for instance, the narrator of "Letters from Zedelghem" (the book's second chapter, set in Belgium in 1931) "[comes] across a curious dismembered volume" (2004, 64), which turns out to be the "Pacific Journal" of the first chapter. What is peculiar about this sequence is that, as Heather Hicks points out, the various texts discovered by the characters "have little effect on the action" (2016, 74). Put otherwise, neither the discovery of these manuscripts nor the act of reading them have a significant influence on each protagonist's predicament. The texts encountered by the characters merely function as cross-references, grounding the book's overall structure – and therefore increasing the reader's awareness of Mitchell's narrative technique – without contributing to the novel's plotting. Recall the point I made above about the link between linearity and the protagonist's goals and intentions, which tend to steer narrative progression (or the temporal-causal dynamic of plot): in *Cloud Atlas* we have a network of protagonists, but the linkage between them remains extremely loose insofar as the points of convergence – the references to previous chapters – never help the characters achieve their goals.[16] The nonlinearity evoked by Mitchell's novel thus points to the breakdown of human intentionality as the structuring principle behind narrative progression: the overall Russian doll-like form of *Cloud Atlas* is *not* meaningfully grounded in the characters' mental states.

As human intentionality ceases to be the plot's guiding principle, the stories of *Cloud Atlas* are brought together by the suggestion of a mysterious connection between the six protagonists. This connection is materially inscribed on their bodies: all of them have a comet-shaped birthmark on the shoulder blade. This

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16 David Bordwell (2008, Ch. 7) discusses under the rubric of "network narratives" films that deploy a network of characters connected by coincidence rather than strict causation. I would argue that *Cloud Atlas* constitutes a particularly radical instance of network narrative.

detail, which is often mentioned in passing in the novel and never fully explained, evokes notions of reincarnation or metempsychosis: all the protagonists, living in different places and at different times, may possibly host the same soul. This is made explicit by one of the characters in the postapocalyptic "Sloosha's Crossin'" episode, in which we read that Zachry "b'liefed Meronym the Prescient was his presh b'loved Sonmi, yay, he 'sisted it, he said he knowed it all by birthmarks an' comets'n'all" (2004, 309) – Meronym and Sonmi being the protagonists of "Sloosha's Crossin'" and "An Orison of Sonmi-45," respectively. It is, of course, not a coincidence that the birthmark is shaped like a comet, because it points to the intervention of nonhuman (in this case, cosmic) forces in human history. The same is true for the other material element connecting the six characters and their story lines: the titular metaphor of a "cloud atlas," which emerges frequently and compares Mitchell's protagonists to the materiality of the weather (drifting clouds). In "Letters from Zedelghem" (chapters 2 and 10), *Cloud Atlas Sextet* is the title of a polyphonic piece where "each solo [in the first part] is interrupted by its successor: in the second [part], each interruption is recontinued, in order" (2004, 445) – an apt description of the novel's structure. In "Sloosha's Crossin'," the artistic vision of the sextet turns into a sense of supernatural connection between human subjectivity and the nonhuman world: "Souls cross ages like clouds cross skies, an' tho' a cloud's shape nor hue nor size don't stay the same, it's still a cloud an' so is a soul . . . . Only Sonmi the east an' the west an' the compass an' the atlas, yay, only the atlas o' clouds" (2004, 308). The nonlinear structure of *Cloud Atlas* is thus based on mysterious resonances between human bodies and nonhuman materiality (the comet and the clouds). Such resonances bring together the six protagonists while uncoupling the narrative progression from an overarching human intentionality.

It is important to keep in mind that the protagonists are distributed in space and time: the birthmarks and the "cloud atlas" metaphor serve as glocal epiphanies, bridging the characters' bodies – and their individual story lines – with the planetary scale. If *A Tale for the Time Being* uses a single material object, Nao's diary, to bring together two characters on either side of the Pacific, *Cloud Atlas* deploys a multiplicity of stylistic and diegetic cues to suggest material convergence between the planetary and local scales and embodied experience.[17] This emergence of planetary connections across the story lines also discloses conceptual tensions and epistemic gaps. Most straightforwardly, the exact nature of the

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17 This approach also draws attention to the materiality of the book, *Cloud Atlas*, readers are holding in their hands. In fact, Astrid Bracke's (2018, Ch. 1) ecocritical reading of *Cloud Atlas* brings out its metafictional dimension – how its material presentation offers metacommentary on the novel as the Western narrative genre par excellence.

characters' linkage is never spelled out: as the most distinctly fantastical element of the novel, the relationships between the protagonists' "souls" remains uncertain throughout, even as the whole narrative structure hinges on it.

Also significant is that the supernatural connectedness of this "atlas of souls" is meant to oppose another kind of connectedness: namely, the economic integratedness of a globalised world, which – as Mitchell's chapters highlight repeatedly – depends on capitalist greed and Western colonialist practices. "In an individual, selfishness uglifies the soul; for the human species, selfishness is extinction" (2004, 508), we read on the novel's last page. These stakes are brought out clearly by the postapocalyptic setting of "Sloosha's Crossin'," in which human communities have barely survived an existential crisis brought about by the West's destructiveness. In different ways, the six protagonists work against "selfishness" in their individual story lines, embracing sympathy for the dispossessed and resisting oppression at the hands of the ruling class. The characters' supernatural bond thus serves as an alternative to the ruinous integration of capitalism, which may appear to connect economically but actually creates unbridgeable rifts between those in power and disenfranchised communities. By appealing to prescientific ideas of reincarnation, Mitchell's glocal epiphanies offer what Hubert Zapf calls "imaginative counter-discourse" (2001, 93): they envisage an alternative way of thinking about human intersubjectivity as well as human-nonhuman relations, one that rejects – through its appeal to the fantastic and the supernatural – the devastation wrought by capitalism. Thus, even as they bridge the gap between the individual and the planetary, these glocal epiphanies do not sideline human ethical responsibilities in the name of an undifferentiated concept of "materiality"; on the contrary, Mitchell's narrative strategies deploy the materiality (of bodies and of nonhuman entities, such as the comet and the clouds) to reveal the colonial violence inherent in the capitalist system. As these tensions and gaps emerge, the nonlinearity of this *Cloud Atlas* destabilises faith in linear ideas of progress and economic growth, which are shown to lead straight to societal collapse.

6 Conclusion

My discussion of scale in this chapter has brought into view two concepts that can help us come to grips with the relationship between planetary and local phenomena: discontinuity and nonlinearity. As Clark and Woods have shown in the field of ecocriticism, going from the scale of human bodies in interaction to the scale of vast planetary events does not involve a smooth conceptual progression but rather a number of divides and tensions that make the global difficult to imagine or

experience as a totality. The global, in this sense, is profoundly different from the self-contained snow globe from which this chapter took its cue. The ruptures in our thinking of the global are an offshoot of its nonlinearity, a concept that denotes the way in which a dynamic system adapts to changing conditions. In short, nonlinearity entails that the planetary scale is more than the sum of its parts. Throughout this chapter, climate change has served as my main example of a planetary phenomenon that arises nonlinearly from physical processes (greenhouse gas emissions leading to global warming, etc.), socio-economic biases, and cultural factors in, especially, the Global North. Not only does climate change crisscross binary distinctions between "natural" and anthropogenic processes, but it is a phenomenon that perhaps more than any other highlights the disjunctions between everyday life and the cultural imagination of the globe (where "cultural imagination" includes, but is not limited to, scientific models of the climate crisis).

While the discontinuities and nonlinearity of the global elude everyday experience, literary narrative is uniquely capable of implementing strategies that make these concepts tangible. Crucially, as I have argued in *Narrating the Mesh* (2021), this operation involves a foregrounding of formal devices, such as nonlinear plotting, that break with the conventions of Western narrative genres – particularly the novelistic bias towards an individual protagonist and teleological progression. My main focus here has been on how literary fiction can provide "glocal epiphanies," which function as concrete sites for the evocation of the planetary scale within the fabric of characters' local, embodied experiences. The glocal doesn't involve a seamless integration of scales but rather the foregrounding of tensions that can be extremely productive for narrative and for readers' interpretive meaning-making. In both my examples of glocal epiphanies, Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being* and Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, the epiphany is tied to a focus on materiality. The former novel follows the physical circulation of an object (a diary) that unites the two main characters despite their geographical and cultural distance. In *Cloud Atlas*, six story lines are brought together by two material elements, the first of which is thematic, the second stylistic: a shared mark on the protagonists' bodies – the comet-shaped birthmark – and the parallel between meteorological phenomena (the clouds) and their seemingly incorporeal souls. Ozeki's and Mitchell's works are here representative of a larger category of "Anthropocene fictions" (Trexler 2015) that deploy materiality to disrupt binaries between human and natural processes and channel the scale of the ecological crisis.

Materiality has been extensively theorised in New Materialism and related nonhuman-oriented philosophies. However, the New Materialist extension of agency to the nonhuman has been criticised for diverting attention from meaningful political action. Andreas Malm reasons: "If matter has agency in new materialism, then, it is because everything and anything can be said to have it" (2018, 44).

For Malm, the New Materialist notion of agency is so vague that it fails to capture the way in which human action – unlike inanimate processes such as rising sea levels – always implies ethical accountability. Without entering the philosophical debate directly, the literary narratives I have explored in this chapter demonstrate that the interest in materiality need not elide distinctions between human responsibility and the workings of nonhuman things and processes. In both glocal epiphanies, the shortcomings of political decision-making and the Western imagination of the nonhuman remain well-delineated. Indeed, the clash of local and planetary scales draws attention to the failure of short-term thinking (e.g., building homes in areas exposed to tsunamis, in Ozeki's Japan) and Western notions of linear technological progress (particularly in the postapocalyptic chapter of Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*). In both novels, the critique of linear concepts is enacted by the multilinear and decentralised form of the plot – a strategy that holds particular promise vis-à-vis literary engagements with the climate crisis and with planetary processes more generally.

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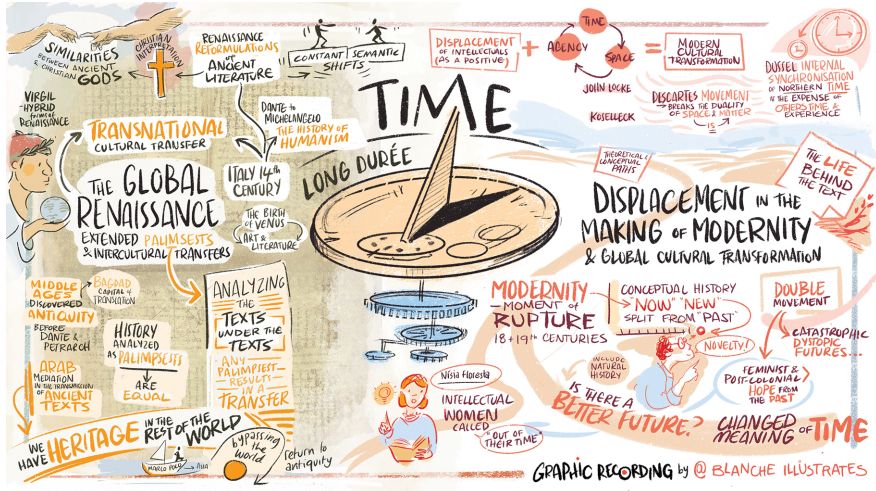
Part III: **Time**

Michel Espagne

The Global Renaissance: Extended Palimpsests and Intercultural Transfers in a Transcontinental Space

To study the global circulation of literary works, we must necessarily imagine a global history of culture that goes beyond the circulation of printed objects themselves. The historiography of Renaissance culture, for instance, has its own history that begins with Burckhardt's famous work on the history of the Renaissance. Burckhardt is interested in art and literature, but his work mainly concerns the political and cultural context they fit into; thanks to his work, the Renaissance is often defined as a network of global – or at least transcultural – relations. "Renaissance" may be used interchangeably as the name for a historical period or a certain style of intertextual references to the ancients, and it is also a term used by historical actors and an analytical term.

The German historian Bernd Roeck (2017) recently endeavoured to provide a definition of the Renaissance from a cultural transfer and global-historical perspective by approaching the Renaissance as the result of a process of circulation involving the whole inhabited world. Roeck's successful work, which builds on an entire body of recent publications on the topic (Gamsa 2013; Blitstein 2021; Maissen and Mittler 2018), will provide a central common thread for the contribution we aim to make in this chapter. The balance he establishes between synchronic and diachronic circulation is an invitation to use a figure familiar to rhetoric[1] but not so deeply rooted among historians, that of the palimpsest.

The term *Renaissance* typically refers to a period of closely interwoven literary and artistic history that developed, mainly in Italy and particularly in Tuscany, in the 15th century.[2] The period begins with a "pre-Renaissance" that includes Dante Alighieri's writings at the beginning of the 14th century, most notably the *Divine Comedy*, and it is characterised by a return to literary works and artistic forms from Antiquity, by the rediscovery of Latin literature, and by the renunciation of the literary and artistic forms specific to the Middle Ages. The Renaissance became an object of particular fascination and study during the 19th century, as the analysis of pictorial forms gave rise to art history and the nascent science of

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1 Even high school students nowadays know the book of Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré* (Paris, Seuil 1982), which inherited a long tradition of rhetoric criticism but rejects any historical use of the notion.

2 The term "rinascita" appeared first in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (c. 1550).

philology, developed in Germany, aimed to reconstruct the primitive forms of ancient literature. In German-speaking Switzerland, Jakob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) founded a new historiography around the notion of the Renaissance. Curiously, Burckhardt's work does not focus on literature or art in themselves, but rather on the conditions that enabled the emergence of these aesthetic forms in Italy. In turn, Roeck's monumental Renaissance history, first published in 2017, aims to complete Burckhardt's approach under a different paradigm, situating the Renaissance in a global context where Italy is viewed as one country among many.

Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Renaissance was the main subject studied by art historians in general, and by founding figure Aby Warburg in particular. From his thesis on Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (Warburg 1980) onwards, Warburg's critical work has emphasised the close links between literature and art. A close inspection reveals that many pictorial works from the Italian Renaissance were rooted in ancient literary works that had been assimilated into the mainstream of the period; Botticelli himself was inspired by Homeric hymns, which had been introduced to Italians by the Renaissance philologist Politian. But Warburg also underlines a more important dimension of Renaissance works of art: if they took the forms of Antiquity and gave them a kind of second life, bringing them back to life, it was by completely modifying their meaning, by giving them a kind of second life and moving them from their original semantic context into a new semantic context that transformed them. The Renaissance, as Warburg understands it, represents a kind of diachronic cultural transfer (Espagne and Werner 1988; Espagne 2013) that can be compared with later schools of thought from the Chinese context, inviting us to generalise the principle.

A historian's role in assessing this cultural transfer therefore involves studying both pictorial and literary works of art to look for former configurations of meaning that have been erased by subsequent semantic layers. This process could be described through the figure of the palimpsest, which is too seldom used in historiographical approaches to studying cultural transfers. A palimpsest is a parchment – or any manuscript created prior to the use of paper – on which an earlier text has been scratched away or otherwise erased to write a new text. The old text, which is often ancient, can generally be deciphered, so many fragments of ancient works have been transmitted through palimpsests. Palimpsests can also be found on materials other than parchment, such as wax tablets, and they can even involve the use of superscribing symbols.

The notion of the palimpsest, which is useful for understanding the connections between the Renaissance and Antiquity, can be abstracted from there. It is also worth noting that the search for a text under the text inevitably leads to a widening of the old strata beyond the linguistic or geographical space of the

text that the analysis begins with. Viewed as a palimpsest, Renaissance literature can be understood as a literature that encompasses not only literary forms inscribed over a long period of time, but forms inscribed in a spatial dimension that transcends national, cultural or linguistic borders and could qualify as global – even if we often lack an understanding of how these formal traditions coalesce in the Renaissance palimpsest text.

If the Renaissance revived a transformed Antiquity, it was certainly also aware that the text below the text was itself only the upper layer of a complex palimpsest that drew not only on older periods of Greco-Latin Antiquity, but also on foreign cultures. Plato visited Egypt; Herodotus, who had Carian ancestry, also made a trip to Egypt (Bernand 1994), later described in his work. Democritus is considered a great traveller because he visited not only Egypt but also Persia and Babylon, and because he drew inspiration from sources he found among the priests and scholars of these countries. Pyrrho's scepticism is supposed to have been inspired by his trips to India as a member of Alexander's armies, and the many parallels that have been noted between Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the Assyrian epic of Gilgamesh and other Hittite texts make Homer's texts the result of older literary circulations (Schrott 2008). As they were bringing Antiquity back to life and even travelling through time to complete its journey through space, the artists and intellectuals of the period designated as the Renaissance were not necessarily aware of the fact that the texts they transmitted anew had already been nourished during Antiquity itself by global circulations; however, these circulations did exist and are of increasing interest to philologists.

These circulations became even more visible in the Middle Ages. First, it should be noted that the Middle Ages discovered Antiquity long before the time of Dante and Petrarch, even if the period was not addressed as clearly as it was during the Renaissance. For example, Charlemagne's biographer Alcuin, has been connected to a movement that has been called the Carolingian Renaissance, and the *Liber glossarum*, from the same period, was a large compendium of ancient sources intended to provide a framework for teaching. Rabanus Maurus, a Benedictine monk from Fulda, also passed on knowledge inherited from Antiquity and made a great contribution to the Carolingian Renaissance. This discovery of Antiquity is not, however, limited to the Western Middle Ages: The Koran is now considered to have been nourished with references to Antiquity. The Suda, a vast compilation of ancient literature, originated in Byzantium during the High Middle Ages and conveys information about Antiquity that was lost elsewhere. After the Carolingian Renaissance, one might also speak of a Renaissance of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, since the poets of this time (Hugh Primas of Orleans, of course, and a small circle of elites) used Ovid, Homer and Sallust in their production in Latin at the end of the eleventh century.

The Renaissance reproduces what happened during the Carolingian period or the eleventh–twelfth century, and each of these stages was characterised by a circulation that encompassed a space much larger than that of the Italian peninsula, a space that integrated, at a minimum, Byzantium and the Arab world.

Arab mediation is a classic phenomenon in the transmission of ancient texts. Gerard of Cremona (1114–1187) translated many Arabic texts into Latin, many of which were Greek texts that had been translated into Arabic. Among these very numerous Latin transpositions were Galen; Ptolemy; and, notably, Aristotle. Gerbert of Aurillac, who became pope under the name of Silvester II, was said to have studied occult sciences among the Arabs; at the very least, it is certain that he introduced Al Kwarizmi's mathematical texts to Europe. Many mediaeval Arab philosophers, like Al Ghazali (1058–1111) and Averroes (1126–1198), were also aware of Greek philosophers, and Dante thus refers to Averroes as a well-known commentator on Aristotle. In general, the role of Arab mediators between Greek philosophy and the Christian West is now part of Hellenist philology's classical fields of research (Büttgen, Libera, Rashed, and Rosier-Catach 2009). Sicily played a central role in the organisation of circulation between Antiquity, the Arab world and the Christian West, home to Greek-to-Latin translators such as the Archdeacon of Catania Henricus Aristippus, who proposed a Latin version of the Phaedo of Plato, and geographers like Al Idrissi (1100–1166), who wrote a description of the world for King Roger of Sicily. Not only is the rediscovery of Antiquity inseparable from the phenomenon of Arab mediation, but one could also speak of a Renaissance in the Arab world to which the Renaissance in the Latin West may have been, more or less indirectly, the heir. We have to accept that Renaissance refers less to an historical period in a clear, defined space than to the revival of cultural layers that may have been imported from another part of the world (Goody 2010). In the Middle Ages, for instance, Baghdad was a capital for the translation of Aramaic, Persian, Greek and Sanskrit texts into Arabic (Teixidor 2007). Bernd Roeck reminds us that the Renaissance refers to a global circulation of ancient writings, which themselves are the result of an even more archaic circulation.

If the Renaissance is to be defined as a form of diachronic transfer of ancient texts or works of art into a more recent period, this movement must be correlated with alternative forms of circulation. We know, for example, that the great Persian king Khosrow I (531–579) was himself the author of some writings on Aristotle's logic and on astronomy, and that one could find at his court not only Greek scholars, but also Chinese and Indian scholars (Abdullaev 2016). Furthermore, elements of Greek thought fertilised intellectual contexts that are not directly linked to the Florentine Renaissance but nevertheless evoke forms of Renaissance. The role of southern Spain in the dissemination of ancient texts is also worth recalling. Maimonides (1135–1204), for example, was not only a connoisseur of the texts of

Judaism, but also of Aristotelian texts in the versions provided by Al Farabi, a commentator on Plato and Aristotle. Maimonides went into exile in Cairo, making the city a centre for the development of dialogue between Arab and Jewish traditions, and for the development of Greek heritage – a sort of Cairo Renaissance. These alternative circulations are clearly documented in a number of canonical texts. For example, the legend of Barlaam and Josephat has an Indo-Persian origin and narrates the life of the Buddha, but it gave rise to several later versions – first Zoroastrian, then Arabic, then Georgian, then Greek, before being integrated from the thirteenth century onwards into the Golden Legend of Jacobus da Varagine (Forster 2012). The final stages of the text's metamorphosis and its geographical displacement have led many to overlook its primitive versions, which invites us to apply the characteristic treatment of the palimpsest, which consists in analysing the texts under the texts. The examples of the humanist pre-Renaissance and late Renaissance are not as drastic as that of this legend,[3] but both were nevertheless fed by broad peregrinations. Erasmus of Rotterdam studied in Paris and London, where he met Thomas More, before settling in Basel. Written in London, the *Praise of Folly* draws on a tradition of ironic panegyric dating back to Lucian of Samosata. Within the framework of the late Renaissance, the life of Giordano Bruno (Arnould 2021), which was marked by his debates on Aristotelianism, was also a life of peregrination, since Bruno crossed France and went to England and Germany, where a part of his work was published, before returning to Italy.

The classical Renaissance, which extends from Dante to Michelangelo and unfolds mainly in central Italy, is also the result of a cultural transfer. Cardinal Bessarion, Patriarch of Constantinople, who came to Italy in the middle of the fifteenth century, brought with him a thousand manuscripts that were deposited in the Saint Mark's library in Venice and went on to nourish the Hellenist branch of humanism. After arriving from Greece, Manuel Chrysoloras occupied a chair of Greek studies in Florence from 1397 onwards. The displacement of handwritten texts that go on to join the lower strata of a kind of palimpsest is part of the history of humanism. The large libraries that have been formed, not only in Italy, indicate movements of knowledge across space (Nuovo 2013). Even before they were integrated into new productions as a deep stratum, the works collected in these libraries gave rise to a search for the original version. The notary Salutati, representative of Florentine humanism, endeavoured to save ancient works (Virgil, Lucian, Horace) from disappearance by acquiring the manuscripts, and to

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3 The model of *translatio* may still be used for the pre-renaissance. See Curbet and Reche (2014).

correct the texts transmitted and restore them to a primitive form. The idea of an authentic text, free from the dross of history, is in fact a preparatory step for reinterpretation. Any palimpsest results in a transfer. Renaissance authors considered even "imitatio" and copying a compliment to the original author.

The Renaissance period is concurrent with the discovery of America, and the manuscripts that circulated during the period and earlier preparatory periods were often travelogues. Christopher Columbus wrote notes in the margins of his copy of Marco Polo's *Travels*, thus extending the world to Asia. After Columbus's probable reading of Strabo, translated in 1469,[4] he was able to conclude that the riches of Asia could be accessed not only by land, as the mediaeval travellers Giovanni Da Pian del Carpine, William of Rubruck, or Marco Polo himself had accessed them, but also by sailing around the globe in the other direction. This global perception of the world – the idea of entering Asia after sailing around the world – is a moment of return to Antiquity. The Renaissance was accompanied by concern that the rediscovery of Antiquity should not be limited to Italy. This is why the German Konrad Celtis, editor of the tragedies of Seneca, Germania of Tacitus, and Apuleius, incited Apollo in one of his poems to move from Italy to Germany as he had once passed from Greece to Italy. Celtis's interest in incorporating spatial travel into the use of ancient literary models is reflected in his project of creating a general description of Germany. The palimpsest takes on an archaeological dimension for him, as he is interested in the material traces of the Roman Empire on German soil (*Germania Illustrata*). This keen awareness of human inscription within a global space is characteristic of the Renaissance period, independently of Europe. Admiral Zheng He, who left Nanjing at the beginning of the fifteenth century on an exploration that would take him to Mozambique, was as much inspired by the idea of a global world as Timur, who tried in vain to keep the two parts of Eurasia together in the same framework.

If we look back on the history of Renaissance literature, it is largely a history of reformulations of ancient literature – reformulations that involved constant semantic shifts. Prometheus is present in the work of Boccaccio, but he is not chained to the Caucasus; instead, he crosses the mountain, and the eagle that tears his liver becomes simply the weight of the thoughts that obsess him when he tears at nature's secrets. In the twenty-sixth Canto of Dante's Inferno, Ulysses is equated with the thirst for discovery that guides human wanderings, while in Petrarch, he seems to embody human intellectual freedom. These two heroes of the Italian Renaissance represent the recasting and reinterpretation of two heroic

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4 The whole literature concerning Columbus mentions that he read Strabo and was inspired by Greek geography.

figures of Antiquity. The *Dream of Poliphilus* (Hypnerotomachia) is a text full of innumerable Hellenisms that are lost in the description of architectural works of Antiquity. Homer, Virgil, and Ovid provide models that we encounter, for example, in Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (1504). Machiavelli's work is one of the attempts to resuscitate Antiquity, and he even defines this resurrection as Italy's role in history. This form of revival is not simply the result of the Italian Renaissance: the German Meistersinger Hans Sachs used and transformed ancient motifs in the thousands of poems and dramas that make up his work, relying on Greco-Latin texts by Aristophanes, Plautus and Terence, Apuleius, Plutarch, and Pliny, among others. In his hands, these are less sources than transformed materials.[5]

There is a strong link between episodes of humanism and the councils that convened scholars from across Europe and even the Ottoman empire. The Council of Constance, for instance, provided Cardinal Guillaume Fillastre with an opportunity to copy an ancient cosmography and a work by Ptolemy. The papal secretary explored the manuscripts of the cloister of Sankt Gallen, where he found a manuscript of Vitruvius, the speeches of Cicero, a manuscript of the rhetoric of Quintilian, and above all the manuscript of Lucretius's *De natura rerum*. The Councils of Basel (1431) and Florence (1437) both represent stages in the constitution of the collections of manuscripts that humanists would go on to focus their attention on. And it was in connection with the Council of Ferrara that Cardinal Bessarion's famous collection of Greek manuscripts arrived in Italy. These manuscripts were not immediately readable by most Italians, but the teaching of Greek was spreading. Leonzio Pilato, a Greek from Calabria, taught Greek in Florence and translated Homer, in particular. This translation facilitated the constitution of the Homeric palimpsest in Renaissance culture. Even as they are translated, ancient texts are simultaneously analysed to define the first version – the so-called archetype – and a philological investigation takes shape. The knowledge gathered from this investigation is also transformed in new works; Salutati's text *The Labors of Hercules* was a sort of compendium of references to Antiquity that developed, in the process, a poetics inspired by Aristotle. If Montaigne's essays made extensive use of excerpts from ancient literature, sometimes by juxtaposing quotations, these excerpts paradoxically ended up highlighting a subject, and are not an addition of scholarly references. Here, again, the palimpsest corresponds to a dynamic of transformation.

The resemantisation of the ancient heritage of the Renaissance is particularly – and perhaps above all – about the Christian interpretation of ancient

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5 We could refer for instance to the translation and rewriting of Plautus by Hans Sachs "Ein comedi Plauti/heist Monechmo unnd hat 5 actus" (1548).

literature. The goal was to show that the ancient gods celebrated by Greek or Roman literature were closely related to the great figures of the Christian tradition, even if every connection between a Greek god and a Christian figure can be analysed differently according to its historical context. Once again, we must keep in mind that this Renaissance palimpsest actually begins very early, since as early as the eleventh century, the Byzantine theologian Psellos (1017–1078) strove to bring Plato's philosophy and Christian doctrine closer together. Dante and Petrarch readily cited Plato for religious purposes, suggesting that he offers a key to understanding Revelation. Apollo, because of his beauty, was brought close to Christ; Venus approached the Virgin Mary, and the Renaissance only inherited the preestablished link between Marian worship and courtly love. Even Ovid was Christianised. This palimpsest thus led to the emergence, from the deep layers beneath Renaissance literature, of a kind of primary theology of whose development Christianity would essentially ensure. This was the idea of Gemistus Pletho (1355–1452), who mingled Zarathustra and Greek philosophy in the palimpsestic reconstruction of a theology of origins while representing Greece at the Council of Ferrara. The notion that various forms of rites, at different times, make it possible to pay homage to God is a constant among Renaissance writers, and it was expressed by Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), among others.

In order to understand Christian texts, Renaissance thinkers had to study ancient Egypt, the India of the Brahmans, and the Orphic rites. The Hellenized Jews made Moses an ancestor of Plato. The recognition of this diversity in the forms of the divine was favoured by the councils. Generally speaking, humanists performed the work of reforming theologians – translating of the Bible, for example – which presupposed philological work. The concern for Antiquity among humanists in the service of theology takes various forms. Reuchlin (1455–1522) felt that learning Hebrew must be encouraged to enable a new reading of the Bible and provide new access to the divine word. Konrad Gessner (1516–1565), who published a bibliography of 10,000 Hebrew, Greek and Latin titles, introduced a global dimension to this search for a link between ancient languages and religious literature with his 1555 text *Mithridates*, which presented a hundred different documented languages, notably, through as many versions of the Our Father prayer (Gessner 1974). Gessner was not only a linguist; he was also a proponent of a holistic approach to theology involving different fields of knowledge.

The invention of the printing press was one of the characteristic phenomena of the Renaissance that globalised the palimpsest in the way Konrad Gessner's book did. Robert Estienne and his son Henri Estienne published a gigantic thesaurus of the Greek language that served as a supplement to the Greek edition of the Bible, but also to editions of Terence, Plautus, and Aristotle. Vast compilations could now take stock of ancient texts spread over the space of cultures. Hartmann

Schedel (1440–1514) published a universal chronicle, illustrated with xylography, that brought together everything that was known about the world's countries in a single text based on ancient geographers. Schedel was one of the first Germans to learn Greek. The globalised Renaissance – that is to say, Renaissance on a large scale involving many parts of the world – moved from Tuscany to Nuremberg. It also moved to England, and we know that the texts of Shakespeare, which represent a late Renaissance, incorporate allusions to Plautus, Ovid, and Boccaccio – in other words, to Antiquity, or to the treatment of Antiquity by the Italian Renaissance. They even transfer early Italian plays. Finally, the Renaissance moved to France, where Montaigne willingly used sceptical and stoic authors and did not fail to refer to Seneca, Plutarch, Lucretius, or Pyrrho.

Nevertheless, the attempts to organise Antiquity – and the world more broadly – in such vast compilations also resulted in arrangements and a return to practices that relativize Antiquity. It seems, then, that the palimpsest turned against itself. Against this backdrop, Petrus Ramus, who reorganised knowledge in his philosophy, would place reason above Aristotle, and the works of Giordano Bruno evinced a desire to break away from research into a primary theology specific to Antiquity. Galileo was very interested in Dante's poetry and his topography of Hell, but even if his physics started from the Greek physics he had practised, they eventually turned to empirical research. The palimpsest must stop imposing its authority; superscription must be renewed.

The model we have applied to Italy and Europe between the end of the fourteenth and the middle of the sixteenth century is also valid in other contexts that are distant in time or in space. Moreover, it also has validity in the field of art history, which is difficult to separate from the history of literature. When Aby Warburg analyses Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, he turns to Lucretius (Rubinstein 1997). In the quattrocento, the decorative motifs were borrowed from old decorations, even they took on a new value in their new, different context; the Florentine architecture of the time derived its legitimacy from a reading of Vitruvius. This use of Greco-Roman Antiquity in art spread even in a very early globalised world. A silver cup of Persian origin that depicted Greek warriors leaving for Troy was found in the tomb of the Roman general Li Xian, who died in Guyuan in Ningxia in 569. The Bolognese architect Aristotele Fioravanti, who built the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Virgin in the heart of Moscow's Kremlin at the end of the fifteenth century, reveals the global dimension of the use of ancient forms and the export of Italian models. The ancient palimpsest can be found as early as the first century in the Buddhas of Gandara, syntheses of Indian, Persian, Greek, and Roman references that were found on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan and later transported to China. One might also recall how the urban geometry characteristic of the work of Hippodamus of Miletus is

found in countless urban contexts as distant as, for example, Baghdad. The universal dimension of the Renaissance palimpsest is all the more evident when one includes works of art in the field of systems of signs, which are likely to contain in their deep layers moments from ancient literatures.

The palimpsest, which concentrates the literature of the Italian Renaissance and the deep layers of a reinterpreted ancient literature, spread throughout the world through what has been called the "Hybrid Renaissance" (Burke 2016; Singh 2021). A particularly striking example of this form of Renaissance can be found in Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616), who represented an "indigenous Renaissance". The son of a Spaniard and an Inca woman, he focused in his *Comentarios Reales de los Incas* on giving a description of Inca culture. To find the system of references that would allow him to complete this exercise, he referred to Greco-Latin Antiquity. He uses the Roman Empire to understand the nature of the Inca Empire and Neoplatonism to explain the influence of the Inca himself. His work is an example of how a Renaissance text presenting a then-unknown world can be crossed with ancient references that it reinterprets according to this new usage. This configuration of the Hybrid Renaissance is widely found in the history of the various regions of Latin America before the Conquest. Efforts to understand the nature of the Aztec gods, such as the texts of the missionary and proto-ethnologist Sahagun (1500–1590), often compared them to ancient Roman: Chicomecoatl referred to Ceres and Tzatzolteotl was equated with Venus. Ovid enjoyed particular success in America and made a significant contribution to the Hybrid Renaissance and the specific palimpsest it represents. His *Metamorphoses* particularly inspired the Métis populations who formed after the Conquest, whose motifs can be found in frescoes, and in 1577, the first American edition of *Metamorphoses* was published in Mexico City. In a house of Cuzco, the war between various factions of conquistadors was described via the struggle of Caesar and Pompey. The gods of Antiquity found new life in this specific Renaissance, appearing in frescoes on the walls of Latin American mansions, and in travelogues, we find allusions to the warrior women of antiquity, the Amazons. A few monastery libraries that were well-fitted with works of Greco-Roman literature have served as reservoirs for these Indian reactivations of Antiquity (Bernand and Gruzinski 1993).

Virgil also played a special role in the hybrid forms of the Renaissance, as we can observe in at least two cases. When Luís de Camões (1525–1580) wrote the *Os Lusiadas*, he chronicled Portugal's expansion around the world, recalling Vasco da Gama's voyage and his own stay in Macao in the middle of the sixteenth century, which allows his epic poem to claim a form of globality. But *Os Lusiadas* also borrows much from Virgil, and one of the poem's underlying figures is the navigator Aeneas, founder of another empire – that of Rome. Another case is that of the Spanish poet Alonso de Ercilla (1533–1594) author of *La*

Araucana, an epic poem that describes the Spanish conquest of Latin America, and especially the struggle against the Indian populations of the continent's southern reaches. Ercilla's epic is the founding text of Chilean literature, and it is also marked by references to Virgil. Ercilla's humanist orientation leads him to present a Mapuche Indian as the true hero of the fight against the Spaniards. As in Virgil's epic, the poem's actual topic is the birth of a nation, Voltaire compared one of the heroes of *La Araucana* to Nestor in the *Iliad*. Thus, Virgil is one of the Latin-language authors with the most visible presence in the palimpsest of the Renaissance, found as much in the founding epic of the Portuguese Empire as in the founding epic of Chilean national literature. In efforts to rediscover an early theology, Virgil is also recast as a Christian poet. He is a constant figure in the palimpsest of hybrid Renaissance.

If Virgil belongs to the deep text of the founding epics in Portugal or Latin America, Antiquity more broadly served to found national historiographies during the Renaissance. The founding myths that developed during the Renaissance are like invitations to create a nation (a collective entity formed on ethnic basis) in line with the greatness of ancient origins. The Germania of Tacitus remains, so to speak, a moment in the Roman Empire. This empire is much more directly present in the work of State historians like the Venetian Paolo Parute (1540–1588), who strove in his history of Venice to present the Republic as a counter-model to the Roman Empire, and therefore always connected with it. Moreover, the history of science calls for ancient models. Copernicus refers to Cicero to criticise Ptolemy, and he readily mentions the Pythagoreans. This gesture characterises historians who base their discourse on references to Antiquity, and Copernicus's development of scientific knowledge cannot do without it either. Antiquity invites us to reconstruct filiations and appears as an instance of legitimation.

In his attempt to write the definitive book about a Global Renaissance, Bernd Roeck opens up important historiographical avenues on several levels. First, the Renaissance is plural. If we focus on the period defined in the most traditional sense as the Renaissance, we must observe on the one hand that the aforementioned deep layers are not only Greco-Latin but also Arabo-Persian. The ancient texts themselves resulted from imports and crossing, though nineteenth century readings of Renaissance texts were largely blind to the wealth of knowledge underneath the palimpsest, because readers had gradually become more ignorant of those cultural references. The figure of the palimpsest, which Bernd Roeck perhaps does not completely grasp, accounts for these multiple textual configurations.

On the other hand, Roeck insists on a break, an overview of the Renaissance that results in its distancing from Antiquity. In the field of medical writings, the name and legendary figure of Paracelsus (1494–1541) stands out, since he wrote prolifically, was one of the German language's first authors, and

developed the theory of a vital force. But Paracelsus also wanted to break free from the writings of the Ancients, and he burned Galen and Avicenna to study the action of natural substances, which led to the emergence of the idea of a natural substance. This rejection of Antiquity is symbolised, so to speak, by a caricature from 1550 that depicts Virgil's Laocoon transformed into a monkey fighting against snakes. Giovanni Battista della Porta (1535–1615), the author of the 20-volume *Magic of Nature*, outlined an evolution from magical thinking to an understanding of the laws of natural causality that leads him to gradually detach himself from the world of signs linked to the reception of ancient texts. Peter Ramus (1515–1572) reorganised the order of knowledge according to its practical applications. As we can see, even all the authors who announced their intention to overtake the Renaissance were nourished with Greco-Roman and Arab literature, and the turn itself is a form of allegiance.

There are obviously many Renaissances, and we can encounter them in many regions of the Ottoman Empire, in the Arab world, in India. Some of them took place long after the sixteenth century, like the Maori Renaissance in the second half of the 20th century. But ultimately, Bernd Roeck defends the paradoxical thesis that the Renaissance really was born in the European region. In Japan, for example, the only opening to the wider world came through very limited Dutch studies until the 19th century, and in the Ottoman Empire, Sultan Bayezid's (1447–1512) ban on printing in Arabic characters had the effect of isolating the Arab world and freezing it in time. Even authors like historian Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) remained unknown in the Arab world. The production of books in China also experienced a period of long stagnation; even though Ricci had translated Euclid, Chinese science remained in a situation of poor development for a long time. The Arab world has long ignored the turn embodied by Galileo and Kepler. The states that came out of Renaissance Europe, even if they presently represent only 12% of the planet's population, have produced more than half of the world's wealth. And the conclusion is far less hopeful than that of Roeck's volume brought if we take into account the first decades of the twenty-first century, when wars were fought over the ethnocentrism that Roeck's whole volume on the globalised Renaissance claimed to overcome. This decline reveals the difficulty of controlling the classic oppositions between centre and periphery over time.

In order to place the nodal periods of cultural history – and, to a more limited extent, literary history – within a globality, we must be able to analyse them as palimpsests. In particular, the figure of the palimpsest makes it possible to bypass national or ethnocentric reconstructions of the history of literature in the broadest sense of the term, that of transmitted writings. Diachronic circulation gives rise to chain reinterpretations. There are no continuous filiations; rather, there are many

knots, and the Renaissance or Renaissances constitute a knot of this kind. The danger is that a cultural space will claim a kind of hegemony over this phenomenon. If it is relevant to define the Renaissance as a "morning of the world," as Bernd Roeck does, it is still necessary to remember the fact that mornings constitute a recurring phenomenon, and that regardless of the vagaries that periodically favour the economy of one part of the world or another, palimpsests retain the same value as a tool for criticism.

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Aurea Mota

Displacement and Global Cultural Transformation: Connecting Time, Space, and Agency in Modernity

> How do you go about finding these things that are in some ways about extending the boundaries of the self into unknown territory, about becoming someone else? Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*.

1 Introduction

The year 1936 was the time of a remarkable encounter that did not happen. The writer Stefan Zweig (1881–1942) was visiting Rio de Janeiro for the first-time. At that moment, a young girl was starting to write and make literature a way of understanding the many emotions that a human being can experience. Her name was Clarice Lispector (1920–1977). In an attempt to overcome an unfortunate situation of the family, her father had decided to move with his daughters from Recife to Rio de Janeiro in 1935. In 1936, Clarice Lispector was 16 and Stefan Zweig 55 years old. He was an internationally famous writer who arrived in the city for a short visit. He was given a reception with the status of an official state visitor (Fontanals 2019, 182). Despite the difference in age, gender and status, both were Jews who at different times fled from Eastern Europe to the New World to evade death and persecution.[1] Though they did not meet – at least not

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[1] Clarice Lispector arrived in Brazil in 1922 when she was one and a half years old. Her family escaped from Jewish persecution in 1920 from a little village called Chechelnik, part of Russia at that time, but now part of Ukraine. Clarice regarded herself as fully Brazilian and was annoyed when her nationality was questioned (Ferreira 1999, Gotlib 2011). The family first lived in Maceió. Two years later they moved to Recife, both cities being in the northeast of Brazil. In 1935, after the death of her mother and a worsening of the economic situation of the family, Pedro Lispector moved with his daughters Tania and Clarice to Rio de Janeiro. The other daughter, Elisa, joined the family a short time later. For Portuguese readers, there are two excellent biographies of Clarice Lispector: Nádia Gotlib's *Clarice, Uma Vida que se Conta* (2011) and Teresa Cristina Montero Ferreira's *Eu Sou uma Pergunta: uma Biografia de Clarice Lispector*. For English readers the much-praised book by Benjamin Moser *Why This World: A Biography of Clarice Lispector* is the best account of her life and work. Of special interest about the experience of Stefan Zweig in Brazil is his book *Brazil, A Land of the Future* (2000 [1941]). It connects his first impression of the country in 1936 with his time as a resident from 1940 to

in the way we understand an encounter as a face-to-face contact – their work bears the mark of their experiences in this particular time and space. Both Clarice Lispector and Stefan Zweig in 1936 saw Brazil, especially Rio de Janeiro, as a space that offered them the possibilities of a better future and the potential for a new horizon of interpretation.

For Clarice Lispector, Rio de Janeiro opened up a literary world that was not available to her in Recife. In Rio she was able to access and read works by international authors which she ferociously consumed, such as Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf* and Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment,* as well as Brazilian writers such as Machado de Assis and José de Alencar (Ferreira 1999). For Stefan Zweig, Rio represented a way out of the insanity of fascism and other forms of narrow nationalism that he saw in Europe. In his words, this experience made it possible "[. . .] to escape for a time from a world that was destroying itself, into one that was peacefully and creatively building" (Zweig 2000 [1941], 7). Since his very first visit to Brazil in 1936, Zweig made it clear that he would return to finish a book that he wanted to write about the country. In 1940 he did come back with his second wife, Lotte Altmann (1908–1942), and they both lived there until 1942. They settled in the city of Petropolis where many other German Jews were also living, mostly escaping from Europe for the same reasons. There, in the year of 1941, another meeting with Clarice Lispector could have happened. She went as part of her job as a journalist to visit the Imperial Museum that was under restoration (Moser 2009, 112). In so far as it can be established, they shared the same space at the same time but a face-to-face meeting did not occur. Nonetheless, human encounters that create new social networks and forms of interpretation of the world can happen in many ways.

This anecdote is used to help the reader understand two key points: how the modern temporal experience has been driven by expectations of a better future (Koselleck 2004), and how spaces are related to literary interpretation. Even though much thought has been devoted to the perspective of time and contingency in modernity (Baudelaire 1964; Wagner 2008, for instance), understanding the importance of spaces that are shared during a particular period is one of the research agendas still open in the field of global literary studies. Spaces where life flows are a constitutive part of the way humans understand and interpret the world. To explore this idea further, the temporal and spatial experiences of modernity are examined in this chapter in relation to the general assumption that

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1942 when he committed suicide in Petropolis, a city close to Rio de Janeiro. The movie *Stefan Zweig: Farewell to Europe* (2016) is also interesting in relation to his experience in Rio de Janeiro.

the displacement of people and ideas reveals important features of the self-constitution of modernity, especially with regard to the modern interpretation of the world and the meaning of space and time.

I will consider in depth the displacement to different places of the world of two female intellectuals and the entanglements they created. For us, "intellectual"[2] is a term that should refer to those who dedicated their life – or part of it – to the dissemination of their ideas and interpretations of the world. As Znaniecki (1986 [1940], 21) puts it, intellectuals are people who "for longer or shorter periods of their lives specialise in cultivating knowledge". My goal is to show that the study of the displacement taken by intellectuals constitutes a very fruitful line to be pursued in studies of global cultural transformations in the modern period. As captured in the epigraph to this chapter, the experience of being in the world and moving through different spaces extends the boundaries of the self and emerges as the most striking source of the interpretation of the world and self-transformation (Solnit 2006). On those grounds, I am advocating both a theoretical and an empirical approach to elucidate the role of displacement for the formation of global cultural transformation. This chapter develops the idea of displacement as (self) transformation and deconstruction, as it appears in the work of Derrida (1978) and extends it to the domain of modern global cultural studies. The argument developed starts from a reflection about to what extent experiences of travelling bring to light the core categories that we use to understand modernity: time, space, and agency.

The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part I will discuss general transformations that happened in the modern period from a historical-sociological point of view. This is a kind of philosophical and conceptual interlude that will help us to frame in broader terms the empirical discussion of this contribution. To understand modern transformations, it is important to see how the attempt to unify different temporalities became embedded in the way "moderns" started to see world history. I will show how influential theories of modernity and concepts of the present still very much lack a broader understanding of different experiences of being in the world. The aim is to find out how key ideas of time and space have been traditionally used in order to see what kind of re-orientation is needed to better understand global literary modernity. The argument of this chapter then is that the concept of displacement can be used to understand the role of intellectuals as cultural mediators and as agents of cultural transfer.

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2 Before the birth of the term "intellectual," the terms used to refer to these people were "man of letters" and "philosophers" (Charle 2015 [1990]).

To illustrate the argument about the role of space, displacements, and cultural mediation from a gendered and peripheral perspective, I will analyse in the second section of this chapter the central aspects of the life and work of Nísia Floresta and Clarice Lispector. The selection of these figures is based on: i) an emphasis on the fact that female writers played a central role in the affirmation of the modern global cultural milieu; ii) the fact that they were intellectuals from peripheral countries (both from Brazil) who did not belong to the social or political elite; and iii) the fact that they were figures who did not experience the same kind of success and recognition in their lifetime. While Clarice Lispector obtained recognition of her work during her lifetime, Nísia Floresta remained largely unknown until long after her death – and remains so for contemporary thinkers outside Brazil. Thus, in order to overcome the obsession with success and public recognition observed in mainstream studies of intellectuals (Zelinský 2020), it is also a methodological choice to work with one intellectual that acquired public triumph and another that did not. What they do have in common is that both were part of marginalised groups (females) from a peripheral place (Brazil). The method used for this analysis is what I call geo-biographical approach. It consists of a study of personal life events and works produced by intellectuals to show how global literary connections are created in specific times and spaces by the action of intellectuals – especially ones experiencing displacements– traditionally understood as peripheral. On that basis, the geo-biographical analysis[3] of the two intellectuals – Nísia Floresta and Clarice Lispector – shows how displacements and the interpretation of the world offered by the thinkers are connected to the agency of these people and the entanglements created by their movement through different spaces. Finally, some conclusions will be offered to the reader.

2 Time, Space, and Human Agency in Modernity: Towards an Analysis of Displacements

Modernity is a polysemic term that, despite its many meanings in different fields of knowledge, retains the idea of major historical innovation connected to the possibility of expanding the human experience of being in the world

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3 This analysis is done using biographical information about the person analysed along with other complementary material (letters exchanged with friends, colleagues, and family members, for instance). The analysis takes the places the person has been to as a variable that elucidates how a change in the interpretation can be connected with the change of space.

(Mota and Delanty 2017). From a historical-sociological point of view, modern ruptures are based on the projection of the idea of societal progress to a time to come – the future. That is why very often we refer to modern horizons and to the modern imaginary as a way of moving beyond the concrete experience of the present (Wagner 2008). This view of the modern as a temporal transformation was developed by Koselleck's (2004) ground-breaking historical analysis of concepts. He showed how the emergence of modernity represented a moment of rupture in which expectations of a better human future became part of historical experience. This temporal transformation is the basis of the modern idea of progress (Wagner 2015) and of many forms of literary understanding that emerged in the nineteenth and the twentieth century, such as Zweig's book *Brazil, A Land of the Future*.

John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, written in 1689, has the famous sentence "In the beginning all the world was America". Locke was a keen reader of travel literature in general but with a special interest in travel narratives from people who had been to Asia and, above all, to the new world on the other side of the Atlantic (Talbot 2010). Travel books on America were used by Locke and many other thinkers of the early modern period as a sort of ethnographic material that informed their philosophical claims (Mota 2015, 2018). In particular, Locke used what he learned from the travel experiences of others to make a very strong statement about how to understand the different temporalities that he saw in the world. He did so by imagining a line in which it would be possible to position the past, the present and the future of the society. The phrase "all the world" makes a strong affirmation about a supposed point of departure that empirically demonstrates, for him, that societies were all at the same level before they started to "develop". For Locke empirical evidence revealed that people were living in a completely different temporality. From his perspective, however, these temporalities could be re-embedded if the Christian civilised areas of the northern world carried out their duty of civilising these different experiences. Travel writings from explorers and missionaries who visited the unknown world from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries informed thinkers who, like Locke, are taken to be the founding fathers of modern western philosophy. The writers of these books and the bridges they created by the action of movement functioned as a cultural mediating process in which different social patterns were relocated. The analysis of this process of cultural transfer through the production and consumption of travel writing is a clear example of how to work with the process of entanglement to overcome the problems of treating different historical realities as isolated units (Werner and Zimmermann 2006).

The view of modernity that emphasises time and space as *universal* and *neutral* categories while assuming that the history of modernity is made up of

comparison between different realities is still present in influential sociological theories, such as that of Anthony Giddens (1990). For Giddens, modernity had its beginning in Europe from approximately the seventeenth century and then spread throughout the world. He sees this process as unburdened by the European perspective of representing/interpreting and imagining the world as an embedded global space. This argument is based on an uncritical understanding of how the North Western perspective became the privileged one for the interpretation and representation of modern cultural transformations.[4] An adequate view of modernity will need to take the opposite direction to Giddens. As I argue in this chapter, modernity needs to be understood as the formation of a horizon that has been made by a process of connections and divergences connected by the action of cultural mediators such as intellectuals and writers. Even core ideas that are classically inscribed as a product of the European system of knowledge, such as the idea of the world sharing a similar historical time, cannot be fully addressed without bringing to the analysis the experience that comes from other parts of the peripheral world. Alternatively, Mignolo (2011) tried to understand the modern category of time and space beyond this sort of Giddenian-Eurocentric approach. Mignolo's analysis assumes that space and time are fixed categories that structurally determine all the possibilities of action and thought. However, time and space should not be taken as absolute structural systems that do not vary in relation to the historical experiences that a society goes through or the personal experiences a human being has.

Thus, it could be said that modern beings think and act based on where they have been and what they learn from their experiences. This way forward accepts the contributions of transnational studies, as has been proposed by Middell, Espagne, and Geyer (2010), but moves beyond the position of these authors in the direction of overcoming national constraints; to place agency in the movement of human beings as self-cultural mediators. Drawing on empirical

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4 For Giddens, *distancing* from time and space is what distinguishes the pace of change in modern societies from "traditional" to "pre-modern" ones, in his terms. Giddens sees the change of speed that took place during the modern period as something that happened due to the separation of time and space and their recombination into a distinct social experience. That is, in his perspective, in "pre-modern" societies there was a coincidence between the abstract sphere of social life and the physical area where it took place. This constitutes the basis of what he calls the time-space *distantiation* and of the mechanisms that make it possible to ground social life in these new circumstances. A major dimension of these systems is what he calls *mechanisms of embedment*. They are responsible for the reorganisation of social relations in a situation of distancing between space and time – the physical and the abstract. For this reason, in his approach one of the consequences of modernity is the formation of empty spaces in which social life occurs.

evidence, I will show that important changes that formed the modern interpretation of the literary world are connected to cultural entanglements created through the movement of intellectuals. By looking at the networks created by intellectuals, it is possible to claim that intellectuals act as cultural mediators (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018) by articulating different perspectives about how we should understand specific cultures and global connections (Espagne 2013). The concept of cultural mediators has been regarded, since the first use of the term, as pertaining to the study of the role of those actors who connect cultures through communication (Taft 1981). Hence, in this view, the process of cultural mediation occurs when there is a means of communicating differences mediated by actors. Following this definition, intellectuals not only exchange ideas and forms of interpretation of the world, but they also act as cultural mediators and as such create channels that connect and transform cultures. It is through the action and experiences of very concrete agents that entanglements are created between different parts of the globe and it is this that also creates the categories that we use to understand our present time. Displaced intellectuals – or intellectuals in displacement – have created networks of interpretation that became an important force in the transformation of the cultural and literary world. Displacement is a practical movement with interpretative and cultural implications.

Consequently, before moving on, it is important to further clarify how the concept of displacement is to be understood. Displaced people are a common way of referring to people who have moved, or people that were expelled or forced to move, from where they settled. In this later use of the term, displacement is connected to the idea of a forced diaspora, exile, and migration, notions which all have in common the sense of being out of place in a negative way. The perspective I have adopted demands a conceptualization of displacement in more general terms as part of an epistemic and interpretative movement. In the elusive and not fully articulated use of the term by Derrida (1978), displacement is related to the Freudian interpretation of dreams, and to his criticism of the "language of presence" that constructs modern discourse and practice. For Derrida, displacement is the possibility of a movement that can turn hierarchy upside down to dislodge a dominant system. For me, displacement is a mechanism of transformation both in terms of a change in a writer's perspective and in terms of the structure of time and space in which they are inserted. By conceptualising displacement in more general and abstract terms, it can be claimed that the concept has a wider significance in the self-constitution of modernity and enlarges our understanding about the agency of human beings when it comes to the domain of culture. To be *on route* (Clifford 1997) is a condition for the formation of the modern subject and thought.

The scarcity of studies in the social sciences and humanities that combine empirical research with theoretical analysis on the displacement of the intellectual and the changes in their interpretations is surprising. Yet there are a few studies that do, such as Offe's *Reflections on America: Tocqueville, Weber and Adorno in the United States* by (2005), Scaff's *Max Weber in America* (2011), and Nolan's *What They Saw in America* (2016). These three authors develop different approaches to how "America," understood by them only as the United States of America, has played an important role in the work of some male European thinkers. These works are, nevertheless, limited. First because there is no connection between the analysis of the displacement and the intellectual production of the analysed thinkers. It can be explained because they did not regard movement as part of the knowledge process, and as part of a broader historical process. Secondly, the meaning of "America" for each of these authors is different because of the transformations historically produced in the New World in its relationship with the Old World. This distinction came with the process of divergence of the Americas in the nineteenth century; the separation of North from South America (Mota 2015). And thirdly, no female intellectuals are analysed at all. For instance, these works largely ignored the importance of Weber's partner, Marianne Weber, and other women in the process of displacement and production of knowledge.

The relationship between displacement (without using the term) and knowledge was addressed by Euben (2006), who sees the act of travelling as a necessary condition for the production of theory, which, for her, is the main manifestation of knowledge. Euben's insights about how spatial displacement is connected to knowledge is important, but also limited because she is concerned only with the production of theories. There is no mention of interpretation and cultural transformation in her account. In another vein, following the path of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), several studies have addressed the representation of the Other under conditions of modern colonial domination. Travel writings that arose within different structures of modern colonial domination have been analysed in order to show they basically served the purpose of a representation of the Other that corresponded to the European colonial imaginary, see *Belated Travellers* (Behdad 1994) for instance. In the same vein, it is also worth mentioning the work *Imperial Eyes* (Pratt 2008) and the well-known article by Appadurai, "Putting Hierarchy in its Place" (1988). These works are fundamental texts for understanding the process of colonial domination and the connections it established in modernity. However, the movement and representation of the Other should not be seen only as a one-way process or as something that was simply used to impose the perspective of the European coloniser. The movement of people from other parts of the colonial, dominated

world to Europe also played an important part in the interpretation of the meaning of global cultural modernity and thus also needs to be scrutinised. Appadurai's claim that the "natives did not travel," as well as the idea that the colonial perspective crystallised only in the perspective of the coloniser, must be questioned. We have been too used to attributing agency of travel and exploration only to white European men, although things have not always been exclusively like that (see for instance Franco 2007). To be *on route* is an important part of the action of thinkers and writers.

Though it is not new to attribute agency to humans in general to understand modernity, intellectuals and scientists have been seen as quite fixed subjects (Zelinský 2020). However, this view of intellectuals as people detached from reality but at the same time very much conditioned by the structures in which they are inserted can be misleading. This image does not correspond to what these mobile subjects have done in terms of network creation and cultural transfers. To use a term that became known by the work of Karl Mannheim on the study of intellectuals, these subjects have been seen as capable of becoming *unattached* to ideology, but that is not the same as detached from the social life they create by their action. The creativeness and freedom of the mind is a product of what Mannheim sees as intellectual dynamism and a state of flux (Mannheim 2013 [1929], 139). Intellectuals are people that create meaning and social networks (Zelinský 2020, 4). They do so by their movement, which encompasses their performative interventions as well as the products of their mind. In the next section we will see how displacements have created cultural connections and changed the interpretation of two female authors in different times and spaces of the modern period.

3 Displacement and Cultural Transformation: Women Writers *on Route*

The analysis of major life events alongside an interpretation of the work produced by an intellectual from a historical sociological point of view represents a twofold challenge: first, it is difficult to measure the real impact of an action/event on a time that has passed; second, and even more difficult and hazardous, is to attribute a relation of causality between the action and the final product that is under analysis. These are, however, general issues that any researcher who deals with past events needs to accept. In any event, to make clear the way that I deal with these challenges, it is important to mention that the geo-biographical approach developed here is not intended to give an exclusive explanation of the way that

an interpretation of the world has been produced by an author. However, it does aim to show that there is a relation between the displacement that a person experienced at a specific time and space, and their intellectual production. Thus, displacements are taken as explanatory factors to understand the production of a literary interpretation in a specific time. In any case I am far away from advocating that, by itself, it can explain the idea that the author expresses. Context and creativity, for instance, matter, just as other structural factors, including the economic, gender, racial, and social circumstances that mark the life of a human being. This should be borne in mind in the following analysis.

Nísia Floresta was born in Rio Grande do Norte in Brazil in 1810. At that time, it was a place far away from the more vibrant southern part of the country, but close enough to Atlantic connections because of its strategic position. Floresta was what can be termed a complete thinker and writer – she wrote poems, novels, newspaper articles and texts in the field of human sciences related to women's condition and education.[5] In terms of personal stories, her life was very hard, she was even forced to get married when she was 13 years old. This forced marriage lasted for less than a year before she left her husband's house. With her parents, she moved to Recife trying to escape from the shame and from persecution by her ex-husband. Recife was at that point a well-developed city in the northeast of Brazil. It was there that she published in 1831 her first writing in the form of newspaper contributions about the condition of women in Brazil. A year later, when she was 22 years old, Floresta managed to publish her first book, *Direito das Mulheres e Injustiça dos Homens*. She claimed it was a free translation of the book *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* written by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792. However, this is not correct. She actually made the translation of the book *Woman Not Inferior*, published originally in 1739. Pallares-Burke (1996), who first investigated this episode, argues that Nísia Floresta probably used what she calls a "literary trick" because she thought it was a more fruitful way of disseminating the kind of female perspective she wanted to see developed in Brazil.

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5 She wrote 15 books that were translated into English, French and Italian, most of which were translated shortly after the publication of the original. However, it is quite surprising that her work is not widely known in Brazil or in Europe. A list with her publications includes: *Direitos das mulheres e injustiça dos homens*, 1832; *Conselhos à minha filha*, 1842; *Daciz ou a jovem completa*, 1847; *Fany ou o modelo das donzelas*, 1847; *A lágrima de um Caeté*, 1847; *Dedicação de uma amiga*, 1850; *Opúsculo humanitário* (translated to English as *Humanitarian Brochure*), 1853; *Páginas de uma vida obscura*, 1855; *A Mulher*, 1859; *Trois ans en Italie, suivis d'un voyage en Grèce*, 1870; *Le Brésil*, 1871; *Fragments d'un ouvrage inédit: notes biographiques*, 1878.

In terms of network connections, Floresta managed to establish, through the publication of her book and through her trip to different parts of Brazil, the beginning of a social network connecting people that shared a common interest in the condition of women. Thus, she inaugurated a primordial form of what we understand as feminism in the country. Limited in her own time and by the conditions of communication, she managed to create bridges to strengthen the discussion about the place of women compared to that of men, specifically in the national context, and to connect with contributions from women in other countries, such as Mary Wollstonecraft. She used literature and the human sciences to put Brazil into the flow of the global cultural female connections that was emerging at that time. However, I need to contextualise the kind of female perspective Floresta was disseminating. As Franco (2007) shows, she was still very much advocating the recognition of women as the moral structure of a family. She strongly condemned every attempt to make women equal to men when it came to their public roles. For instance, she was very much worried about the fact that in Europe women were taking part in leisure activities such as playing cards in public.

In 1849 she travelled for the first time to Europe. From this experience, she published many texts, mostly in the form of novels and travel books. She compared Europe and Brazil in many of these works. It is important to notice that, indeed, her critique of slavery in Brazil is connected to the way European civilization created an unequal colonial structure. Floresta was strongly opposed to theories about the genetic/racial inferiority of blacks in relation to whites that were in vogue at the time. She reiterates a critique of the Europeans' inability to deal with the racial hierarchization of the world in many parts of the book *Trois ans en Italie, suivis d'un voyage en Grèce* (1870). For example:

The black race itself [. . . .] upon which the most absurd prejudices and the atrocious tyranny of the white race still weigh, would, in general, furnish proof of the truth of my assertion [. . .]. How often have I had occasion to see, in these unfortunate victims of the usurpation and avarice of civilised men, traits of virtue and elevation of soul that we would honour in the greatest heroes of the white race! (Floresta 1998 [1980], 258).[6]

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6 Author translation from the original in Portuguese: "A própria raça negra [. . .], essa raça, digo-o, sobre a qual pesam ainda os preconceitos mais absurdos e a atroz tirania da raça branca, forneceria, em geral, uma prova à verdade de minha asserção [. . .]. Quantas vezes tenho tido ocasião de constatar, nessas infelizes vítimas da usurpação e da avareza dos homens civilizados, traços de virtude e elevação de alma que honraríamos maiores heróis da raça branca!".

Already enriched by the experience of living in different parts of Brazil, Floresta developed a sense of social justice that was based on race and gender. In her view, no human being was inferior to another because of these characteristics. By analysing Floresta's writings before and after her trip to Europe, it can be said that her sense of the inequalities existing at that time between men and women became even more embedded with other social themes, like the issue of inclusion and exclusion in the formation of modernity.

By looking at what she considered to be the cultural advantage of Europe, she grasped a fundamental contradiction in what Europeans were doing in the newly explored areas of the world. Before her first trip to Europe in 1849 she wrote about the situation of women in Brazil in relation to other parts of the world and about the subjugation of indigenous people by white colonisers. This is the theme of her poem *A Lágrima de um Caeté* 1847 (*The Tear of a Caeté*).[7] This view was transformed into, and encompassed by, a much stronger sense of critique of the racial situation of her time when she observed the contradictions of European society with her own eyes. It is due to this spatial displacement that she started to create a temporal image of Brazil as being the land of the present/future in contrast with Europe, which in her opinion belonged to the past.

As well as this, an exceptional event happened while she was living in France. Before returning to Brazil, in 1851, she attended a course entitled *General History of Humanity* given by Auguste Comte (1798–1857) in Paris and, from that moment on, she began to establish a friendship and an intellectual exchange with him that would continue to be a strong bond until Comte's death. She returned to Brazil for a short while in the 1850s and while there published her most renowned book Opúsculo Humanitário in 1853 (*Humanitarian Brochure)* which had a focus on the education of women and equality between sexes. This book was also well received in the most positivist European circles, including by Auguste Comte himself, who actively appreciated the contribution that she had made. Moreover, it was also important that Floresta used her connections to blame Europeans, who did not have a deep experience of the New World, for creating the false image of this area as uncivilised and backward.

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7 In this poem of 712 verses Floresta breaks with the Romantic view that prevailed at her time. She shows the clearly indigenous person to be unsatisfied with their subjugated position. This poem was translated into French by the important Italian writer of the second half of the nineteenth century Ettore Marcucci. He wrote the preface to the translation, in which he expressed his appreciation of Nísia Floresta's work, as well as many notes explaining the specific vocabulary of the poem. He was clearly thoughtful about how to properly transfer the ideas from one cultural context to the other.

She was extremely annoyed with the way Europeans described the rest of the world based on false information. In her own words:

[. . .] a modern traveller who knew nothing about Brazil beyond Rio de Janeiro, where he stayed for a few days, presumes to have thoroughly known everything else. [. . .] This continent and its people have such a great difference in climate, habits, and customs that they can only be known after a long time, by travelling a lot with an observant and impartial spirit. With all this, some extravagant or malevolent brains, who only covered a minimal part of it, took delight in flowering their narratives with false anecdotes, and with quirks used to make Europeans laugh, without realising that they were committing two great faults in this way: first, lack of love for a people by whom they were always welcomed, and often enriched; second, to betray the truth, leaving readers in complete ignorance of an important country, called to hold a high place among modern nations. (Floresta 1997 [1859], 26–27)[8]

It is important to emphasise this point because Floresta transmitted her views about how Europeans have been wrongly representing the world to the cultural circles that she got involved with in France, above all through her connection with Auguste Comte. After her first short trip to Europe in 1849, she returned to Europe at the end of 1850 and stayed mostly in France until her death in 1885 in the city of Rouen. It is from this second displacement that most of her ideas flourish. Still, she can be seen as a cultural mediator who translated the Brazilian experience to Auguste Comte. It is not by chance that Brazil and France adopted positivism in the nineteenth century as a symbol of national development. It is possible to understand the cultural and historical transformation of global modernity by following the displaced writers who did great work self-mediating their intellectual production. When a movement starts, both the point of departure and the destination become not only connected, but also transformed.

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8 Author translation from the original in Portuguese: "[. . .] um viajante moderno que do Brasil nada conheceu além do Rio de Janeiro, onde permaneceu por poucos dias, presume ter conhecido a fundo todo o resto. [. . .] Este continente e as suas variadas populações têm uma tão grande diferenciação de clima, de hábitos e de costumes, que não se podem conhecer senão após longo tempo, nele viajando muito e com um espírito observador e imparcial. Com tudo isto, alguns cérebros extravagantes ou malévolos, que dele percorreram apenas uma mínima parte, deleitam-se em florear suas narrações com falsas historietas, e com argúcias empregadas para Fazer rir aos Europeus, sem se darem conta de que assim cometem duas grandes faltas: primeira, carecer de amor para com um povo por quem foram sempre bem acolhidos, e amiúde enriquecidos; segunda, trair à verdade, deixando os leitores numa completa ignorância a respeito de um importante pais, chamado a manter um alto posto entre as nações modernas."

Leaving the nineteenth century but keeping with the same line of the argument, the Brazilian woman writer whose work is one of the most translated, according to Brazilian National Library data, Clarice Lispector, was a young undistinguished writer when she published her first novel in December 1943.[9] Prior to that, she had written short pieces while working as a journalist for the Brazilian National Agency[10] during the years 1940–1941 and for the newspaper *A Noite* where she started a collaboration that lasted for several years. It is not too audacious to say that the most important thing she got from the experience as a journalist was to get closer to other writers who, like her, wanted to transform their personal experience into literature. Her friendship with other literary figures, especially Lúcio Cardoso[11] started at this time and most of these friendships lasted her entire life. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Clarice's move to Rio de Janeiro opened up many literary doors that would not have been possible while living in Recife.

Despite this, when Clarice first left Brazil in 1944 she was still a person without a known identity outside her own familiar environment. She left the country just a few months after her first novel *Perto do Coração Selvagem (Near to the Wild Heart)* was published in December 1943. Clarice went to Italy as the wife of an early career diplomat sent on a mission to Naples in the last years of the Second World War. It was from the exchanges of letters with friends and with her two sisters, Tania and Elisa, that she heard, while living abroad, what Brazilian readers were thinking about the novel. She would write far away from her native public for most of her life (Ferreira 1999). At that moment, she was experiencing a new life

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9 In the recommendation letter that the editor Chico Barbosa wrote to a publisher trying to get her first book contract, he wrote the following: "She is entirely unknown, she is almost a girl. But I think she has written a strong novel, although I don't think it is done very well from beginning to end, but it is a strong novel" (Ferreira 1999, 95 – author translation from the original in Portuguese: "Ela é inteiramente desconhecida, é quase uma menina. Mas acho que escreveu um forte romance, embora ache que não seja muito bem realizado do começo ao fim, mas é um romance de impacto"). Of course, from this beginning, Clarice became one of the most important Brazilian writers of the twentieth century. She wrote more than 20 books including novels, short stories and children's books, and much has been written about her life and work. For a full list, see Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarice_Lispector.

10 A public institution that was part of the *Department of the Press and Propaganda* created in the dictatorship period known as the "New State" (1937–1945), during the Getúlio Vargas government.

11 Born in Curvelo in 1912 and died in Rio de Janeiro in 1968. He is one of the most important Brazilian writers of the first half of the 20th century. He wrote novels, plays and poems. Clarice and Lúcio developed a friendship that lasted for their entire life. Lúcio also acted as an important mediator that helped Clarice to become connected with the Brazilian intellectual circle as well as assisting her in finding publishers.

outside Brazil, but her novel was left behind. Clarice Lispector was displaced both in time and space and this experience marked her interpretation of people and the world around her for her whole life. This experience was not easy, and we can feel it in the following passage from a letter she sent to Lúcio Cardoso on the 13th August 1947, just a few months after arriving in Berna with her husband on another diplomatic mission:

It is sad to be out of the land where we grew up, it's horrible to hear foreign languages around us, everything seems rootless; the main reason for things is never shown to a foreigner, and the residents of a place stare at us as if we were irrelevant. For me, if it is as good as a medicine is for health to see other places and other people, then it has long since gone from the good to the bad; I never thought I was so unadaptable, I never thought I would need so much of the things I own. (Ferreira 1999, 145–146).[12]

Although this excerpt shows how bad Clarice Lispector felt about being abroad, she also recognises the many good experiences she had after leaving Brazil. In Italy, for instance, she met many important artists, including the painter Giorgio De Chirico (1888–1978) who painted her portrait. She also met the Italian writer Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888–1970) who in a letter to her said that he would like to publish Clarice's first novel in Italian. The translation of parts of the novel was made by Ungaretti's daughter (Gotlib 2011, 25). With Ungaretti, Clarice clearly created a cultural connection. He said to her in a letter of July 1945 that he was trying to catch up with his knowledge about Brazil since he met her.

Clarice finished her second novel *O Lustre* (*The Chandelier)* in 1945. This book presents the main character, Virginia, as someone who cannot escape from the memories of her childhood while looking for herself as an adult (Lispector [1946] 2020). Virginia, as Clarice herself, experiments with a feeling of strangeness represented by the search for herself in a different time and space. Clarice had this experience while living in Italy. That time was also difficult because she could not manage to get her work published by herself. She needed to count on the help of her sisters and friends in Brazil to get the publication ready. It should be noticed, however, that Clarice Lispector was never very

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12 Author translation from the original in Portuguese: "É ruim estar fora da terra onde a gente se criou, é horrível ouvir ao redor da gente línguas estrangeiras, tudo parece sem raiz; o motivo maior das coisas nunca se mostra a um estrangeiro, e os moradores de um lugar também nos encaram como pessoas gratuitas. Para mim, se foi bom, como um remédio é bom para a saúde, ver outros lugares e outras pessoas, já há muito está passando do bom, está no ruim; nunca pensei ser tão inadaptável, nunca pensei que precisa tanto das coisas que possuo".

lucky in her attempt to publish her novels in Brazil. Later on, she recognised that, at first, it was easier for her to get published outside Brazil (Ferreira 1999). The connections that Clarice created in Europe were long lasting and were fruitful to her and the people she met. However, she was not always comfortable with the position of being the wife of a diplomat. As she attested in many letters that she wrote to her friends and family in Brazil, she learned how to live the lie, making the appearance that everything was right and looking after the social life of her husband while leaving herself in a secondary position. However, this did not stop the compulsion to write. On the contrary, it seemed as if her characters took on too much of Clarice's own feigned way of life. It was while living in Berna that Clarice wrote her third novel *A Cidade Sitiada* (*The Besieged City)* (1949). As one of her critics points out, it seemed as if she needed to write this novel to revise her memories from faraway, from a different time and space (Ferreira 1999, 161). Clarice also followed her husband for a shorter diplomatic mission to the United Kingdom (Torquay, from September 1950 to March 1951) and a very long one to the United States of America (Washington, from 1952 until 1959). In 1959 she left Washington with her two sons to return to Rio de Janeiro and soon after that she got divorced from her husband who remained in the USA.

As was also the case with Nísia Floresta, Clarice Lispector changed her perspective of the world. Her writings owe much to the many forms of displacement she went through. Lispector produced her own literary identity and form of interpretation due to the many forms of displacement she went through between Brazil, Europe, and the USA. However, it was not only for her that the perspective had changed. These travels created a web of exchange and connections that transformed the perspectives of others as well. Clarice, for instance, was invited to give a lecture at the University of Austin in 1963. Her talk was entitled "Vanguard Literature in Brazil" and was very well received by the audience (Gotlib 2009). Trying to define what she understood by vanguard literature, Clarice said that "all true life is experimentation" and "vanguard is experience" (Lispector 2007, 77). One could say that this idea beautifully expresses the meaning for her of all the experiences in her life.

By the application of the geo-biographical methodological approach, we can analyse both the aspects of the personal life, and the interpretation offered by an intellectual. And that is what I have done in this part of the chapter by discussing both the life events and literary achievements of these two female intellectuals. We can see that it is impossible to understand the work of neither Nísia Floresta nor Clarice Lispector without analysing their circulation and connections. So these examples show that the spatial experience that comes with the process of displacement is a constitutive part of the modern structure of

knowledge and interpretation. Displacements and personal experience are not merely external factors with little influence on the production of a literary or even a scientific interpretation of the world, they are key factors for the understanding of human intellectual development.

4 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have developed the idea of displacement into a concept that helps us to understand how time and space become connected through the agency of intellectuals by creating entanglements that shape global literary constellations in the past and in the present. The path that we followed started by presenting an anecdote about a meeting that did not happen between Clarice Lispector and Stefan Zweig in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Petrópolis at the end of the first half of the 20th century. This anecdote opened the door to the point I wanted to make about how spatial experiences need to be related to interpretation. Although as far as we know Lispector and Zweig did not have a face-to-face meeting, they became influenced by the connections and experiences they both had at that same time in these cities. The chapter then moved to a discussion about how modernity is connected to the transformation of the experience of time and, as I want to claim, also to the transformation in the perspective of space. I adopted a gendered and peripheral approach to understand how global literary modernity has been formed and transformed by the action of less well-known actors, and to do this we considered the life and work of Nísia Floresta and Clarice Lispector.

Following from this, the first conclusion I would like to draw is that one of the arguments we should avoid when analysing the work of female writers is that their creativity and innovation came from the fact that they were "ahead of their time". This argument denies the role of the experience they had, the difficulties they went through, and the broader social context into which they were inserted. The connection of different temporal experiences is one of the main exchanges that these authors created as a result of their sense of displacement, as the example of Nísia Floresta shows when she talked about the temporal difference that in her view marked Europe (the past) and Brazil (the present and the future), or when the character Martim in the novel *A Maçã no Escuro* (The Apple in the Dark) discovers based on his own experience that circular time exists (1961 [2019], 177). Nísia Floresta and Clarice Lispector were both products of the personal and collective experiences they created in different spaces and times. Through these experiences, they created social networks and forms of cultural exchange during the process of entanglement created by their displacement.

The geo-biographical analysis of Clarice Lispector and Nísia Floresta shows how we can analyse displacements and the cultural entanglements created by intellectuals as constitutive of the global literary world. These intellectuals are neither out of their space (detached from social reality) nor out of their time (they are part of the traditional old elites or part of the artistic avant-garde). They are situated in a specific historical context that demonstrates that they are formed by the relations they have established in the different spaces they have experienced and with the different historical temporalities they brought together. The action of intellectuals as cultural mediators created networks of interpretation that became an important force in the advancement of the cultural and literary world. Displacement thus is a practical movement with interpretative and cultural consequences.

In relation to the idea of modernity as offering a general framework to analyse displacement and global cultural transformation, there is another important conclusion that needs to be highlighted. Both in the early modern period and in the period of the consolidation of modernity in the nineteenth century the desire to know, interpret and transform the world through temporal and spatial displacement has been equally important. However, from the nineteenth century onwards, spatial displacement and experience became regarded as a secondary factor in thinking about intellectual and scientific production. Displacements that gave rise to the interpretation of the world came to be seen as a matter of personal experience. This can be explained by the process of divergence between a philosophy of experience and meaning from a philosophy of knowledge, reason and interpretation (Foucault 2001). With the consolidation of the modern structure of knowledge, the recognition of the role of displacement that the romantics had no problem with became something to be kept apart from interpretation and scientific knowledge. However, as we saw in this chapter, the literary and the scientific world is completely entwined with the displacements intellectuals have experienced. Being in the world and moving through different spaces is vital for understanding how people have been interpreting and acting in the world into which they are inserted. Even the most abstract theories are all, in the end, the fruits of constant fieldwork that come with the many processes of displacement that marked the lives and interpretation of modern intellectuals.

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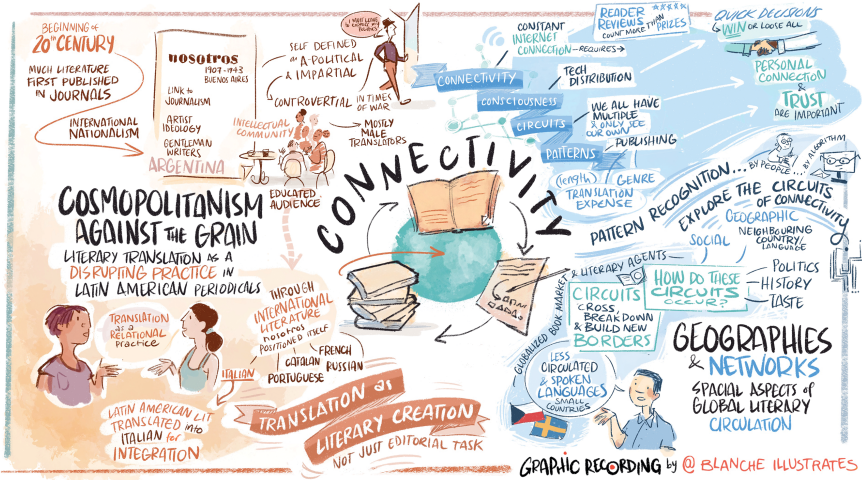
Part IV: **Connectivity**

Laura Fólica

Cosmopolitanism Against the Grain: Literary Translation as a Disrupting Practice in Latin American Periodicals (*Nosotros*, 1907–1943)

It is well-known that periodicals played an important role in cultural transfer in early-twentieth-century Ibero-America, as many important literary works were first published in journals. For instance, the first Spanish translation of certain extracts of James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* were published in Argentine journals. New movements and trends, intellectual debates, and the national and international recognition of certain authors and literary genres were also discussed in this media. At the same time, journals proved an essential means by which literary and artistic groups staged public appearances, as the connections among them reinforced their mediation between the international, the regional, and the national (Fólica, Roig-Sanz and, Caristia 2020). Because of journals' simultaneous local and transnational configuration, complicated by international exchange with other periodicals as well as the exile or emigration of their collaborators, a sociological nation-based approach would be reductionist for this object of study (Jeanpierre 2006; Padró Nieto 2021). Though this object may be considered a "world form," that is, a product produced under local conditions, often by the intellectual elite, we must not reduce it to "a single country or continent" as it "was never contained by geopolitical borders, no matter how they were configurated" (Bulson 2016, 13).

Aiming to map the international circulation of foreign literature in Hispanic journals through translation, this chapter studies the way in which translation – which, at first glance, would seem marginal in nationalistic Latin American periodicals that aimed at reinforcing the national literary field – disrupted these journals' goals by eliciting unexpected connections with foreign literatures (Thièse 1999; Wilfert 2002). By describing the translated literatures and authors, reviews thereof, and the network of international relations among journals, I claim that

translation allows us to place local publications within "international nationalism" and helps conceptualise Latin American national literatures within a network of national, regional, and international relations, struggles, and tensions.

Based on the concepts of "connectivity" – understood here in two senses, firstly as the network that a given magazine would aim to weave with other local, regional, and international magazines, and, secondly, regarding translation as a relational practice linking two or more cultures, authors, and languages – the aim of this chapter is to study the cosmopolitanism present in magazines that started off being more inclined toward national issues. I propose to analyse these magazines in order to gain a better understanding of "cosmopolitanism" as a concept (which is often reductionistically understood as the harmonious exchange with the foreign) through a critical perspective. Gerard Delanty proposes "critical cosmopolitanism" as emerging "out to the logic of the encounter, exchange and dialogue" (2012, 42), informed by a certain optimistic and universalistic approach to World Literature (Loy 2019). Delanty claims that cosmopolitanism is "a matter of degree" in a "given social phenomenon" (Delanty 2012, 44) and highlights that cosmopolitanism, as a dialogic condition, may also be critical and transformative (41). For instance, the postcolonial critique of the Eurocentric idea of cosmopolitanism put forward by Mignolo (2007) follows this approach. In this sense, cosmopolitanism is not a universalistic category but a notion that always needs to be contextualised as "rooted cosmopolitanism" (45). Furthermore, from an ethical point of view, Appiah (2007) points to the importance of "local values" in discussing the general assumption that to be cosmopolitan is "to have obligations to others" (xiii) and exercise tolerance. He proposes rethinking "counter-cosmopolitanism" with local variations. In this sense, cosmopolitanism adopts peculiar features when situated in Latin America. This cosmopolitanism is disruptive and irreverent toward the centres, as described by Sánchez Prado (2006) and Moraña (2006). Meanwhile, Gramuglio (2013b) prefers that we stop idealising this force and analyse it within the context of a network of mediation practices. She defines the term "cosmopolitan" as that which Latin American intellectual elites sought out as a way of growing national literatures and situating them in the global literary map of the early twentieth century, which can also be tied to the elites' "desire for modernity" (Siskin 2014). In fact, the literature associated with national identity, which was thus tied to the political, would prove key to the modernising projects of Latin American countries throughout the early twentieth century. From the periphery, they grew critical of the effectiveness of binary models, such as those that would place cosmopolitanism and nationalism in opposition.

Based on this situated approach, in this chapter, I aim to explore the way in which "cosmopolitanism" was shaped in Latin American national magazines – which prioritised cultural nationalism based on the national literary tradition (Delgado 2006, 319). I view cosmopolitanism as a dynamic and critical concept entangled with national issues, especially through literary translations and international connections. To explore the idea of an "international nationalism" – that is, of nationalism that is necessarily constituted in relation to the foreign – in periodical publications, I will analyse the function of literary translation in *Nosotros* (1907–1943) (which would translate to "*Us*"), a long-lasting Argentine journal that was crucial to the modernization of the Argentine literary tradition as well as to the constitution of the national literary field, promoting the professionalisation of the writer in the first half of the twentieth century. Furthermore, because of its long life span, *Nosotros* built an important network of periodical publications on the national, regional, and international levels.

1 Periodicals in Argentina During the First Half of the Twentieth Century

In the Argentine periodical realm of the first half of the twentieth century, the "literary magazine" model, inspired by European examples such as *Mercure de France* (1890–1965), *La Revue Blanche* (1889–1903), and *The Studio* (1893–1964), gave way to the creation of similar, literature-centred experiences that were closer to a restrictive conception of "culture" (Rivera 1998). In this sense, two well-known magazines are generally mentioned: *Proa* (in two periods, namely 1922–1923 and 1924–1926) and *Sur* (1931–1992), both of which place the translation of contemporary foreign literature at the core of their cosmopolitan interests (Willson 2004, Sarlo 1997a, Gargatagli 2013) and were sometimes criticised for their focus on the foreign.[1] In these publications, literary translation was not only a way to introduce contemporary foreign authors associated with the topic of "new literature," but translation was presented as a literary problem whose

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[1] In the 1950s, the writers that contributed to the magazine *Contorno* (David and Ismael Viñas, Adolfo Prieto, and Noé Jitrik) put forward this critique. They also shifted the axis from Jorge Luis Borges to Roberto Arlt, a working-class writer of the Boedo literary circle. He was the epitome of the professional writer, as opposed to the "gentleman writer" that was closer to the oligarchy. The *Contorno* writers argued that writing well was not enough; the critical operation that their time required was to read the interference between the writer and his environment (Prieto 2011, 286).

formal features would be discussed from an aesthetic and textual approach. For instance, James Joyce, the epitome of the "contemporary writer," was published in both periodicals (among others) much before his book publication, including an excerpt of *Ulysses* ("La última página del Ulises," translated by Jorge Luis Borges for *Proa*, 1925) and an excerpt of the play *Desterrados* (*Exiles*) (translated by Alberto Jiménez Fraud for *Sur*, 1931). But the international reception of Joyce doesn't take into account this corpus of fragmented and earlier translations beyond European journals, as Argentine researcher Marieta Gargatagli states: "reception in Spanish (including fragmentary translations) isn't cited regarding Joyce's European or global reception, nor did it come to comprise part of the complex web of international editions that were tolerated, banned, adulterated, or illegal, cultivating the Irish writer's most essential biographical elements" (2013, 1).

While translation in these well-known magazines is more studied and, therefore, better known, *Nosotros* remains unexplored from this point of view, possibly because it was considered a "nationalistic" organ (Delgado 2006). In fact, this journal was active in the debate around national – and Latin-American – identity throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The Argentine researcher Verónica Delgado points to an initial Latin Americanist moment in the magazine, which would soon adopt a "nationalist inclination" as the magazine focused on highlighting national, realist literature, especially national theatre. This interest in national matters may lead us to mistakenly believe that this magazine housed little foreign literature and translation. In this chapter, my goal is to study the translations in the magazine and analyse how contact with foreign literature in *Nosotros* through translations undermined the publication's alleged apolitical principles while contributing to both the national and regional debate around the modernization of literature as well as to the constitution of the national literary field.

2 Boosting the Constitution of a National Literary Field through *Nosotros*

By revisiting the notion of the "literary field" as defined by Bourdieu – that is, as a relatively autonomous space within the nation (France in his example) – and deploying it for the Argentine case, we must reconceive of the concept within the logic of peripheral Latin American nations. On the one hand, we must add nuance to the idea of literary autonomy given certain heteronomous factors, such as the economy and politics, which Bourdieu points to as central to the French field and to the "disinterested" defence of art for art's sake (Bourdieu 1992; Jurt 1999). In the constitution of Latin American literary fields, we may glean a certain,

progressive though ever-flailing autonomization regarding the literary practice as well as the literary object (Gramuglio 2013a), given the imbrications between the aesthetic and the political (Ramos 1989), as well as the often dependent or tense relationship between the literary field and the State (Altamirano and Sarlo 1993). We may also note the existence of canonising agencies beyond the strictly national geography, as with "central" capitals like early-twentieth-century Paris (Colombi 2008) and former metropoles against which spaces define themselves as "counter-fields" (Jurt 1999), as with Madrid, for example.[2] Meanwhile, it has been said that, in Latin American nations, popular classes participate in defining the literary through their creative powers (García Canclini 1990; Moraña 2014) even though, to Bourdieu, these classes would be in the pole of mass production and thus have less legitimacy and symbolic capital, as opposed to the custodians of literary purity in the pole of restricted production. It is worth noting that, in Argentina, as in many young nations in Latin America, the publishing market's constitution was still recent at the start of the century (whereas, in France, it was already more consolidated) due to a variety of factors including the high rate of illiteracy, a lack of technological or publishing know-how, the high costs of production, and the fact that publishing still relied on the former metropoles, among other factors. As such, publishing in magazines was a more feasible enterprise for authors, and magazines constituted a central organ for the forging of the national literary field (Sarlo 1992; Delgado 2006). While, in France, magazines ensured consecration "among peers" and strengthened the processes that unfolded in an already consolidated publishing market, in Argentina, these organs not only proved key to the circulation of national literature among peers but also to circulation more

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2 We may observe this when studying the controversies around "Madrid, cultural meridian of Hispano-America." This intellectual debate, which mostly unfolded in the pages of magazines, surged after Guillermo de Torre published an article in *La Gaceta Literaria* (no. 8, on 15 April 1927). In the face of the "captivation" and "attraction" Paris exerted over young, Spanish-speaking writers, De Torre proposed situating Madrid as the "truest meridian point, as the most authentic line of intersection between America and Spain," by which America would be the "prolongation" of the Spanish intellectual realm; Spain would not exert domination but enjoy a purely fraternal relationship among speakers of the same tongue. In his argument, De Torre situated Spanish and French influence over America as equal, which the "criollo" writers in the magazine *Martín Fierro* rejected on 10 July 1927, in "Un llamado a la realidad" ("A call to reality") [AA.VV. 1995: 356–357]. They responded by attacking the idea of alleged Spanish-language unity among sister nations and defended their own polyglot character, especially because they spoke French (Sarlo 1997b, 269–288). Behind this response, many others followed, some in Latin America (Montevideo's *La Pluma*, *Revista de avance* and *Orto* from Cuba, *Variedades* from Peru, *Ulises* in Mexico, and *Nosotros* in Argentina), and others in Spain (in *El Sol* and *La Gaceta*) and Italy (in *La Fiera Letteraria*). For a detailed study of the debate, see Croce (2006, 55–132) and Alemany Bay (1998).

broadly. As Miceli states (2017, 37), in Buenos Aires, "collaborating in one of the more coveted magazines, like *Martín Fierro* or *Nosotros*, was in and of itself a triumph of identity, the mark of a certain authorial or aesthetic form, the auspicious pre-announcement of a robust intellectual project." For instance, the emergence of the first Argentine literary field, from 1896 to 1913, can be traced around the magazines *La Biblioteca, El Mercurio de America, La Montaña, Ideas* and *Nosotros* (Delgado 2006). All of these publications were preoccupied with forging a national literature, broadening the reading public, professionalising the industrious writer (Rivera 1998), and building a more specialised form of criticism (Ramos 1989).

Considering the peculiarities of the notion of the field in Latin America, *Nosotros* is key to understanding how the Argentine literary field consolidated itself at the beginning of the twentieth century, sparking the emergence of the "artists' ideology" (Altamirano and Sarlo 1997, 167) and the "new kind of writer" (Rama 1984, 60–63), whose identity was deeply tied to the writing practice and often linked to journalism, though detached from the political and religious domains in which the previous generation, from the 1880s, participated. Those writers of the past were known as "gentlemen writers," that is, as politicians and diplomats whose practices included writing and translation, among other cultural activities (Viñas 1964). It is worth noting that, beyond a certain "spiritual" need – to use the term of the time – that generally inspired the organisation of magazine projects, *Nosotros* espoused another peculiar characteristic, which perhaps allowed the magazine to persist over time: the magazine displayed a clear "*designio de organicidad*" (plan for organicism) (Lafleur 1962, 41), that is, a perceived need to forge a national literature that would distance itself from the experimental or the avant-garde and be far more ephemeral. Thus, the publication provided a privileged vantage point for debates on the constitution of the national literary field.

In what follows, we will briefly describe 1) the national literary project of the magazine, 2) its attempt at coming in contact with other national and international publications, and 3) the translation of foreign literature that was published in its pages, all with the goal of studying how, through this intertextual network as well as through translation, the magazine connected to the foreign, undercutting its original exclusively literary tenets.

2.1 Promoting an Inclusive, Secular, and Apolitical National Literary Magazine

The magazine *Nosotros* was founded in 1907 and faced economic hardship throughout the first four years of its existence, until, in 1912, a Cooperative Society (presided by writer Rafael Obligado) was created to support the magazine.

This allowed the magazine to acquire sufficient funds to subsist until 1943 (only interrupted in 1935 and 1936) (Lida 2015). *Nosotros* was founded and directed by two young friends, Roberto Giusti and Alfredo Bianchi, both born in Italy, who were students at the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy in Buenos Aires.

In terms of aesthetic and literary currents, the magazine was characterised by tolerance, promoting the presence of young, local talents, alongside renowned authors, among its ranks, as stated in the first issue's editor's note: "This magazine will not exclude [. . .]. The directors' goal is none other than to allow older, consecrated writers to commune with new and already recognized writers, as well as with writers who are emerging or have yet to emerge" (no. 1, 1907). In this sense, it tied new writers to modernist and *Centenario*[3] writers, as well as to authors from the 1920s who were more concerned with the avant-garde (Rivera 1998, 59–62). *Nosotros* considered itself a tolerant magazine that espoused a variety of aesthetic contents. In fact, from the perspective of the sociology of literature, Bourdieu (1990; 1992) notes that, in the consolidation of a field, the battles between agents aiming to appropriate the specific capital at play are not excessively visceral. Since no agent (regardless of the degree of opposition between their positions) seeks to attack the constitution of the field itself, a more tolerant atmosphere takes hold.[4]

Inclusive and eclectic, the magazine defended the right to free speech and intellectual manifestations, as long as texts were "well thought out and elegantly written" (no. 1, 1907). Indeed, the magazine disseminated "fine literature" and "high culture," in a gesture that could be read as "inclusive elitism," as noted by Shunway (1999, 165–180). This aesthetic tolerance was locked inside non-negotiable boundaries: the magazine did not allow literature to mix with politics and religion. This limitation might also be viewed as a consequence of the magazine's desire to autotomize the intellectual field. In its statutes (established in 1912), the magazine defined itself as "apolitical" and "impartial." Politics were not to enter its pages, but the political events of the beginning of the twentieth century (the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and, in Argentina, the University Reform and the surge of the Radical Party, which represented the middle class, in government), raised questions around this principle, leading to discussions, controversies, and even resignations. For instance, an article

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3 Around the 100th anniversary of the revolution that liberated Argentina from Spain (1810).

4 However, within the field, we may observe a certain polarisation articulated around two opposing aesthetic groups, Boedo and Florida, the first being more realist and the latter, more experimental. This polarisation manifested itself around the introduction of Ultraism, which was on the decline in Spain but still developing in Argentina's (Padró Nieto 2019) avant-garde journals, including *Proa* and especially *Martín Fierro* (Sarlo 1969; 1982, 1988).

written as an homage to the socialist Jean Jaurès (no. 65, 1914) was heavily criticised by the magazine's more conservative wing, whose most conspicuous representative was the writer Manuel Gálvez, who believed that defending Jaurès would undermine the publication's impartiality. One of the directors, R. Giusti, who, in 1920, stated that he needed to "take sides" and stop concealing his sympathy for the Russian Revolution and his affiliation with the Socialist Party, ultimately resigned:

> As a man of defined political ideas and as a socialist militant, I can only speak within *Nosotros* in one way, in the way that concerns my feelings and ideals, which, even if the statutes did not prohibit me from engaging in politics, would clearly impose an abusive form of partisanship on the magazine. Since I can no longer bear the events taking place throughout the world, and in Argentina, without issuing a word of criticism, indignation, protest, hope, and faith in the pages of my magazine, I am renouncing my responsibilities. (no. 136, 1920)

Religion is not promoted in its pages either. The magazine was considered a secular organ, as evinced by the controversies in terms of the critiques of "La madre de Jesús" ("The mother of Jesus") by Carlos Alberto Leumann (no. 215–216, 1927) and the conflict at the PEN Club (no. 272, 1932) around the Argentine PEN Club's vote at the International Congress in Amsterdam regarding the "humane treatment of political and religious prisoners," to which nationalist and conservative writers, including Manuel Gálvez and Atilio Chiappori, were opposed.

Another significant feature of *Nosotros* is its aim to capture the "intellectual environment" of the time and become its natural interpreter. *Nosotros* essentially proved a space for intellectual socialisation through the magazine itself, but also through a variety of events and the network of Latin American and Western periodical publications with which the magazine interacted, thus pushing the consolidation of an intellectual community (Pasquaré 2012, 26).

In terms of events, *Nosotros* organised gatherings at cafés as well as banquets and homages (to national or Latin American authors, such as Rodó and Darío, but also to foreigners, such as Anatole France in 1924). It also held conferences with distinguished speakers, including the Italian poet Marinetti, who, in 1926, was introduced not "as a propagandist for fascism" but as the "founder and chief of Futurism" (no. 205, 1926) and the American novelist Waldo Frank, who, like the magazine, criticised "Yankee capitalist expansion" (nos. 243–244, 1929). Indeed, Marinetti was considered from an aesthetic position in order to include him in the magazine (via the translation of some of his poems, for instance).[5] However, the

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5 The disagreement on whether to consider Marinetti a mere poet or a supporter of fascism is also present in the pages of the avant-garde journal *Martín Fierro* and the Boedo's publications.

magazine's alleged "apoliticism" comes off as more problematic with Waldo Frank, whose text poses a challenge to the apolitical tenet by directly criticising US American capitalist expansion.

Finally, *Nosotros* introduced the modern "survey" format in its pages, inspired by the French cultural surveys conducted by Huret, Le Cardonnel, and Picard (Rivera 1998, 61) to gauge its surroundings and understand certain questions and issues, for instance, these surveys ask, "Are women more cultured than men?" and put "Italian influence on Argentine culture" on the table. Likewise, they ask, "What makes authentic Argentine literature?," and "What is the value of *Martín Fierro*?" These questions point to the consolidation of a national literary tradition, with a gaucho poem printed as an opening epic that could serve as an initial approach to national literature.

2.2 Promoting a National, Regional, and International Network of Periodicals

Both in the responses to these surveys and in other collaborations, we may observe how *Nosotros* consolidated a regional and international network of Argentine, Latin American, and Spanish writers (such as Rafael Obligado, Rodolfo Rivarola, Carlos Ibarguren, Ernesto Quesada, Alfredo Palacios, Carlos Octavio Bunge, José Ingenieros, Alejandro Korn, Manuel Gálvez, Diego Luis Molinari, Emilio Ravignani, Manuel Ugarte, among others, from Argentina specifically; Alfonso Reyes, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, José Vasconcelos, Víctor Haya de la Torre, Gabriela Mistral, Mariano Picón Salas, Enrique José Varona, Francisco García Calderón, from Latin America more broadly; and Unamuno and Eugenio Díaz Romero from Spain).

This interest in building an exchange network is also clear in the publications mentioned in *Nosotros* – which in fact included sections called "Nuevas revistas" (1922–1928), "Revistas literarias" (1923–1928), "Las revistas" (with reviews by Antonio Aita) (1929–1930), "Revistas" (1931–1933), and "Espejo de revistas" (with reviews by Tristan Fernández) (1942–1943). These sections mentioned European magazines, such as *La Lectura* and *Revista de Occidente* (from Madrid), *La*

The position of *Nosotros* is the same here as that of *Martín Fierro*, which held a banquet in his honour (Saítta 2014). In *Martín Fierro*'s special issue on Marinetti's visit to Buenos Aires (no. 29–30, 8 June 1926), the editors state that "it has been said that Marinetti is coming to these American territories for a certain politically oriented aim. *Martín Fierro*, given its spirit and orientation, would repudiate any intromission of the kind, and its activities have been clearly established. And perhaps we might declare, to avoid any bothersome suspicion, that Marinetti, a political man, has nothing to do with our publication" (3).

Crítica (directed by Benedetto Croce), *La Revue de Deux Mondes*, *Le Mercure de France*, and *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, as well as Latin American ones. Notably, the magazine received and sold a number of magazines from the region in its offices, including *El Convivio* (San Jose de Costa Rica) and *La Cultura* (Mexico) (Prislei 2008).

With a quantitative exploration of the term "*Publicaciones periódicas*" (Periodical Publications) in *Índice* (Ardisonne-Salvador 1971, 72–84), we can confirm the broad network of mentioned magazines[6] in *Nosotros* (243 in total), with most comprising publications from Argentina, Spain, France, and Italy (Fig. 1). It is worth noting that when we focus the search on specific cities, the ranking changes. The top five cities of publication for these mentioned magazines are Buenos Aires, Paris, Madrid, Mexico, and La Plata, while Italian cities held a lower position given their more scattered sites of publication (Milan and Genoa) (Fig. 2). This would allow us to reflect upon the sway of European cities, like Paris and Madrid, on *Nosotros,* a magazine that positioned itself as nationalist (Delgado 2006), backing the idea that "there is nothing more international than the formation of national identities" (Thièse 1999, 11), an idea we will confirm later on when exploring translations in the magazine (see section 2.3).

In terms of Argentine magazines, the most cited hail from Buenos Aires (with *Sur*, *Síntesis*, *Megáfono*, *Verbum*, and *Revista Nacional* in the top 5, also boasting the most citations, two to nine mentions per magazine), but magazines from other important cities are cited, too, such as those from La Plata, Córdoba, Tucumán, and Rosario, confirming an interest in capturing the Argentine intellectual environment of the moment.[7] Meanwhile, in Latin America, the

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6 In this section, we tally the mentions (and frequency) of other magazines in *Nosotros*. We are aware that this cannot be equated to an effective exchange with the cited magazines and that this study would need to be complemented by measuring the number of times that *Nosotros* appeared in other publications in turn, thus corroborating whether their attentions were reciprocal or solely telling of their desire to come into contact with their peers. Furthermore, this quantitative study could be supplemented by analysing shared collaborations, their joint participation in controversies, and the viralization of certain texts, among other matters. Nonetheless, the quantitative study of *Nosotros*' mentions of other magazines presented here is a preliminary quantification of the intertextuality between publications, so that we might later systematise a network of exchange.

7 For this quantitative systematisation of magazines mentioned in *Nosotros*, we will proceed by counting the mentions of other magazines diachronically (rather than synchronically) throughout the years of *Nosotros*' publication. Nonetheless, these mentions may also be revisited in future studies in order to detect which years registered more mentions of publications. This information could also be considered in terms of the contents of each issue, using a qualitative analysis. For example, a synchronic cut could be made in the year 1913, the year when the magazine acquired great visibility (Delgado 2006), or in 1927, when the controversy around

countries with the most mentioned publications are Mexico, Uruguay, Cuba, Brazil, and Chile (Fig. 3). In this figure, we may glean no strong network (as the number of mentions in the magazines is low, ranging between one and eight mentions per magazine), but this scattered connectivity points to an attempt to look to a vast portion of Latin America in order to sketch a panorama of its magazines, or at least recognize their existence, by registering them in *Nosotros*.
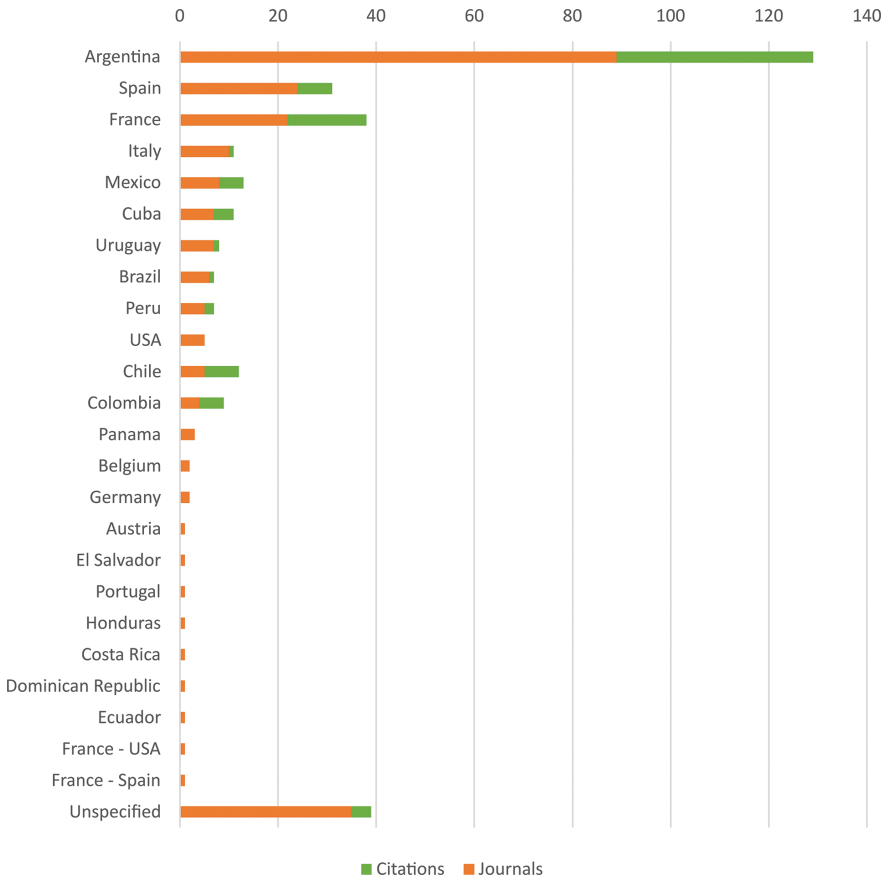
Fig. 1: Number of magazines mentioned (in orange) and citations (frequency of mentions, in green) in *Nosotros*, organised by country.

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the Hispano-American meridian took place (see note 2), which may be read in terms of the magazine network in turn.
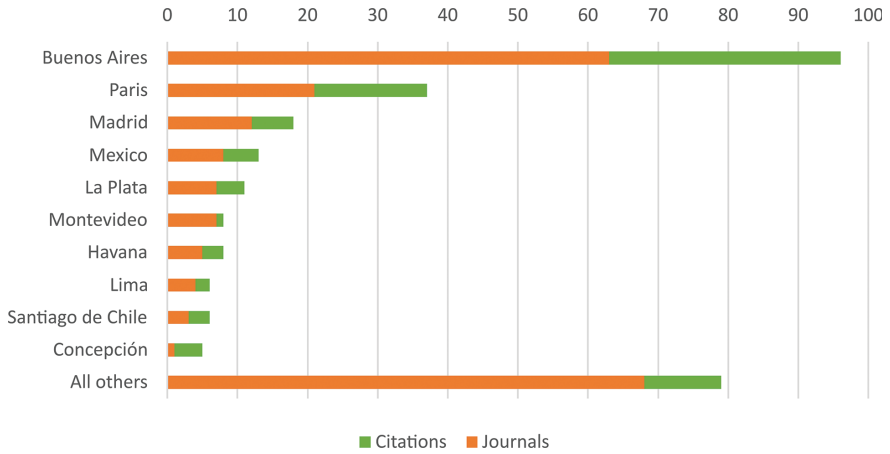
Fig. 2: Number of magazines mentioned (in orange), and citations (frequency of mentions, in green) in *Nosotros*, organised by city.
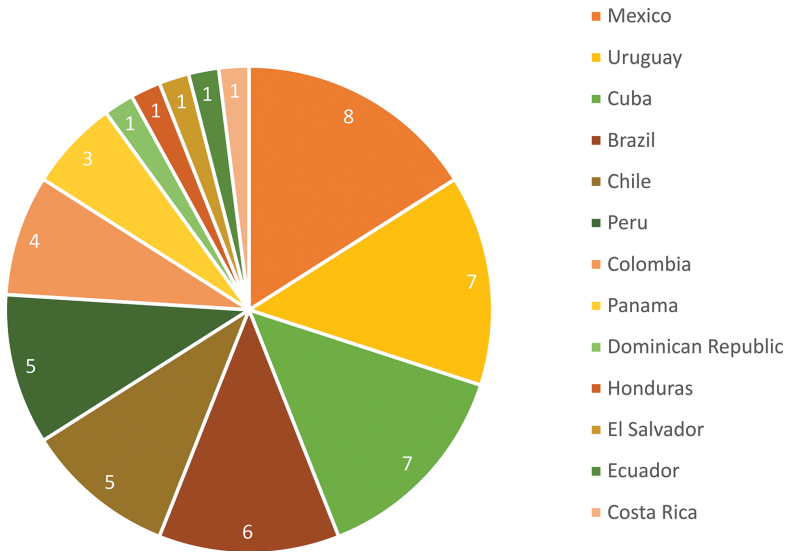
Fig. 3: Number of Latin American magazines mentioned in *Nosotros*, organised by country.

Regarding non-Latin American, western publications, we may observe (Fig. 4) the prevalence of "Latin Europe," comprising Spain, France, and Italy. Spain holds first place in terms of the sheer number of magazines mentioned, but France is in first place regarding the actual frequency with which its (fewer) magazines

are mentioned (from two to seven mentions per magazine) *Mercure de France*, *Revue de l'Amérique Latine*, *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, *Latinité*, and *La Revue Sud-Américaine*). Among the five magazines with the most mentions, the interest in Parisian magazines focusing on Latin America stands out, such as *Revue de L'Amérique Latine*, *Latinité*, and *La Revue Sud-Américaine*. This allows us to consider the key role Paris played at the time in terms of the consecration of minor or peripheral literatures (Colombi 2008), even within its national and regional space. Indeed, contact with *Mercure de France* would certify one's existence (and legitimacy) in the international, literary space. In fact, *Nosotros* was inspired by *Mercure de France*, though not in terms of its content, given that *Nosotros* aimed to provide a more local perspective. Meanwhile, thanks to *Nosotros*' international dissemination network built upon exchanges with foreign magazines, in 1914, *Mercure de France* complemented *Nosotros* on its ability to sustain autonomous and independent literary and aesthetic criteria (Lida 2015). A counterexample would be *Revue Sudaméricaine*, founded by the Argentine poet Leopoldo Lugones in Paris, which printed seven issues. *Nosotros* criticised this publication due to its Eurocentric character, as it appeared to be "disguised as French," without intending to change the "intellectual environment that we literary persons lack" at the local level (no. 63, 1914) – which, as noted previously, was one of *Nosotros*' goals. This would imply that the mere mention of another magazine would not necessarily signify affinity or that it was a "friend magazine." In each case, one would have to qualitatively observe what *Nosotros* printed regarding the mentioned magazine, how it was presented, and how closely the magazines were related.

Country	# of magazines	# of total mentions
Spain	24	31
France	22	38
Italy	10	11
USA	5	5
Belgium	2	2
Germany	2	2
Portugal	1	1
Austria	1	1
France - Spain	1	1
France - USA	1	1

Fig. 4: Number of referenced non-Latin American magazines and number of references to magazines from non-Latin American countries mentioned in *Nosotros*.

In Europe, Spain holds second place in terms of mentions, validating its referential position – for instance, when it came to pro-Hispanic discourse in Argentina's *Centenario* years. Paradoxically, this discourse tied Latin America to Spain, which was seen as the motherland, with Spain still holding the reins: "Nonetheless, a defined spirit animated it from the start: its frankly American spirit, founded on broad and well-understood nationalism. All of its propaganda has aimed to deepen the ties between Latin American nations, and between these nations and the mother country" (no. 13–14, 1908). Indeed, *Nosotros* "does not aim to rival European centres" (nos. 13–14, 1908), but to use them as models for gaining autonomy (Delgado 2010). Nonetheless, we may also observe national intellectuals' attempts at distinguishing themselves from Madrid, the Spanish exmetropolis, as made manifest in the 1920s, with the debate around where to situate the Latin American cultural meridian (see note 2).

In terms of Spain, the most cited magazines (two to four mentions per magazine) are the Madrid-based *Cosmópolis*, *Revista de Occidente*, *La Revista de las Españas*, and *La Gaceta literaria*, as well as the Galician-Uruguayan *Alfar*. It is worth noting that *Nosotros*, like other Argentine, avant-garde publications including *Proa* and *Martín Fierro*, was interested in the Ultraist movement, which was imported from Spain by Jorge Luis Borges and adapted to the Argentine criollo variation of Spanish. In fact, Borges published his "Manifiesto ultraísta" in *Nosotros* in 1921.[8]

Lastly, the third country with the most periodical-publication mentions is Italy (with one to two mentions per magazine), with publications including *L'Italia letteraria*, *Rivista di scienza*, *Rassegna italiana*, *Panorama*, and *L'Argentina*. There are a few scattered citations (one mention) of other magazines in Europe (Belgium, Germany, Austria, and Portugal) and the United States. In terms of the latter, most of these magazines specialise in Hispanic America, as with *Inter-América*, *Hispania*, and *Chile Pan-Am*.

It is worth noting that, by observing the magazine *Nosotros'* connections to other publications, we may construct an interesting corpus of magazines that we could characterise as "regional-international." Many are multilingual and show an interest in Latin America or Ibero-America, with Spanish and Latin American actors heavily present in their editorial committees (including Hispanicists and Latin Americanists) despite their sites of publication being located outside the

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8 For a study of Spain's presence in *Nosotros*, see Delgado (2010). For a study on the reception and redefinition of Ultraism in Latin American magazines at a time when the movement was on the decline in Spain but on the rise in the Southern Cone, see Padró Nieto (2019), who studies the connections between Uruguayan and Argentine avant-garde magazines – as well as Alemany Bay (1998) who notes that, in the 1927 controversy around the "Hispano-American intellectual meridian" what was actually at play was the authorship of Ultraism.

region. This is the case with *Hispania* (Paris), *L'Argentina* (Genoa), *La Gaceta de América* (Paris), *La Nouvelle revue mondiale* (Vienna), *La Revista de América* (Paris), *La Revue hispanique* (Paris/New York), *La Revue Sud-Américaine* (Paris), *Les Nouvelles italiennes* (Paris), *Prisma* (Paris/Barcelona), *Revue de l'Amérique Latine* (Paris), *Latinité* (Paris), and *Hojas libres* (Hendaye). We can also find mentions of magazines published by immigrant communities in Argentina, as is the case with Buenos Aires's Italian publication *Almanacco dell'italiano nell'Argentina*.

2.3 Criticism and Translation in *Nosotros*: Modernising the Literary Field

Nosotros was interested in creating a broad reading public, rather than merely relying on a writer-public for legitimacy (as a "little magazine" would). In contrast to *Nosotros*, "high literature" magazine projects sought legitimacy through the approval of other writers. In this sense, we might call *Nosotros* an "inclusive elitist" magazine (Shunway 1999, 165–180) that believed in the democratic and disseminating effects of culture. This magazine targeted the middle (and immigrant) class, and, in fact, many of its collaborators were part of this class and wrote for an educated audience that included students, professors, and middle-class intellectuals in order to take on a "broader and more complex cultural operation: the founding of the modern Argentina," as Rivera notes (1998, 61).

Given that this magazine was not financed by other agents, such as state subsidies or private sponsorship, the magazine promoted the professionalisation of the writer as a condition for the constitution of the modern literary field. Professionalization implied that the writer's profession required material sustenance (Rivera 1998, 61), which was often found in university positions (Delgado 2006, 262). This concern can be traced back to the topics addressed in the magazine, such as the challenges of being published by local publishing houses, royalty collecting (the first intellectual property law was passed in 1910), payments for journalists in the press, the creation of the Argentine Literature Chair in the Department of Literature and Philosophy under Ricardo Rojas in 1912, the project that aimed to create a Society of Writers in 1908, the discussion around the Institute of Philology's path, and national prizes (for instance, a proposed rule so that only works that had made a legal deposit could participate), among others.

In fact, literary criticism was central to the writer's professionalisation in *Nosotros*, and it was also key to consolidating the "national literature." For instance, we may recall the aforementioned debate about "Martín Fierro"'s place as a national epic poem, as compared to France's "La chanson de Roland". The poem set the basis for a History of Argentine Literature, whose foundational myth lies in

Gaucho literature. Indeed, the practice of literary criticism was considered exclusive to the lettered man ("*hombre de letras*") as we may read in the complaint that *Nosotros'* editors issued regarding the jury in charge of awarding national literary prizes, which included public servants and lawyers. The editors stated that, to *Nosotros*:

> literary works can only be judged, with authority and command, by literary professionals. No one would ever think to place a criminal judge, merely based on the fact that he is a judge, among the jury for an architecture contest, let alone for a wheat or heifer contest; so, by what lapse in good judgement would he be placed in a literary competition? (no. 187, 1924)

In *Nosotros*, criticism and reviews of national works abound (with authors such as Gálvez, Lugones, Güiraldes, and Borges, among others) with the goal of consolidating "Argentine literature." In fact, the magazine defends "[Latin] American nationalism."[9] To understand this concept that seems like an oxymoron at first glance, it is worth clarifying that the magazine was interested in defending Argentine literature, but not in isolating this literature from its regional and continental context. Instead, Argentine literature was to be read in relation to the whole of Latin American literature. This becomes explicit in the statement that *Nosotros* aimed to "be more than an Argentine magazine: an [Latin] American magazine" (no. 57, 1914): "There is nothing we need more urgently than to create solid ties between South America's isolated cultural centres"; (no. 1, 1907); which is why other Latin American literatures, such as Brazilian, Chilean, and Colombian literatures, are also included. Furthermore, as seen above, *Nosotros* boasted relationships to "Europe's Latin countries" (no. 13–14, 1908): France, Spain and Italy. Many reviews of foreign works were also published, including critiques of French publications of the time.[10]

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9 We should also mention the impact of "Arielism" in the early twentieth century. The movement brought together intellectual youths around José Enrique Rodó's book *Ariel*, which outlined a new, Latin American spirituality as opposed to the Caliban, which Rodó saw as incarnated in the United States. Arielism impregnated the University Reform, beginning in Córdoba, Argentina, in 1917, with its principles spreading all across Latin America. This is also present in *Nosotros*; in fact, Rodó is one of the most recognized authors in *Nosotros*, as he reviewed Latin American authors including Ruben Darío, Guido Spano, and José María Gutiérrez, and European authors such as Goethe and Montalvo. In fact, the magazine published a special issue as an homage to Rodó on the occasion of his death (no. 97, May 1917), recounting his life, works, and thought across some thirty contributions, including writing by Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Alberto Gerchunoff, Baldomero Fernández Moreno, and Evar Méndez, among others.

10 According to data on reviews of foreign literature (in the categories "*Crítica sobre un autor (Literaturas clásicas y modernas),*" "*Idem.*," as well as criticism on theatre, in the index created by Ardisonne and Salvador (1971), for the 1907–1943 period, the author boasting the most

Criticism in *Nosotros* boasted a central and highly specialised role, but what role did the translation of foreign literature play?[11] At first blush, *Nosotros* appears to include few translations, as opposed to the more cosmopolitan magazine *Sur*. As Lafleur and Provenzano (1962, 61) explain, *Sur* ascended when *Nosotros* began to fail: "Readers felt the urge to look out toward the world, which dictated the norm, and shirked our small circle of affairs, which only received its impact. This explains *Sur*'s ascendant flight: the magazine was founded when *Nosotros* began to languish." If we consider that, between 1907 and 1943, we have a provisional registry of 125 translations (adding those which have been effectively declared to those that are likely) (Fig. 5), the figure seems small, especially when bearing in mind that the monthly magazine included forty to fifty articles (registries) per issue, among which approximately half were strictly related to literature.

Nonetheless, a more attentive study of these translations could provide interesting information on the relationship between the magazine and foreign literature. My goal here is to trace how, through foreign literature, *Nosotros* was able to position itself ideologically and politically, both nationally and internationally, despite their statutes forbidding writers from taking sides in politics. In this sense, Bourdieu (2002) argues that, in the international circulation of ideas, there are "structural misunderstandings" given that texts circulate out of context and are reinterpreted according to the conditions of their fields of reception. This "structural

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reviews (6) is Henri Barbusse, followed by Leticia Boschi Huber, Henri Béraud, and José María de Acosta, with two reviews each. The following authors, among others, enjoyed one review each: Baudelaire, Ricardo Baccheli, Nicolás Beauduin, Claudio Basto, Apollinaire, Doménec de Bellmunt, Mario Appelius, Fortuné Andrieu, Proust, George Borrow, Beauduin, A. G. de Araujo Jorge, León Bocquet, André Baillon, Louis Antoine Fauvelet Bourriene, Honoré de Balzac, Maurice Barrés, Jean Richard Bloch, Paolo Albatrelli, Rudolf G. Binding, Raul Brandao, Rufino Blanco Fombona, Roberto Bracco, Schalom Asch, Ugo Betti, Ruy Bloem, Joseph Aynard, Sherwood Anderson, Joseph Bédier, Víctor Auburtin, Jules Bertaut, and Leon Bloy.

11 To visualise data on translation, I am working on a relational database for social-network analysis based on the digital environment Nodegoat. The sources include the summary *Bibliografía argentina de Artes y Letras* by Elena Ardisonne and Nélida Salvador, (Fondo Nacional de las Artes, 1971), as well as the *Nosotros* collection digitised by the Ibero-American Institute of Berlin, and the useful Portal of cultural magazines (Revistas Culturales 2.0), created by Professor Hanno Ehrlicher. The data on literary translations has been entered manually, having selected some specific "fields" from the Ardisonne-Salvador index, such as *literary genre* (essay, story, novel, poetry, narrative prose, theatre, chronicles, interviews, etc.) in the entries related to what the index labels "Classic and Modern Literatures" (as opposed to "Argentine Literature"). That is, these translation searches have not thoroughly scanned the entire collection, but only the materials in which we believe the publication of literary texts is most feasible. I should clarify that the study of these materials is in the exploratory phase. Thus, this chapter shows preliminary results.

misunderstanding" opened a field of possibilities for *Nosotros*, which gave way to politics through translations.
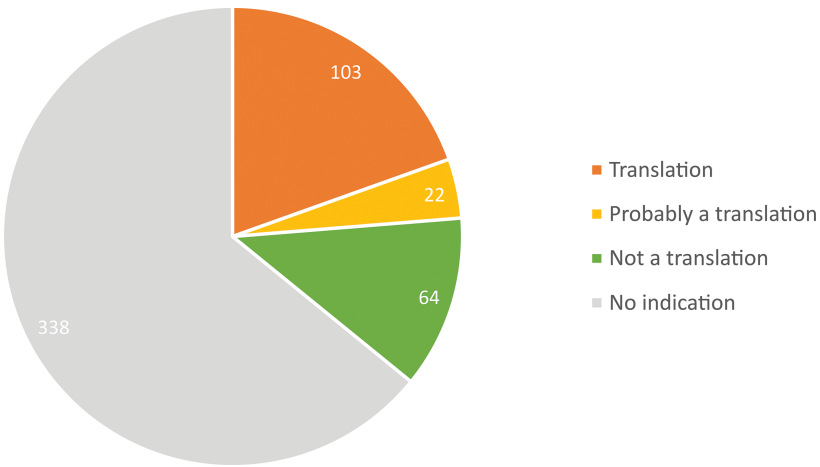
Fig. 5: Number of translations in *Nosotros* related to publications of foreign literature.

If we view these translations in time, we may observe that translations spiked in the 1920s (Fig. 6).
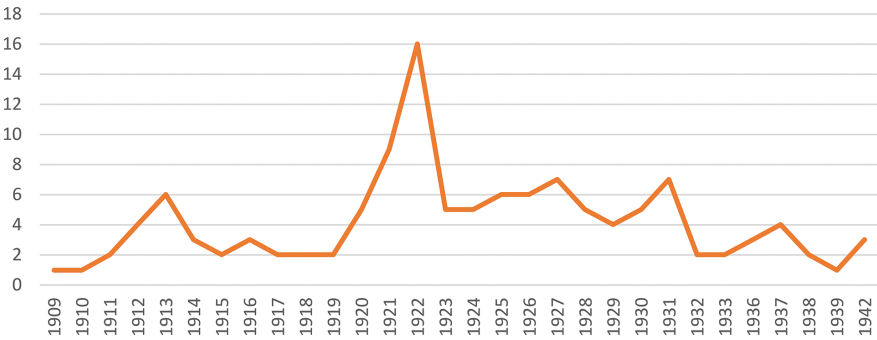
Fig. 6: Number of translations per year in *Nosotros*.

Interestingly, in 1920, R. Giusti quit his position as director. At the time of his resignation, which stemmed from political issues surrounding his affiliation with the Socialist Party, he noted that the magazine was experiencing years of opening and should thus position itself as a publication of the avant-garde

(around these years, several more cosmopolitan magazine projects emerged, such as *Proa* and *Martín Fierro*). Giusti noted the following:

> for the magazine to continue being what it always has been, the rightful pride of Argen-
> tine intellectuals, the thinkers, writers, and artists who are noteworthy in the world today
> must be duly published in its pages, so that Argentine intelligence, and Argentine letters,
> may find in *Nosotros* an organ to illustrate and stimulate them, that is, a magazine of the
> avant-garde. (no. 136, 1920)

In terms of the source languages of translated texts, we may observe a wide variety of origins (Fig. 7), with French leading by far (in orange), followed by English (in yellow), Italian (in green), German (in dark brown), and Catalan (in light brown). In fact, the magazine boasted sections dedicated to French, Portuguese, Italian, Catalan, and Latin American literature (Lida 2015, 5), in which the latest publications were reviewed, while translations, to a lesser degree, were also showcased.
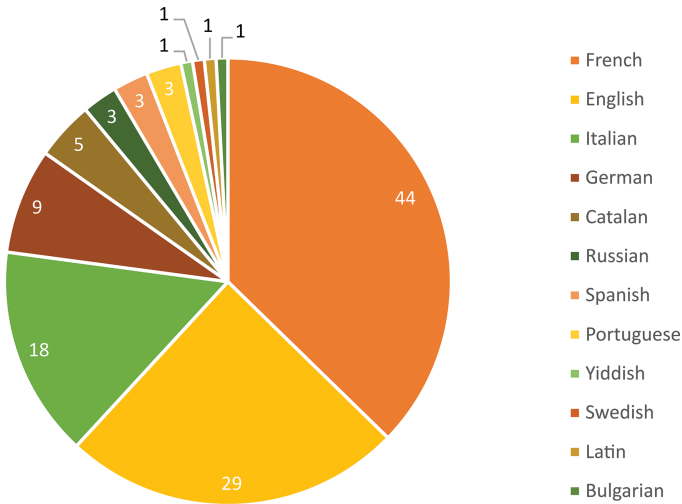
Fig. 7: Number of translations according to source language in *Nosotros*.

In Fig. 8, one piece of information stands out: Spanish appears as a source language three times, implying that the target language must have been something other than Spanish. Besides including Spanish as a target language, other languages also appear, especially Italian and French.
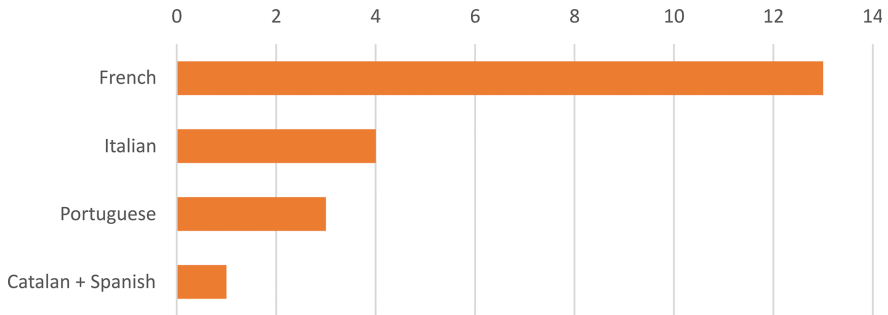
Fig. 8: Number of translations according to the original language of publication in *Nosotros.*

First, I would like to consider the peculiar case of texts published in Italian: these were not publications of texts by Italian authors, as one might suspect (although some Italian authors were published in translation),[12] but of Latin American authors translated into Italian. The translator, Comunardo Braccialarghe, also went by the pseudonym "Folco Testena" in, for example, his translation of *Martín Fierro* for the magazine's publishing house, which was also called Nosotros. In the magazine, Braccialarghe translated poetry by Rubén Darío (to "Notturno" and "La chiocciola") and Rafael Obligado (to "Il nido di boyeros") to Italian. He also wrote homages to Latin American authors, such as José Ingenieros and Amado Nervo, in Italian verse. Likewise, he published criticism of contemporary Italian literature, commenting on the now-forgotten, best-selling author of the time, Virgilio Brocchi, and on texts by Polo Albatrelli and Levi Ezro (specifically on his speech upon receiving the Romance languages chair at the University of Naples). He also published the article "La literature italiana, su influencia en la literatura argentina de este primer cuarto de siglo" ("Italian literature: its influence on Argentine literature during the first quarter of the century") (9–1927).

The fact that Italian was not only present in reviews, but also in translations of Latin American literature, can be explained by the importance of immigration for the middle class at the beginning of the century. As noted above, this was the magazine's target audience. In fact, its directors, Giusti and Bianchi, were of Italian origin. In this sense, the magazine sought the integration of foreigners, in opposition to more conservative ideas stemming from the creole "nationalist reaction" led by figures such as writer Manuel Gálvez, who demonised foreigners as a force that corrupted traditional values. Thus, Giusti affirmed the following:

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12 *Nosotros* includes translated texts by Dante, G. Prezzolini, G. Leopardi, G. Carducci, L. Sorrentino, G. Pascoli, G. Papini, G. Senes and Leticia Boschi, among others.

"our history" will be constructed upon the enormous mass of foreigners who will lay out their new nationality here. As expected, this nationality will be inspired by the ideals of justice, fraternity, and economic equality that the downtrodden dream of today. And one day, perhaps [. . .] Buenos Aires will be proud to see not only Moreno, Rivadavia, and San Martín in its plazas (the respectable leaders of an old time), not only the symbolic Dante that Rojas admits, not only the Garibaldi and Mazzini that he would have us chuck away in the attic, but also – and why not? – Karl Marx, Émile Zola, and Leo Tolstoy, the champions of new ideals.

In this magazine, the influence of foreign literature would also contribute to forging the identity and cultural history of the Argentine nation.

Keen on tracing the presence of Italian in Argentine culture, *Nosotros* published a survey in three of its 1928 issues (from February to July) with the goal of ascertaining the scope of "Italian influence in our culture." The surveys posed questions to nineteen key intellectuals of the time (including academics, journalists, and writers like Leopoldo Lugones, Ricardo Rojas, and Enrique Méndez Calzada). Following researcher Celina Manzoni's (2019) analysis of their responses, we might highlight a certain consensus in terms of recognizing the "Italic element" (an expression that Lugones used) in the composition of the Argentina of the time, but, among the consulted intellectuals, there was less recognition of Italy's impact on culture (Manzoni 2019, 245).

As we have observed, another of the publication languages in Fig. 8 is French. Above all, the magazine published French poetry by the following authors: Charles de Soussens (1865–1927) (a Swiss author living in Argentina, who actively collaborated with the magazine); Nicolas Beauduin (1880–1960; founder of "paroxysm," a poetic doctrine of renewal); Marcelle Auclair (1899–1983), a French female writer who was living in Chile in 1922–1923; and Raimundo Manigot (unknown dates).

To date, we have found forty-four registries of translations from French to Spanish, with abundant criticism of the post-war French literature of the time, such as criticism by François Felicien Durand (a pseudonym for Francis de Miomandre) (1880–1959), who also published works in *La Gaceta Literaria* and led the "Crónica de la vida intelectual francesa" ("Chronicles of French intellectual life") section from 1921 to 1923, though Miomandre may have written his articles in Spanish. The magazine also contains reviews and translations of works by the writer group *Clarté*, which fought to push intellectuals to commit to pacifism during the post-war years and was drawn to the ideals of the Russian Revolution. *Nosotros* published and reviewed works by the following: 1) Henri Barbusse (1873–1935) (in fact, the magazine published the first *Clarté* manifesto, along with translated texts by the author, such as "El cuchillo entre los dientes," and "Russie," and articles about Barbusse, including "Una visita a Barbusse," and "Henri Barbusse," etc.); 2) Romain Rolland (1866–1944), who was also published

(M. Gálvez and R. Giusti translated "Páginas de Clerambault" (1920), with commentary by Giusti, whose translation followed the book *Clerambault. Historia de una conciencia libre* (Buenos Aires, Ediciones Pax, 1921); and 3) other notable authors (in fact, some were paid a special homage edition given their visit to Buenos Aires) including Anatole France (1844–1924). In January of 1922, Anatole France's Nobel prize acceptance speech was published: a translation of the article was printed in *Le Temps* on 12 December 1921, and was subsequently published by *Justicia* in Montevideo, on 20 January 1922. Given his death in 1924, a number of critical articles on his philosophy and works were authored by several *Nosotros* writers, such as Ángel Battistessa, Roberto Giusti, Francis de Miomandre, Luis Reissig, and Carlos Ibarguren, among others. However, France was not always well received. In 1917, a person who went by "C.V.D." criticised France's visit in "Las lisonjas de A. France a la Argentina" ("A. France's Flattery in Argentina") (July 1917), given his lack of knowledge of Latin American affairs. The visitation speech "Anatole France en Buenos Aires; el banquete de la juventud" ("Anatole France in Buenos Aires; A Banquet of Youth") was published in October of 1924. Furthermore, the magazine published translations of France's texts, such as "si no se quiere parecer . . . " (February 1922), an article France wrote about the League of Nations, which was published in *Clarté* and subsequently printed in *Repertorio Americano* (San José de Puerto Rico) in January 1922; the text "A los intelectuales y estudiantes de la América Latina" ("To the intellectuals and students of Latin America") (February 1921), which the author wrote with Barbusse; and a translated letter from France to the director of *L"Humanité* (September 1922). In fact, the magazine's close relationship with *Clarté*'s authors caused altercations with *Nosotros'* more conservative writers, who accused the directors of supporting a group of "communists," despite the fact that, according to its statues, the magazine was to remain apolitical (Lida 2015).

In terms of French translations, it is also worth noting that the magazine published poems as well, by French authors like André Chenier, Leconte de Lisle, Hégessipe Moreau, Alfred de Musset, Marcel Proust, Arthur Rimbaud, Albert Samain, Francis Vielé-Griffin, Paul Valéry, Paul Verlaine, Alfred de Vigny, the Belgian Maeterlinck (theatre) and Emile Verhaeren, the Italian Filippo Marinetti, and the Franco-Argentine Paul Groussac. One of the directors, A. Bianchi, also translated literature: he translated poetry by Marinetti (written in French in 1911 and printed upon his arrival in Buenos Aires) and Oscar Wilde (*De Profundis*, which had not been published before), as well as critical articles by Nicolas Beauduin and Pierre Abraham. We may also note that France was seen as a model – we may recall the phrase "and France, the eternal teacher of liberty" in Pasquaré (2012, 154) –, as seen in section 2.2 regarding the prevalence of contact with French magazines in the periodical-publication network.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that *Nosotros* also published Russian texts, given the magazine's penchant for the Revolution and the novelty of the Soviet model in the 1920s and 1930s. While the magazine was to be apolitical, given its very statutes, translation allowed for deference, as texts could be published without the magazine having to explicitly subscribe to any given idea. The contemporary critics and poets that the magazine published included the following: 1) G. Ustinov (unknown dates): "Opiniones de un crítico bolchevique" ("Opinions of a Bolshevik Critic"), "Sobre la revolución rusa y la revolución" ("On the Russian Revolution and Revolution") (no. 158, July 1922); 2) D. Merejkowski (1866–1941), a Russian-symbolism ideologist and critic of the Revolution: "El pueblo crucificado; el mesianismo polaco y Rusia" ("The Crucified People: Polish Messianism and Russia"), (no.144, May 1921) and Merejkowski's indirect translation, through the French, of "Le roman de Leonard Da Vinci" ("The Novel of Leonardo Da Vinci") (no. 207, 1926); "Dostoievski, precursor de la Revolución Rusa" ("Dostoyevsky, Precursor of the Russian Revolution") (no. 149, Nov. 1921); 3) N. Evreinoff (1879–1953), "Los bastidores del alma" ("The Soul's Stretchers") (monodrama), translated by Llinás Vilanova (no. 249, February 1930); 4) M. Iarojchewsky (unknown dates): "La Revolución en Rusia" ("The Russian Revolution"), (no. 95, March 1917); "Escenas de la Revolución Rusa en provincial" ("Provincial Scenes of the Russian Revolution"), on the occasion of the revolution's first anniversary, (no. 108, April 1918), and "A propósito de la ley de colonización" ("On the Law of Colonization)," (no. 93, January 1917). The magazine's editors published an homage to the poet Vladimir Maiacovski on the occasion of his suicide (no. 253, 1939), studying the Soviet case from a far more critical and less laudatory perspective:

> Having exited the chaos of revolution, [Russia] is going through a feverish period of reconstruction; this has created a new economy, new politics, new art, and a new society. In a word, Russia is gestating the new world and, consequently, is going through painful times, times in which sentimentalism seems but a joke. [. . .] Sentimental men have no place in Russia.

Lastly, besides the contemporary European literature we have outlined here, which allowed the magazine to indirectly take on political positions, we may find translations of what was then called "universal literature," but was actually just a European cannon of acclaimed authors: Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, Byron, Shelley, and even Roman classics like Virgil (Shunway 1999, 173).

Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the directors considered translation an act of literary creation (and not just an unfaithful copy that would evoke the common notion of "treason"). This belief is manifest in the statements

Nosotros published regarding the need to prize translations alongside original Argentine literature:

> While there may be many opinions on this point, there is no discussion when it comes to properly judging aesthetics, regardless of what the law states in terms of translation being unable to compete, as the jury resolved regarding Augusto Bunge's *Faust*, without considering its value. A translation can be a master work of re-creation (this has been stated, demonstrated, and exemplified to death), and, by the way, the translations of the *Iliad* by Monti and Plutarco Amyot are not worth less, but more, than many other original works they wrote. *La Vulgata*, as we know, is a translation. (no. 227, 1928)

One final interesting point worth exploring is that *Nosotros*' translators were mostly men[13] who also wrote criticism, reviews, and their own works. For instance, the two directors, Giusti and Bianchi, also translated, as noted above. Translation was not seen as a specific profession, but as yet another editorial (and creative) task that collaborators who spoke more than one language would take on sporadically. Often, these publications were accompanied by the *translator's comments*: the translator did not hide as a mediator, but, on the contrary, would issue opinions on the translated text.

Nevertheless, one woman, Luisa Sara S. [Spangenberg] de Barreda, appears in the list of translators as having translated two works by Oscar Wilde "El gigante egoísta" (September 1914) and "Decadencia de la mentira" (December 1911). Unfortunately, we were unable to find biographical information about Barreda, but we assume she was the wife of Ernesto Mario Barreda, a writer and member of the magazine's editorial committee. As such, a personal relationship to a man might emerge as the key to women being introduced to the public domain of letters. It is possible to mention another example of the misrepresentation of women regarding reviews of female writers. We found only two names in a list of sixty: Giulia Cavallari Cantalamesa (a feminist and pedagogue from Italy), and Emily Brontë, both in reviews written by men. We also found an entry under "Maria Bartolini," who in fact was a man called "Gioseffo Maria Bartolini" (an Italian painter of the late-Baroque period), which shows the risk of using supposedly female names, such as Maria, in search fields, given that "Maria" is a relatively common middle name among men, which is problematic when conducting automatic queries from a big-data perspective.

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13 The list of translators includes Obligado, Carlos (7), Braccialarghe, Comunardo (5), Bianchi, Alfredo A. (5), Cárdenas, Jacinto (5), Díaz Carvalho, Luis María (4), Risso, Domingo (4), de Vedia y Mitre, Mariano (4), Más y Pí, Juan (2), S. de Barreda, Luisa Sara (2), Resnick, S. (2), Suárez Calimano, Emilio (2), Llorens, Gracia (2), Banchs, Enrique (2), Bufano, Alfredo R. (2), Díaz, Luis María (2), Bunge, Augusto (2), F. Giusti, Roberto (2), Beruti, Antonio Luis (2), Barreda, Ernesto Mario (2), Gálvez, Manuel (2), and Battistessa, Ángel J. (1).

3 Conclusion

In this chapter, we started with the premise that the forging of national literatures should not be understood in isolation, but in relation to the international system of literary circulation (Thièse 1999; Bulson 2016). Regarding peripheral literature from more recently consolidated nations than those in Europe, as is the case with the formation of Latin American literatures, we should situate national formation amid the tensions between the forces of nationalism and those of cosmopolitanism. Argentine literature specifically was bound between four sites of reference: Argentina, Latin America, Europe (especially France and Spain), and the United States (Gramuglio 2013a). As such, following Delanty (2012), I propose considering literary nationalism in terms of critical cosmopolitanism, given that the latter concept can activate a less polarised and more dialogical dimension between "us" and "them" in a specific territory, while remaining connected to the outside. This allows for an active transformation process regarding the reception of foreign literatures. We might thus consider texts such as Oswald de Andrade's "Manifiesto antropofágico" (1928), or Borges's "El escritor argentino y la tradición" (1953), in which Western tradition is genuinely and irreverently appropriated from the margins.

Thus, the goal of this chapter has been to study how the national and the cosmopolitan were articulated in the Latin American periodical press of the early twentieth century by considering the emblematic case of the Argentine magazine *Nosotros*. As mentioned above, and in contrast to what unfolded in France, magazines in Argentina and in many other Latin American countries served as central organs – and often as the only organs, given these countries' less developed publishing industries – to build a national literature and an intellectual field.

We have studied this constitution through multiple features of the Argentine magazine *Nosotros* (an ideal site of observation given its long duration and its aim to operate organically). Firstly, we have studied the moderate and tolerant character of the national field under construction, welcoming authors of diverse aesthetics to the magazine, but barring political and religious subject matters in favour of literature proper (though the political would inevitably make its way in) as crafted by writers (often men) who professionalised their labour, either in the press or the university, in stark opposition to the "lettered politician" model (in which writers tended to be diplomats) that had persisted through the end of the nineteenth century. Second, we have analysed the mentions of periodical publications, with which we may trace *Nosotros*' relationships of affinity, interest, or controversy. In fact, connectivity with other magazines is a key feature of periodical publications – many included sections titled "*revista de revistas*" (magazine of magazines) or "*canjes*" (exchanges) –, along with their periodicity, collective

authorship, and embodiment of spaces of socialisation, as proposed by their editorial committees. Nonetheless, thanks to the long duration of *Nosotros*, we have been able to observe – in more detail – how these relationships between magazines organised (across countries, cities, and publications) and which spaces were most emphasised in their mentions. Using a quantitative study of *Nosotros*' relationship to 243 magazines, we have been able to highlight the heavy presence of the international (especially of France, Spain, and Italy) in this nationalist publication. Lastly, we have focused on the new tasks of the professional writer of the time: literary criticism and translation. Though the former was far more present than the latter in *Nosotros*, we might consider translation as a form of implicit, positive criticism on behalf of the professional writer, given the implied selection of the foreign text, even when publications did not include explicit arguments justifying a translation's inclusion in the magazine. Though translation is less obvious regarding its textual features (for instance, the name of translators) and the quantity of texts, we believe it embodies an interesting space from which to observe the tensions between literary nationalism (which was more organic and explicit in the magazine's editorial policies) and cosmopolitanism, which was less systematic and occasionally shone through in what we might call the "micropolitics of translation," adding tension to more nationalist tenets.

In short, in this chapter, I have sought to show how the translation of foreign literature can influence the debates about the modernization of the national literary field and around national literary revindication. Paradoxically, but not inconsistently, the magazine analysed here, *Nosotros*, sought to portray "international nationalism": it defended the institutionalisation of national literature while creating a network of international – especially Latin American and European – connections, earning the magazine international acclaim (above all, its exchanges with France were held in high esteem, as we saw in the analysis of *Nosotros*' periodical-publication network). Furthermore, while the magazine emphasises literary criticism as the proper task for the new professional writer of the early twentieth century, the translation of foreign, contemporary works indirectly allowed these writers to take political sides, going against the prohibitions in the magazine's statutes. *Nosotros* was to be an impartial and apolitical magazine, as per the literary field it sought to forge. Nonetheless, its translations of contemporary authors, especially of the group *Clarté* and of Russian literature, as well as the translations to the Italian published in its pages, suggest that this magazine was situated in its time, showing interest in political events, whether international (such as the Russian Revolution) or national (such as the inclusion of immigrants in the forging of a national identity). Furthermore, it casts light on the specificity of peripheral literary fields, such as the Latin American one, in which politics are inextricable from literature (Ramos 1989, Altamirano and Sarlo 1993,

Jurt 1999). Thus, it is my belief that *Nosotros* is an excellent example of how, when it comes to Latin American literature, the matter of the national cannot be divorced from the regional and the international.

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Ainamar Clariana-Rodagut and Malte Hagener

Transnational Networks of Avant-Garde Film in the Interwar Period

1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is twofold: to map the circulation of avant-garde films in Europe and the Americas, and to develop a theoretical framework to understand this phenomenon. The film that we focus on as a case study was produced in a specific context, and it occupies a special position in cinema history: *Un chien andalou* (FR 1929, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí). While the film itself is a complex work of art, it is usually understood as the most typical example of surrealist cinema in general. Moreover, the film is routinely studied as a standout example of avant-garde cinema, as it was produced in the second half of the 1920s, during the heyday of the first wave of avant-garde cinema. It has often been labelled as avant-garde for distribution and exhibition purposes during (and after) its premiere, and it spread through specific infrastructural networks of circulation.[1] Through an exploration and examination of the film's transnational circulation, we argue that its meaning and its discursive value do not lie in an immanent aesthetic quality; instead, these aspects are constructed in and through practices of circulation, such as processes of cultural transfer, and through networks whose nodes and edges are traceable in its circulation patterns. To make sense of various aspects of these practices and processes, we will introduce a number of theoretical concepts to our discussion.

2 Transnational Circulation: Terms and Theories

"Circulation" is a curious and complicated term.[2] At its etymological root, it points to the circle, the perfect geometrical form that closes unresistingly unto itself. It

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1 See, for example, self-proclaimed introductory works to the field such as Sitney (1987); Albera (2004); and Turvey (2011).

2 See Hagener, Opitz, and Tellmann (2020).

implies a complete and perfect movement of matter without any friction, loss or addition. In its common usage, the energy necessary for setting up a circulatory system and keeping it in motion is often ignored, as it is implied that the change of physical position within the system is a quasi-magical operation. First used in medicine to describe the blood circuit, it was adapted by political economy (most famously by Karl Marx) to refer to the value-generating processes of modern capitalism. As useful as the term has proven in this context, we want to unpack assumptions, highlight ambiguities, and complicate ways of thinking about the cultural objects in motion hidden within the concept of circulation. We will focus on two aspects in particular.

First, we will highlight the infrastructure necessary for circulation, because movement never happens without facilitation or far-reaching pre-conditions. Energy always has a source and a particular vector of impact. In the case of *Un chien andalou*, many factors contribute to the operation of transnational circulation: embassies and mail service, friendships and institutional arrangements, magazines and telegraph services, leaflets and transoceanic commercial steamboats. While we cannot fully outline every potentially relevant aspect in detail, we will turn our attention to the (infra)structures that often support and enable circulation. Zooming in on infrastructures is also a way to highlight labour that normally remains invisible, as Susan Leigh Star (1999) has pointed out. This shift of focus allows one to see aspects that may have gone unnoticed before, such as the contributions of women, as we will later see in our case study. Leigh Star has argued that when we forget the "invisible" work of cleaners, secretaries, caretakers, or parents, it means that we are operating with a model that lacks certain essential aspects: "leaving out what are locally perceived as 'nonpeople' can mean a nonworking system" (Leigh Star 1999, 386).

Secondly, we are interested in the work of interpretation and adaptation on a semantic level, which shapes and adapts an object for different contexts. Again, Susan Leigh Star's work is productive here, because her concept of a "boundary object" (Leigh Star, Griesemer 1989; Leigh Star 2010) helps us to understand cooperation without consensus and the connections between very different systemic units. For Leigh Star, an object is something people act *towards* and *with*, and the object's materiality depends on actions, not on its "thing"-ness. The term boundary "is used to mean a shared space," so "these common objects form boundaries between groups through flexibility and shared structure" (2010, 603). As in the Leigh Star's example with a car, films can function as boundary objects as they move through different contexts and are approached, employed and understood in various ways. Understanding films as boundary objects is a way to open up the idea of a film's meaning and aesthetic value as tied not only to its "thing"-ness or to itself, but also to the networks – including the actors – through which it

circulates, including the network of actors who perform in it. Here, it is worth highlighting the inherent infrastructural flexibility of film, whose meaning can be more vague or specific depending on the needs of each network – for instance, a film can be tailored to a local use, or it can maintain its "vaguer identity as a common object" (605) when there is no consensus among groups. In this respect, we will also employ Michel Espagne's theory of cultural transfer (2013), which describes the resemantisation process any cultural object undergoes when it circulates. The effect of circulation can be witnessed in the way specific entities (e.g., cultural objects like films) are approached, used, and understood in distinct contexts. Depending on the frame or network the boundary object comes from or arrives at, conditioned by its circulatory pattern, its meaning/s will be modified, expanded, or negated. The environment an object finds itself in not only shapes the meaning-making process; it is also affected by the circulation history the object carries with it. In this sense, actors have agency, and processes of circulation affect the network as much as the actor, because actors and networks are intertwined and co-constitutive with each other.

We want to underline here the efforts made by different groups to employ *Un chien andalou* as a tool for their specific artistic (or cultural, political, or social) goals. Even though these groups are quite diverse, they have often cooperated to screen the film without forming a consensus about its meaning, as Leigh Star has proposed for boundary objects. One result of this cooperation is the film's long trajectory in terms of transnational circulation. A broad range of actors from disparate backgrounds have interacted with the film and established networks in order to maintain and renew its values, but in each context, the film has been comprehended and apprehended differently. Depending on the place, the film has been tagged as Surrealist, Spanish, and independent, as well as with other adjectives we will discuss. This adaptive ability comes from the agency of the film itself, which is capable of being understood from a range of different perspectives and points of view.

Even if tradition holds that "in the social sciences, agency is synonymous with being a person," (Bronwyn Davies 1991, 42), from the perspective of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), agency is not limited to human beings; nonhuman entities are also endowed with it. Agencies are multiple and can only be traced through the actions they participate in. Without an observable effect on another object, we cannot identify any agencies. Thus, according to ANT, any actor or actant, human or nonhuman, has agency, even when it does not have a stable form or exhibits different figurations for the same action (Latour 2005, 54).

To understand how agency works in Actor-Network Theory, it is worth recalling the significance of the hyphen in "Actor Network," which is intended to highlight the interdependence among actors, as well as the interdependence between

actors and networks. According to Latour (2005), an actor can be conceived of in two ways simultaneously, as a puppet and as a unity. The term "actor" was not chosen by coincidence: an actor (in theatre or film), when performing himself/herself, is intertwined with the text he/she is performing. In this metaphor, the text would be the network. Actors and actants, human or nonhuman, are driven by multiple kinds of agencies, and agency, in turn, "is manifest only in the relation of actors to each other" (Dwiartama and Rosin 2014, 32). Therefore, agency does not exist by itself; it functions only within interactions. Agency exists relationally, as a function of entities' relationships to one another. Even when we conceive of them as puppets, actors are not just intermediaries but also mediators, because mediality is never a transparent and frictionless transmission; it always affects what is moved or transported through it.[3]

In this chapter, we conceive of cultural goods – films, in this case – as actors with agencies, and consequently, we think of them as mediators, like any other actor or actant.[4] Of course, films are not the only actors endowed with agency in the networks that we are interested in. Other potential actors or groups of actors include the venues in which the films were screened, the audiences that attended the screenings, the practices carried out by these audiences, the organisers who programmed the screenings, the people who rented or bought copies of the movie, the distribution companies, the posters and advertisements that announced the screenings, and even the press releases and other publications that were published before and after the screenings. Furthermore, the circulation of actors implies two kinds of transformation: of the actors themselves, and of the networks, because the two are co-constitutive of each other. This helps us to understand the costs associated with circulation, because the energy that is necessary to keep the system in motion can be traced back to these mutual modifications. A film – which we are treating as an actor – is transformed by

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3 Regarding the accusation that directors treat actors like puppets, Latour offers this ironic comment: "So who is pulling the strings? Well, the puppets do in addition to their puppeteers. It does not mean that puppets are controlling their handlers – this would be simply reversing the order of causality – and of course no dialectic will do the trick either. It simply means that the interesting question at this point is not to decide who is acting and how but to shift from a certainty about action to an uncertainty about action – but to decide what is acting and how. As soon as we open again the full range of uncertainties about agencies, we recover the powerful intuition that lies at the origin of the social sciences. So, when sociologists are accused of treating actors as puppets, it should be taken as a compliment, provided they multiply strings and accept surprises about acting, handling, and manipulating" (Latour 2005, 60).
4 Here, we are continuing the tradition of art historians like David Freedberg (1989) and W.J.T. Mitchell (1996), and anthropologists such as Alfred Gell (1998) and Philippe Descola (2015).

the network in which it circulates. Conversely, though, a network is constituted by the actors that take part in it. In our example, when a film is screened at a film club, other actors who are part of that club will either attend the screening or abstain from it. The movement focused around the film, which extends to incorporate other actors or/and actants, helps create the network's mechanics. It becomes a structural element of the network, and other movements also become a part of it. Thus, any movement or any action carried out within the network can potentially affect all the actors and actants involved in that network, even if it does not affect all the actors and actants in the same way. Moreover, any modifications that occur in any part of the network have the potential to reconstitute and transform the whole network. Therefore, we can see this systemic relation through Edgar Morin's paradigm of complexity, in which causality itself is understood to be complex (Morin, 2008).

Since we are interested in tracing the paths of these transformations, it will be fruitful to attend the process of cultural transfer. As we will demonstrate, the semantic layers that are added, removed, or modified during a film's circulation depend on the networks through which it circulates. In order to analyse circulation patterns that characterise the transnational networks of avant-garde films, we will examine how films are labelled for distribution and how they are described in press releases, promotional slogans, programming strategies, presentations, and conferences that surround their release. In other words, we will discuss how these films circulated during the interwar period through different spatial and temporal contexts.

Another condition that must be taken into account when studying the circulation of films is connectivity. As Sebastian Conrad puts it, focusing on exchanges and connections is one way of conducting research on global history (Conrad 2016). A wide variety of topics can be addressed through the study of interconnectedness, including diasporas, commercial exchanges, communication channels, and mediators who work as bridges of connection or as impassable barriers. For the purposes of this chapter, we propose the idea of connectivity as a condition that facilitates worldwide connections among actors and/or actants. This globalised framework offers us an opportunity to retrace connections – which Latour (2005) once called the main purpose of the social sciences – by crossing multiple scales or layers. As Conrad (2016) notes, the most interesting questions emerge at the intersection between local and global processes; that is, in the interaction of multiple scales. In other words, global connectivity is an opportunity to widen our networks of cultural exchange. For this purpose, we strive for a transnational perspective that can "look beyond national boundaries and seek to explore interconnections across borders" (Iriye 2012, 11).

Nevertheless, we will focus the geographical framework of our analysis on Europe and the Americas for a variety of reasons. Firstly, we will retrace the circulation of *Un chien andalou* in Europe, because the film was produced there. We will begin in France, where the film had its world premiere; then, we will turn our interest towards Spain to trace another aspect of the film's origins, since the creators were Spanish (and shaped by their Spanish upbringing). Finally, we will mention other places in Europe where the film was screened in order to provide more examples that illustrate how processes of cultural transfer developed, as well as how networks were built and used in other European frameworks. After considering Europe, we will turn to the circulation of *Un chien andalou* in Latin America, focusing mainly on Mexico and Argentina, the countries that had the most developed motion picture industries when the film first circulated. We will also explore its circulation in other Latin American countries such as Brazil or Uruguay. In 1929, when the film had its world premiere, there was frequent exchange between Europe and Latin America, especially among Ibero-American countries, which allowed the transnational circulation of avant-garde films and ideas to flourish.[5] *Un chien andalou* is a widely discussed film, but as we will see, most literature about it is anchored in the study of specific national cinemas, rather than a comparative framework. It therefore comes as no surprise that Latin American and European frameworks have not yet been compared or put in relation to each other in a study of the circulation of a specific film. While much has been written about *Un chien andalou* as an example of the Surrealist aesthetic and creative methodology, as a vehicle for psychoanalytic ideas, as Spanish film that draws its iconography from that national tradition, and as an impulse toward the modernization of the Spanish artistic field, in all these cases, the film has been mostly considered as finite, fixed, and final in its meaning. Furthermore, the film has largely been viewed as closed and passive, as if that meaning cannot be reshaped, changed, or affected by the networks the film circulates through. This ongoing change is exactly what the cultural transfer process envisions and theorises.

In fact, the transnational circulation of *Un chien andalou* was predetermined by the film's previous encounters with the public – an accumulation of semantic layers. Active participants in the wide network of alternative film culture were often highly aware of the film's reputation through texts and personal communication before they had even watched it. In other words, the notorious and scandalous stories surrounding *Un chien andalou* contributed to the fact

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5 Dudley (2009), who proposes that film history has several phases, considers the twenties part of the "cosmopolitan phase".

that the film could be used as a boundary object, because they offered specific (and diverse) interpretive possibilities to different groups. The adjective "avant-garde" was the most reliable label for film society organisers who wanted to screen *Un chien andalou*, and it assured the film's circulation through film clubs in different countries and on different continents. As we will see, there was a transnational network of actors and actants surrounding film clubs, and there were specialised, interconnected subgenres of cinema that sustained this network over time. Nevertheless, even given the similarities and interests that actors within avant-garde networks shared and the connectivity among them, a film had to have the flexibility of a boundary object in order to be screened successfully in a diversity of contexts and attain transnational circulation. Thus, as we have outlined above, presenting *Un chien andalou* as a boundary object highlights the tendency toward cooperation without consensus (Leigh Star, Griesemer 1989) and the film's ability to adopt diverse semantic layers. As with any other aesthetic object, we take into account the film's active role in the meaning-making process of interpretation, which is carried out through production, distribution, circulation, exhibition, and contextualisation. This complex meaning-shaping process cannot be wholly accounted for by a single national framework, so we must shift our attention to its cross-national, cross-regional and cross-local effects. On the one hand, we will analyse the aforementioned process of circulation through our case study, retracing *Un chien andalou*'s transnational networks of exchange in order to unveil the actors and actants involved in those networks, from organisers and audience members to the venues where the film was screened. Through this case study, we will be able to consider the importance of networks of circulation in the meaning-making process surrounding a film. On the other hand, as part of our analysis of the processes of cultural transfer, we will also take into account reports and reactions that the film's screenings provoked, in order to analyse how circulation through different cultural frameworks re-affected the meaning-making process.

Since we are interested in the transnational circulation of films,[6] we will consider these films not only as cultural objects, but also as economic goods and political instruments. As soon as films are treated as having political and economic impact, their connectivity becomes a potential source of power, while a lack of connectivity can be seen as a form of exclusion in the globalised world.[7]

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6 See Ezra and Rowden (2006); Durovicova and Newman (2009); Rawle (2018); and Garza, Doughty, and Shaw (2019).

7 This is not the only controversy regarding globalisation, of course; we could also mention many others, such as its economic, social, cultural or environmental implications.

As connectivity (i.e. the power to form connections) is still highly unevenly distributed, it is ethically important to remind ourselves that – because of this study's wide geographical context – there is a huge disparity in available material from different regions. In the first place, many sources have not survived, some of them are hidden in such a way that one can only come across them by accident, and only a small portion have been made publicly available or used in historiographical studies.[8] Access to archives and data differs widely depending on geographical context.[9] For this reason, tracking the circulation of a Spanish film in Latin America is not easy,[10] not just because of our geographical location in Spain as researchers, but also because of the difficulty of completing an endeavour that has never been attempted before, such as an analysis of the transnational circulation of avant-garde films.[11] In this sense, our contribution attempts to make visible the role that these regions, wrongly called peripheries, have played in that circulation. Therefore, our research is also an effort to build a bridge between Europe and Latin America and facilitate connections between them.

Bruno Latour's idea of immutable mobiles (1990) has been a major influence on us, as it contains a historical argument regarding specific media formats while also making claims about transnational power and the dynamics of development. In Latour's terms, "immutability" refers to the notion that entities are stable, while

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8 This situation has been further exacerbated by the global pandemic, because we have had to rely mainly on remote access.

9 For example, in the United States, many specialised journals are digitised (see the Media History Digital Library; https://mediahistoryproject.org/), while in Latin America far fewer are, though there are variations by country and exceptions for popular journals. In Brazil, for instance, the most important daily paper (*Jornal do Brasil*, 1891–2010) has been digitised, while in Argentina not even the most important and enduring national newspaper (*La Nación*) is available online. In the European context, meanwhile, digitization varies greatly (see Domitor Journals Project; https://domitor.org/journals/). In many European countries, some important newspapers are available online in digital form while others are not; the same goes for specialised art journals. Even when sources are available in digital form, their quality varies: some have been processed using OCR so that one can search by keywords, while others are difficult to read. The metadata is often incomplete, missing altogether, or unusable because of the format, and often, sources were not found in the first place. Mostly, APIs are absent, so harvesting has to be done manually and cannot be automated. There are also countries in which none of the relevant sources are digitised and the only available material consists of secondary sources.

10 We are aware of the various levels of disadvantage among Hispanic cultures, and Spain is not considered part of the Global South. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning the peripheral role Hispanic and Lusophone cultures have so far been relegated to in research on Modernity.

11 Nicholas Poppe and Rielle Navitski's book (2017) is an ambitious and exceptional piece of work that considers Latin America's influential participation in the development of Occidental Modernity.

"mobility" implies that these same objects are also transportable. Both claims – and Latour makes this very clear – are not absolute; they must be considered in relation to other types of media. Compared to handwritten manuscripts, for instance, printed books are a relatively stable media, but the actual practices in the early centuries of printing were constantly evolving and contained many feedback loops, so their immutability is still relative (Schüttpelz 2009). When we consider the immutability of films, the same holds true: throughout their history, they have been subject to censorship, cut or edited to accommodate specific local policies, and physically worn out through repeated use, and musical accompaniment can sometimes vary according to means, audience, and venue, so there are a number of factors to take account of. Nevertheless, films have largely been seen as being immutable – and reproducible, as Walter Benjamin forcefully argues in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Thus, despite the variability introduced by practices of circulation and exhibition, film still has a certain consistency and stability as an object, especially when it is described as a work of art. At the same time, mobility – as we have argued above – is not an effortless and sudden change of location; it always requires energy and labour. Therefore, the mobility of cultural objects comes at a price: transport fees, customs charges, rental fees, taxes, and duties, as well as expenditures of time and energy more generally. While the structure that an immutable mobile affords creates advantages for controlling time and space because of its stability and transportability, these benefits must be qualified by the efforts it requires to put these objects into circulation.

In discussions of the epistemology of avant-garde films like *Un chien andalou*, there is a tension between multiple different perspectives. On one side, we have the perspectives of interpretive flexibility and cultural transfer, which stress objects' transformative adaptability; on the other side stands immutable mobility, which emphasises the durability of structures over time. Our analysis will describe and discuss these tensions, treating them less as contradictory than as dialectical thesis and antithesis: immutable mobility treats objects as having an ontological core that marks them as avant-garde films independently of their context. Boundary objectivity – in which an object's meaning changes and adapts depending on the network it is part of – and the epistemology of the object from a cultural transfer point of view each adds an interpretative layer to the cultural object with each movement in its circulation. In truth, these approaches are just different perspectives on the same phenomenon, which are both useful. An object needs a certain interpretive flexibility to be able to circulate through different contexts; indeed such adaptability heightens its mobility. At the same time, a certain structural stability is necessary for an object to remain recognisable despite variations, and to allow for cooperation across different social and cultural worlds. In this sense, a

boundary object is an object that can mediate between worlds even when they do not have the same idea about it. We believe that immutable mobility, cultural transfer, and boundary objects are three useful categories that highlight different aspects of the object we are considering. Naturally, if one concentrates on the productivity of one of these aspects, the others move into the background. Rather than making ontological claims, our approach strategically employs these terms and theories.

With this in mind, we will now turn to our case study. Rather than presenting a full history of the reception *of Un chien andalou* – which would require a whole book – we will highlight certain moments and incidents that we consider important in relation to the theoretical perspective outlined in this opening section. Therefore, what follows is an exploratory and exemplary foray into transnational circulation patterns and various ways to understand them. The sources we have used to trace, study. and reconstruct the film's circulation patterns consist mainly of historical material (press articles from the period)[12] and secondary sources focused on the history of the film's screenings and the actors involved.

3 Case Study: The European Circulation of Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un chien andalou* (1929)

Un chien andalou premiered at Studio des Ursulines in Paris on 6 June 1929. The Surrealists, led by André Breton, were in attendance, and the great enthusiasm with which they received the film opened the doors for Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí to join their group. In the six months between the film's world premiere (6 June 1929) and its first screening in Madrid (8 December 1929), the film quickly took on a range of different connotations or semantic layers: Surrealist film, independent film, communist film, and incitement to violence.

The premiere in Paris provoked many reactions from intellectuals and members of the film industry: in reviews and statements in film and art journals, and in their private letters. The surge of reports on this first premiere in film journals was broad and transnational, with articles appearing in French, Spanish, and even English journals. Oswell Blakeston, author of the legendary

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12 This research was conducted during the global Covid-19 pandemic, a period when researchers have not had the opportunity to do archival research due to reduced mobility and archival closures.

avant-garde journal *Close Up*, watched the film in a short film festival in Paris and wrote about it (Blakeston 1929). Our goal is not to give a detailed account of the film's screening history and the different reactions it received, because this has been done. For example, Ian Gibson (2013), Román Gubern and Paul Hammond (2012) have explored the reactions to the premiere and subsequent screenings of *Un chien andalou* in France and Spain in detail.

Before its Spanish release in Barcelona on 24 October 1929, *Un chien andalou* was screened at the First International Congress of Independent Film (Congrès international du cinéma indépendant, CICI), which took place in La Sarraz, Switzerland, in September 1929.[13] Between their other activities, the delegates at the congress collectively watched a number of avant-garde films in order to illustrate what they called the "independent cinema" (Archives 84 2000). Two aspects of *Un chien andalou*'s appearance at La Sarraz are important for our purposes. The first is the delegates' discussion about avant-garde cinema, which they called "independent cinema"; indeed, this discussion alone makes an argument for deepening the idea of films as boundary objects. The second is Salvador Dalí's statement about the screening of *Un chien andalou* at the congress, and the positive feedback it presumably received from Sergei Eisenstein. The different labels (avant-garde, independent, surrealist) the film was endowed with are interesting because each calls up a slightly different host of associations, destabilising the object in its semantic dimension (Hagener 2007). These attributions illustrate how the film functioned as a boundary object and, at the same time, how the cultural transfer process worked during the circulation process. At La Sarraz, the film was presented as an example of an "independent film," so the organisers added a semantic layer to the object that was new at the time. *Un chien andalou* proved adaptable enough to be read both as part of the culture of independent film and that of avant-garde film.

As Palmira González has noted (1991, 336), Dalí published a provocative statement in the journal *Mirador* nº 39 (1929, 4) on the occasion of the screening of *Un chien andalou* in Barcelona. The painter described the success the film had enjoyed in Paris as something he and Buñuel disliked very much, since they saw it as an example of the snobbery of bourgeois audiences, who had become interested in anything that seemed new or strange as a consequence of the taste shaped by avant-garde journals and publications. He indicated that only two pieces of recognition they had received for the film mattered to him and Buñuel: the speech Eisenstein had given in La Sarraz and the agreement Dalí said they

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13 Among the congress's many attendees were some famous proponents of film culture: Hans Richter, Walter Ruttmann, Ivor Montagu, Robert Aron, Jean George Auriol, Alberto Cavalcanti, Léon Moussinac, Sergej Eisenstein, Eduard Tissé, and many others.

had signed with the Republics of the Soviet Union to circulate and distribute it. Whether or not this supposed agreement was real,[14] and whether or not Eisenstein truly showed interest in the film, we have the account of Ernesto Giménez Caballero, who reported that of all the films that were screened in La Sarraz, *Un chien andalou* shocked audiences most. Giménez Caballero, who likely made the decision to screen *Un chien andalou* in Switzerland, wrote about it in *La Gaceta Literaria,* one of the most prestigious cultural journals of that time: "La película que más sorprendió fué [sic.] la española. Nadie esperaba de España un alarde semejante de técnica y espíritu. Como tampoco esperaba nadie que el Cineclub Español, fundado por *La Gaceta Literaria*, resultase el segundo en perfección de Europa, tras Holanda y exceptuando Francia [. . .]" (Caballero 1929, 435). [The most surprising film was the Spanish one. Nobody expected such a display of technique and spirit from Spain. Nor did anyone expect that the Spanish Cineclub, founded by *La Gaceta Literaria*, would turn out to be ranked the second-best in Europe after France and Holland.]

The confluence of communist ideals and an artistic cinematic language that Dalí proudly advertised became associated with *Un chien andalou*, adding another semantic layer to the film as it went through its circulatory process. From a cultural transfer perspective, when the film first premiered in Paris, it was already considered a Surrealist film by its authors, as Dalí told the journalist Pere Artigas when Artigas visited the film set for an interview (Gibson 2013, 318).[15] The film's initial reception was not violent, even if Buñuel expected it to be after what had happened at the premiere of *La coquille et le clergyman* (FR 1927, Germaine Dulac);[16] nor was it associated with communist values. But in Madrid, as Gubern and Hammond have noted (2012, 325), the first screening was tumultuous. *Un chien andalou* was screened after *La chute de la maison Usher* (FR 1928, Jean Epstein) and *La fille de l'eau* (FR 1925, Jean Renoir) was supposed to follow; however, as Joan Piqueras wrote (December 15, 1929, 5), it was impossible to screen anything after the first two films. This sounds like a logical possibility, since Buñuel and Dalí had provocatively emphasised that the film was intended to incite violence. The screening in Madrid was organised by the Cineclub Español [Spanish Film Club] in the Cine Royalty on 8 December 1929, and the club's

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14 We could not find any evidence of this agreement.

15 See "Un film d'En Dalí," *Mirador* 17 (23 May 1929).

16 In Buñuel's telling, he was behind the curtains with some stones in his pockets, waiting for the audience and ready to throw the rocks at them if necessary. However, as Louis Aragon told Max Aub (Aub 1985, 361), this was probably just a fantasy. Buñuel was not seated behind the curtain, he was just anxiously waiting to see what the Surrealist group (the orthodox core of it, led by Breton) would think. Nothing violent happened.

director, the same Ernesto Giménez Caballero, offered Buñuel the possibility of saying some words before his film began. Dalí repeated what he had written in *La Revolution Surréaliste* 12 (15 December 1929), as told to Max Aub: the film was a desperate and passionate call to murder (Gubern and Hammond 2012, 325). Considered in the context of the cinema this might sound strange, yet in the context of the Surrealist group that Dalí and Buñuel had been accepted to, it becomes logical. The group gathered around André Breton was passing through a moment of ideological crisis as they reoriented their Second Surrealist Manifesto[17] around a more orthodox position aligned with the French Communist Party (Gubern and Hammond 2012, 20). Not only did Dalí's declarations (1929, published in *Mirador* 39) echo the direction of the Surrealist's second period, but his desperate call to murder was a continuation of the Bretonian declaration in the Second Manifesto: "The simplest Surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd." (Breton 1969, 125)

In his coverage of the Parisian reception of *Un chien andalou* for *La Gaceta Literaria*, the Spanish journalist named Eugenio Montes made nationalistic declarations about the directors' inherently Spanish talent, which had some basis in reality.[18] As many specialists have noted (Requena 2001, Castro 2001, Herrera 2007, Poyato 2008, Gibson 2013), *Un chien andalou* and its imaginary were partly a result of the creative environment that Dalí and Buñuel inhabited in the Residencia de Estudiantes [Student Residence] in Madrid. At the time, there were several Spanish artists, writers, and poets who either lived in or gathered around the Residencia, including Federico García Lorca, Gómez de la Serna, Maruja Mallo, José Moreno Villa, Rafael Alberti, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and many more. As many have pointed out, the concept of "lo putrefacto"[19] [the putrefied], which

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17 The manifesto was published in the last issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (1929) alongside the script of *Un chien andalou*. Buñuel and Breton had a memorable misunderstanding around the publication of the script: Buñuel had originally sent the script to *La Revue Cinématographique*, but when Breton became aware of this decision, he asked Buñuel to remove the script from that journal and publish it in *La Révolution Surreáliste* instead. See Gubern and Hammond (2012).

18 The list of connotations *Un chien andalou* has been given by journalists is interminable, but among the most interesting is Eugenio Montes' assertion that the film is a show of the Spanish talent and the Spanish spirit. See Montes's article in *La Gaceta Literaria* 60 (15 June 1929).

19 The group of artists – especially Dalí, Lorca, Buñuel and Pepín Bello – in La Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid used the term to refer to everything (almost always people and ideas) that they thought that was old, dead, or anachronistic (Rodrigo 1981, 83). The term was ultimately also associated with an ironic style used to make fun of the previous artistic generation (La Generación del '27) for old fashions and traditions ranging from the church and enlightened

undoubtedly plays a role in *Un chien andalou*, can be traced to the creative group around la Residencia de Estudiantes and is associated with Spanish culture. It is certainly true that Dalí and Buñuel were very interested in being part of the Surrealist group gathered around Breton.

In many, if not most European countries, *Un chien andalou* was not screened publicly until after World War II – partly because the distribution and exhibition of such a contentious film proved to be complicated and risky on many levels (due to censorship, police intervention, and protest from the Church and conservative circles), and partly because the arrival of sound films made silent films like Buñuel and Dalí's seem passé. Over time, however, the film became a classic, so screenings of it from the 1950s onwards were often framed differently. For example, in Sweden, a film club used *Un chien andalou* to recruit members, since the film was still officially banned and could only be screened within the confines of a club (see Andersson, Sundholm, Söderbergh Widding 2010, 56). Exclusivity breeds demand, so the alleged "scandalous nature" of the film was often employed strategically to increase interest in the film. In the countries where it was screened publicly, the public debate followed the same pattern, as we will show.

In the first few countries where the film was screened after its French and Spanish premieres, the reaction followed a typical pattern. The case of the Netherlands illustrates this pattern: the film was screened on 28 and 29 November 1929 as part of a programme hosted by the Dutch Filmliga [Dutch Film League] in the movie theatre Filmtheater de Uitkijk. The film had been recommended by Mannus Franken, the Filmliga's Paris correspondent, but the film society's steering committee in the Netherlands did not like it at all (Linssen et al 1999, 91–97). They therefore took it out of the programme in the other local chapters of the Filmliga where the programme was slated to circulate (Rotterdam, Den Haag, Utrecht, Arnhem etc), giving rise to a brief controversy in the pages of the Filmliga's magazine (*Filmliga* 1929). In fact, the steering committee (*hoofdbestuur*) of the society described in great detail why the film had been bought and booked in the first place, before they had seen it. For the committee, Henrik Scholten wrote a scathing critique that characterises the film as wanting to cause a scandal at all costs: "This is not about pornography. Only about a bad film made by a powerless epigone with preconceived meaning, stupefied by an esoteric mystery and stemming from an inferior mind, unveiled with

intellectuals to gentlemen and aristocratic manners. We find an example of "el putrefacto" in this latter sense in the scene with the donkey and the piano in *Un chien andalou*.

ostentatious complacency" (Scholten 480).[20] Meanwhile, even in places that were wrongly considered marginal in the cultural hierarchy, such as Prague, people took notice of the film almost as soon as its international circulation began. In an article published in April 1930, the young Czech filmmaker Alexander Hackenschmied[21] wrote about independent film as a "world film movement" (Hackenschmied 1930) and listed Buñuel and Dalí among its important practitioners. Even if we cannot be sure the film had even been screened in Czechoslovakia when Hackenschmied wrote this, that only further underlines the rapidity with which such information surrounding *Un chien andalou* – labels, ideas, arguments – circulated.

4 *Un chien andalou*'s Latin American Circulation and Transnational Avant-Garde Networks

The violent reaction that *Un chien andalou* provoked in Madrid was echoed in another very different context: Buenos Aires. In a report for *La Gaceta Literaria* called "El 'cineclub' de Buenos Aires" [The Buenos Aires "film club"],[22] sent from Buenos Aires in 1929, Guillermo de Torre describes an incident surrounding the film. In his account, he briefly refers to the 15 films that were screened during the film club's first season. Among the programmed films during that first season of the Cineclub de Buenos Aires, the only "pure" avant-garde films, according to Guillermo de Torre, were L'*Étoile de mer* (Man Ray, 1928) and *Un chien andalou*; this latter film, he wrote, "caused a certain scandal".

Un chien andalou was screened in Buenos Aires (Argentina) on 7 August 1929 for the first time, and again on 16 August 1929. Both screenings were organised by the Cineclub de Buenos Aires (1929–1931), an association founded by the Amigos del Arte.[23] Buñuel and Dalí's film was part of a programme of avant-garde cinema presented by the Romanian philosopher and artist Benjamin Fondane,

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20 This is our translation of Scholten's original: "Van pornografie is hier geen sprake. Slechts van een slechte film, door een machteloos epigoontje gemaakt met de vooropgezette bedoeling, door een esoterisch raadseltje te épateeren, en van een met ostentatief welbehagen geopenbaarde, inférieure geest."

21 After World War Two and his emigration to North America, Hackenschmied became a key figure of the U.S. avant-garde when he changed his name to Alexander Hammid and began to make films with his wife, Maya Deren.

22 See Guillermo de Torre, "El 'Cineclub' de Buenos Aires," in *La Gaceta Literaria* 79 (1930).

23 See editions of *La Nación* from 7 and 17 August 1929. We are deeply indebted to Lucio Mafud, who kindly shared some press clippings with us, as we were unable to visit archives in Latin America due to the pandemic.

who had been invited to Buenos Aires by Victoria Ocampo. Ocampo, who was instrumental in bringing the films in the programme to Argentina,[24] had met Fondane in León Chestov's house when she visited Paris in 1929, accompanied by Ortega y Gasset (Gonzálo Aguilar 2011, 12). On 6 August 1929, Fondane came to Amigos del Arte to present the films he had brought from Paris: *Un chien andalou* (Buñuel and Dalí, 1929); *L'Étoile de mer* (Man Ray, 1928); *Entr'acte* (René Clair, 1924); and fragments of *La Coquille et le Clergyman* (Dulac, 1928), *Le Cabaret épileptique* (Gad, 1928) and *La Perle* (Ursel, 1929). Fondane titled his presentation "Presentation of *films pures*: homage to Victoria Ocampo" ["Presentación de films puros: homenaje a Victoria Ocampo"].[25] Ocampo acted as a go-between, an indispensable link, but she is nevertheless largely forgotten in official histories. It is often women that perform the labour of building connections, yet they only appear at the margins, if at all. In any case, independently of their gender, mediators tend to be forgotten by history.

As Guillermo de Torre assessment in *La Gaceta Literaria* had it, at least some people who attended the screenings of *Un chien andalou* felt offended by the language of the avant-garde film – or perhaps, as Aguilar (2011) noted, by the film's erotic imprint. According to an account by the film columnist of *La Nación*, Benjamin Fondane framed the films as avant-garde films, as distinct from commercial films. While avant-garde films should be read as "film-poems," commercial ones were more like "film-novels". One term that was often used as a quasi-synonym for "avant-garde" was "cinéma pur," a concept that appears repeatedly in both Fondane's presentation and Guillermo de Torre's report for *La Gaceta Literaria* (1930), as well as in a review of the eighth session of the Cine-Club Español [Spanish Film Club], where *Un chien andalou* was screened (Piqueras 1929). In his presentation, Fondane defined "film pure" as a film that points towards pure technique – the goal is to experiment with all the camera's possibilities. He contrasted the cinematographic language developed and advanced by avant-garde filmmakers with commercial cinema based on what the *La Nación* columnist called "literary qualities," referring thereby to cinema's narrative form. It seems that these ideas did not convince the *La Nación* journalist, who described the "film pure" as an arbitrary, repugnant, confusing and sickening aesthetic form, and the set of images at the programme's first screening as meaningless and aimless (7 August 1929). His review of the second screening was even worse: titled "Los 'films' de vanguardia carecen de todo valor" ["The avant-garde 'films' lack

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24 "En 1930, por iniciativa mía, llegaron a Buenos Aires los primeros films de Buñuel, René Clair, Man Ray ". *Sur,* enero–diciembre 1974. Quoted after Martin Peña (2008, 63).

25 *Síntesis*, no. 28 (Septembre 1929, p. 9–20). Quoted after Constantini (2008, 250).

any value"], its subtitle reads: "Forman un conjunto sin ingenio de recursos ya gastados" [The films do not have any ingenuity and are made from used-up resources] (17 August 1929, 11). The journalist blamed the avant-garde for basing their films on theoretical ideas that never appear on screen. He described the films themselves as visually poor and pretentious, childish, a folly show of primitive simplicity, cinematic vulgarity, bad taste, abuse of cinematographic resources, and outdated forms. The journalist dedicated a few words to *Un chien andalou*: for him, it was an example of rude sensuality, a sick paroxysm without any artistic value. At the end of his review, he refers to the audience and assures that "Y por fin ha llegado nuestro público en esta clase de espectáculos a un grado de conocimientos que no permite tolerar seriamente estas expediciones de 'arte puro', dejadas hace tiempo por ingenuas y deleznables" [Finally our audience is knowledgeable enough about these kinds of shows and does not seriously tolerate these expeditions of 'pure art', which were abandoned long ago as naive and despicable]. Perhaps, as Gonzalo Aguilar believes (2011, 12), the Argentinian public was not used to this avant-garde cinema, with its erotic undertones and its non-narrative focus, which stood in stark contrast to most films audiences in Buenos Aires routinely saw and enjoyed at that time. However, we believe that this unprepared cohort could have in fact been only a part of the audience, since for the circle of artists who were close to Amigos del Arte, the films in the "pur avant-garde" programme were likely not so unfamiliar. Long after the programme, artists and intellectuals associated with Amigos del Arte stayed in touch long with Fondane, who maintained correspondence with Victoria Ocampo, with whom he would later produce a film called *Tararira*, "probably one of the first experimental and avant-garde films produced in Argentina." (Aguilar 2011, 17–18)[26] Unfortunately, when the film was finally produced in 1936 in Buenos Aires, there was no audience for the film, so it was never released and is lost today. Fondane also wrote many texts for Ocampo's journal *Sur*, which many of the recognized intellectuals and artists who gathered around Amigos del Arte contributed to.

When the film was released, there were, at least according to the reviews, two different receptions of *Un chien andalou* in Buenos Aires: one among the Amigos del Arte circle and another one by general audiences. This is probably an oversimplified way of dividing the audience, as there were almost certainly members of the "general audience" who liked the film and intellectuals who disliked it. However, despite the bad reviews the avant-garde film sessions received in *La Nación* – which is, after all, a right-wing newspaper – if we consider the programming for

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26 For more information about *Tararira*, see Aguilar (2011), who attempts to reconstruct the plot of the film.

the other sessions organised by the Cineclub de Buenos Aires,[27] we can see that the programmers (and their audience) were fond of avant-garde cinema. Besides the films that Fondane imported, they screened a lot of Soviet cinema (Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Vertov) and other European avant-garde films, including René Clair's work, Ruttmann's *Berlín, Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (GER 1927, *Berlin. The Symphony of the Big City*), and Epstein's *La chute de la maison Usher*. Even if not all of the films screened at Amigos del Arte were as experimental as *Un chien andalou*, most of them had been made in opposition to the commercial cinema represented by Hollywood films – except for the slapstick films of Chaplin, Langdon, and Keaton, which used to circulate in the same networks as avant-garde films. Here, it is worth recalling that at that time, film critics and professionals in Argentina and Mexico – the countries with the largest film industries in Latin America at the time – were in the habit of contrasting American films (meaning Hollywood's commercial films) with other kind of films, such as *films purs* or artistic films. Their distinction had two purposes: first, to demonstrate that the American films that were mainly programmed in commercial cinema venues were neither the only kind of cinema existing in the world nor the most interesting. Secondly, these professionals wanted to boost their respective national film industries by lifting them up as examples of "good cinema". From a cultural point of view, then, the audiences were naturally divided. On the one hand, there were elite film club audiences, and on the other hand, there were general audiences who went to commercial movie theatres and mostly watched commercial cinema. Even if film club audiences also attended commercial cinema venues at times, the reverse did not happen as often during that period as it would after the mass popularisation of film clubs during the fifties and sixties.[28] In other words, one audience was composed of elite groups with symbolic and economic capital who were able to buy copies of films, travel from Latin America to Europe, and organise artistic gatherings attended by diplomats, aristocrats, artists, and intellectuals. And the other, general audience attended commercial cinema venues and was not used to watch the kind of cinema that was considered avant-garde or experimental. This divide explains the split reactions to *Un chien andalou* in Buenos Aires and Mexico City.

Even if the circle of intellectuals around Amigos del Arte was similar to the group gathered around *La Gaceta Literaria* (and, therefore, to Buñuel's and Dalí's networks) from an artistic point of view, from a cultural transfer perspective the

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27 Some of these sessions are summed up by Couselo (2008).
28 See Clariana-Rodagut and Roig-Sanz, forthcoming (2022).

two should be differentiated. The two key notions that the film's Argentinian re-ception focused on were *cinéma pur* and scandal; other adjectives that had been attached to the film, such as "Spanish," "Surrealist," "violent," or "communist," were not mentioned during its circulation in Argentina. The "scandalous" label was added to the film after its Argentinian release, along with the "erotic" label. Until that moment, the film had not been considered sexually scandalous, which explains why Guillermo de Torre felt the need to mention the aforementioned in-cident (1930) in his *La Gaceta Literaria* article on the Argentinian premiere.[29] The film's association with "cinéma pur" came from the elitist and intellectual group gathered around the Amigos del Arte Association, while the popular press at-tached the adjective "scandalous" to it. *Un chien andalou*'s associations with scan-dal lasted many years and had their origins in different places. On the occasion of the Dutch premiere in 1929, for example, we find a caricature titled "Un chien scandalou," referring to the scandal the film provoked among the audiences who attended its first screenings. As illustrated above, the film was at least partly charged with provoking a scandal for the sake of attracting attention. Today, the film is not considered obscene, but it is still considered provocative; somehow, the reaction is similar a century after its release. Now, we talk about avant-garde film instead of cinéma pur, and the latter term has almost disappeared, although it was still described an example of cinéma pur in an Uruguayan journal as late as 1951 (*Film* 1951).

Un chien andalou premiered on 17 May 1938 in Mexico, almost a decade after its Argentinian premiere. It is part of the first programme put on by 35 mm Cinema, a film club run by Lola Álvarez Bravo and others, and it took place in the Palacio de Bellas Artes [Palace of Fine Arts] in Mexico City. Unlike the Ar-gentinians, no one in Mexico considered the film an example of "pure cinema," even though André Breton himself presented the film. Instead, the critic Xavier Villaurrutia applauded the film in the popular press for its sensuality, cruelty, and erotism (Bradu 2012, 96). Efraín Huerta (2006, 171), who disliked the film, called it annoying in the same popular press, but he did not mention anything related to erotic scandal. Villaurrutia's comments may make an argument for considering the "scandal" label as an impulse to broaden the film's circula-tion – the promise of sexual scandal could be a way to attract audiences to the screenings. In any case, *Un chien andalou* worked as a boundary object between the Argentinian and Mexican frameworks of reception, since the actors who

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29 Actually, in Spain, the film was regarded as "intense," which was how Spanish culture was often seen at that point, as compared to the culture in France, where the film was pro-duced. This illustrates how prevalent the idea of national cinemas with specific characteristics was at the time.

took part in the circulation networks did not reach consensus on the meaning of the film, or even arrive at a moment of cooperation. In our exploration of how and why the film was able to circulate or stopped from circulating through specific networks, we must consider cooperation, since that aspect is needed to maintain any network of circulation; nodes have to share common ground to stay in contact. Leigh Star's concept of "cooperation without consensus" is crucial here because it offers a way to understand how at least some elements of the networks function. Villaurrutia, who was closely linked to 35 mm Cinema, did not approach *Un chien andalou* through the same "pur cinema" lens Fondane and the members of Amigos del Arte had applied to it. Yet despite these differences and the lack of consensus, the film continued circulating as a boundary object through avant-garde networks that were in turn intertwined with one another.

5 Conclusion

As our retracing of the circulatory networks of avant-garde film has demonstrated, it was an elite set of intellectuals and artists who were interested in watching *Un chien andalou* in both Europe and the Americas. The European examples we have explored are Madrid's Cine-Club Español, the Barcelona film club Sesiones Mirador, Paris's Surrealist group and specialised venues (Le Vieux Colombier, Studio 27, and Les Ursulines),[30] and the Netherlands Filmliga (at the Filmtheater de Uitkijk). Similar structural developments are visible in the Americas, where the film circulated through film-club networks like the Cineclub de Buenos Aires and the Amigos del Arte Association in Argentina, and the 35 mm Cinema in Mexico.[31] This pattern also recurred in Uruguay – the film club Cine Universitario premiered the film some time in 1950/1951,[32] and the Cine Club del Uruguay screened it in 1951.[33] Another interesting case study for potential future exploration could be Brazil, where the film premiered in the sixties at the Cineteca do Museu de Arte Moderna [the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art] in Rio de Janeiro. The network of avant-garde film circulation also later expanded to include archives, which can be seen in some important respects as the historical

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30 These were considered venues that screened the same films as the film clubs – "cinema independent," as they called it at the La Sarraz meeting in September 1929 (Cosandey and Tode 2000, 13).

31 See Clariana-Rodagut (forthcoming 2022).

32 See *Film* 1 (1952).

33 This account comes from Navitski (2021).

and institutional continuation of film clubs (Hagener 2014). The elite groups that organised sessions at film clubs, art cinema venues, or film archives usually had a specialised journal in which they expressed their ideas: *La Gaceta Literaria* and *Mirador* (Spain), *La Révolution Surréaliste* (France), *Sur* (Argentina), *Contemporáneos* (Mexico), *Cine Club* and *Film* (Uruguay), *Filmliga* (Netherlands), *Film und Volk* (Germany), among others. What is even more interesting is that these elite groups were not just important within their respective national film traditions, as histories of those traditions attest;[34] they also proved influential from a transnational perspective. By retracing the transnational relations between actors who participated in film clubs, we can evaluate their key contributions to the development of artistic Modernity, enabling the circulation of ideas, practices, and cultural goods, giving rise to creative exchanges, and fostering transnational creative environments. In this way, we propose that film clubs function as actors and actants whose transnational connections have enabled them to play an important role in the construction of Western Modernity. The human actors in those networks, who were artists and intellectuals, had similar profiles. They built the mechanics of the networks they were part of, making it possible for avant-garde films to circulate and taking active roles in the cultural transfer process through which those films were given specific labels. These processes also worked the other way, of course: actors and actants were impelled by the agency of avant-garde films to act and perform in certain ways, attending or participating in film screenings. The films, as actors, carried with them all the semantic labels they had accumulated through the circulation process, and their agency impelled other actors or actants to perform according to those labels. Moreover, as boundary objects, avant-garde films allowed transnational connections between different networks of actors and actants like the Spanish, French, Dutch, Mexican, and Argentinian networks in our case studies, thereby tracing a global avant-garde film network. Now that *Un chien andalou* is firmly established as an important part of film history after nearly a century of circulation, we can safely claim that it was its immutable form as an avant-garde film that enabled its mobility across time and space and assured its circulation through film societies' networks.

To date, scholars have not yet analysed the reception of films from a transnational perspective centred on connectivity. When these connections have been studied, the studies have generally focused on a specific bilateral relation (Spain-Argentina / Spain-Mexico / France-Argentina), rather than a multilateral

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34 In several national histories, members of film clubs have been at least cited and mentioned, if not widely. See the example of Victoria Ocampo, Joan Piqueras, Giménez Caballero, André Breton or Manuel Álvarez Bravo, who received part of the credit for the work of his first wife, Lola Álvarez Bravo, who ran the 35 mm Cinema and other film clubs.

connection (Spain-France-Argentina-Mexico).[35] This multilateral connection has proven to be a fruitful case study for analysing circulation, since it has revealed the broad workings of the cultural transfer process and how those particular transnational networks were built. Through this broad lens, we have been able to trace where a particular film was first tagged with a particular label, which agencies boosted this action; and ultimately how the film's meaning-making process was affected during its circulation.

From another point of view, it is worth highlighting that in at least two Latin American countries (Argentina and Mexico) it was women who maintained the transnational networks. We have already mentioned Victoria Ocampo's work in Argentina; in Mexico, it was Lola Álvarez Bravo who played a relevant role.[36] Their contributions support Leigh Star's idea that attending to infrastructures when we map transnational networks will uncover the invisible role that women have historically played in the art field. Without those women's transnational social connections and their facility as cultural mediators (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018), films such as *Un chien andalou* could not have circulated as they did. There is a pressing need to emphasise their roles, in order to assign them the significance they truly had in the history of cinema.

In theoretical terms, the main idea we have explored in this chapter is the tension between the ontology of the object (avant-garde film), which appears immutable, and the epistemology of the object, which undergoes a resemantisation process through its transnational circulation. We have proposed Susan Leigh's term boundary objects and Bruno Latour's notion of immutable mobiles as useful tools for addressing the ontology of such an object (1990), basing our discussion on the hypothesis that the ontology of the object is neither rigid enough, from a structural point of view, to be used, comprehended, assessed, or analysed by just one group of likeminded people, nor so disorganised that different groups of people with diverse interests and geographical contexts cannot recognize it. The object's interpretative flexibility allows for the possibility of achieving cooperation without consensus among different groups, such as audiences, distributors, producers, and censors. Meanwhile, its immutable structure allows for mobility, because it is flexible yet consistent, ready to adapt to different local needs while still providing the object stability as a (artistic) work.

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35 We would have liked to frame our case studies in smaller and more peripheral places (see Backström), but the digital divide we referred to above did not allow it. Furthermore, we would have preferred to take a decentred approach and account for relations among peripheral and less studied places (see Bäckström, Hjartarson 2014), but despite our efforts, this has so far only been possible to a small degree.

36 See Clariana-Rodagut (forthcoming 2022).

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Ondřej Vimr

Choosing Books for Translation: A Connectivity Perspective on International Literary Flows and Translation Publishing

The bone marrow of globalization is connectivity, which is layered, multidimensional and multi-purpose and sprawls in all directions. We don't argue about connectivity because it is basic to everything. (Nederveen Pieterse 2021, 37)

1 Introducing Connectivity

This chapter explores the notion of connectivity and its application to research into the international circulation of literature. It does so in two principal ways. Firstly, it reinterprets the well-known *Index translationum* dataset from a connectivity perspective as an alternative to centrist and universalist approaches. Secondly, it analyses interviews with publishers and editors about their translation and acquisition practices to investigate connectivity in contemporary publishing and explore how circuits of connectivity cast light upon the ways editors and publishers choose books for translation. While connectivity is universal and global, exploring international literary flows from the perspective of connectivity means deconstructing universalism and recognising that literary exchanges happen within unaligned layered circuits of connectivity with their own internal rules and external boundaries.

One of the key concepts of global studies, connectivity (Nederveen Pieterse 2021; James and Steger 2016; Robertson 2016) is, for the first, a phenomenon of technology and communication that involves exchange of information. While it is often taken to refer to the instant, continuous and global nature of online connections, connectivity can also include other forms of information exchange available in a given historical era and geographical location, with mail, travel and trade being typical examples. Connectivity is dynamic and constantly evolving in line with technological advancements. It is also a socio-cultural concept that highlights connections between individuals based on social practice, shared views, and

experiences. While connectivity as related to communication depends on physical infrastructure of some kind, the socio-cultural dimension is less tangible and traceable yet creates a sense of synchronicity and belonging.

Connectivity brings people together, it is omnipresent, ordinary, and barely perceptible, until it is broken, or we experience its limits, disconnectedness. This is because connectivity also creates new boundaries that define circuits of connectivity. Communication infrastructure and technologies for road, mail, telegraph, phone, and Internet systems increase the connectivity of some groups but also produce pockets of isolation since the technologies are not evenly distributed throughout the world. Other circuits of connectivity are organised according to social practices and socio-cultural factors including but not limited to politics, law, and language.

The identification of circuits of connectivity is facilitated by pattern recognition and analysis (Nederveen Pieterse 2021, 35–60). A single instance of communication or translation does not imply a circuit of connectivity since it does not reveal any signs of ongoing agency. Instead, this instance may represent an attempt to establish such a circuit or merely some haphazard action. Identifying circuits of connectivity and discerning their similarities and limits are crucial steps for the analysis of similar phenomena and the different forms and meanings they assume in different settings, locally, regionally or globally. As Nederveen Pieterse puts it, "[t]he contribution of Global Studies is not to promote the global, but to deconstruct the global, to deconstruct that which is claimed to be global" (2021, 55).

Circuits of connectivity are layered, meaning one can find oneself in multiple partially overlapping yet unaligned circuits of connectivity at the same time. Some circuits are clearly defined and demarcated, others have fuzzy borderlines. For instance, some circuits of connectivity are composed of diverse groups of friends or colleagues; other involve political alliances between countries. During the Cold War, political decisions led to the demarcating of geopolitically defined circuits of connectivity with extremely limited interconnectivity. In another example, the exchange of cultural products like books or films in a circuit of connectivity based on a shared language – including an acquired second language – is often limited or disrupted by different legal frameworks or specific distribution channels, creating sub-circuits of connectivity: books published in the UK may be excluded from distribution in the USA, Canada or Australia. Yet, these books are privately accessible to readers from different continents.

These circuits of connectivity at once expose the limits of current connections and expand our awareness of our own and others' connectivity. As Robertson (2016: 6) reminds us, connectivity is closely related to consciousness. Although consciousness does not derive from connectivity, connectivity expands consciousness including specifically the consciousness of connectivity itself. Individuals are

made aware of the circuits of connectivity available to them and also potentially of the limits of established links. The imagined connectivity circuits that arise from this consciousness are as important as the actual connections. Connectivity and the expansion of consciousness, however, do not automatically enhance human agency.

For the study of international literary exchange, the concept of connectivity provides an alternative to universalist and centrist approaches such as Wallerstein's world systems model by emphasising the global nature of connectivity (Nederveen Pieterse 2021, 61–78). Here "global" does not necessarily mean universally applicable but instead refers to the global diversity of situations that give rise to translations and other acts of international literary exchange. A global approach seeks to shift the focus away from issues of domination and the opposition between (uni-)centrality and peripherality. Instead, it addresses the layered nature of global literary transfers.

2 *Index Translationum* and Circuits of Connectivity

The reliability of the *Index translationum* data has been questioned by many scholars, however the dataset has been employed at least as often (Heilbron 1999; Poupaud, Pym and Torres-Simón 2009; Abramitzky and Sin 2014). If large datasets are interpreted with caution, then their intrinsic imperfection need not invalidate central arguments. Johan Heibron (1999; 2010) used the dataset in combination with some other national dataset to underpin his theory of world system of translation. Inspired by Immanuel Wallerstein's world systems theory, Heilbron argues that translation work derives from, and is embedded in, a world system that is organised on a core-periphery model. The position of individual literatures is determined based on the global proportion of translations undertaken from the source language into any other language. On this model (Heilbron 1999, 434; 2010, 2), the English language and literature written in English occupy a hyper-central position since more than 50 percent of all translations published around 1980 were translations from English. A few other languages are categorised as central or semiperipheral while the majority of world languages fall into the peripheral category with a global share of less than 1 percent.

The centre-periphery model has prompted diverse research into international literary circulation, investigating obstacles to this circulation (Sapiro 2012) and potential strategies by which they may be overcome (Van Es and Heilbron 2015; Mansell 2020; Heilbron and Sapiro 2018). Other studies highlight

concepts like supply-driven translation to address the perceived lack of demand for non-central literatures (Vimr 2020). At the same time, the assumed position of the source literature or language in this system tends to be the starting point for and the main focus of any discussion of international literary transfers.

An alternative approach to the logic of international literary circulation can be found in the work of Pascale Casanova, who draws on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the field. Casanova (1999; 2002) describes the emergence and development of an autonomous international literary field that is structured by the unequal power relations between cultures based on their literary capital. The latter is measured by the number of works that have entered the world literary canon. Through translation and inclusion in the world literary canon, literatures accumulate symbolic capital and assume a more dominant position. This gives them a long-term advantage over other subordinated literatures and creates and consolidates profound imbalances in international literary exchanges. Much like the world systems approach, Casanova's dichotomy tends to reduce the discussion on international literary exchange to the issue of the domination of a particular language in a given historical era. The result of these centrist approaches is that in the discussion of recent global literary circulation, English is often reinforced as the dominant or hyper-central language and the key mediating language (Casanova 2015, 123–30; Sapiro 2015; Allwood 2021), while the global diversity of situations remains largely unnoticed.

The interpretation of the *Index translationum* data is instructive in this regard. In 1999, Johan Heilbron combined the dataset with other sources to propose the above-described onion-shaped centrist cultural world system. In contrast, just a few years earlier, in 1992, Anatolij Šajkevič had produced a bibliometric analysis of the *Index* dataset with vastly different results.[1] Instead of analysing global translation numbers from a particular language and measuring an abstract degree of worldwide centrality, Šajkevič studied the target groups for whom the source languages and literatures were important. He measured the proportion of specific source languages among translated books in each target country and established target country-specific linguistic spectra, while comparing it to the total, or worldwide linguistic spectrum (Šajkevič 1992, 68–70). While the world-wide linguistic spectrum, Šajkevič observed, only changed slowly, and it was increasingly dominated by English (the same data that had led Heilbron to identify the English language as hyper-central in the world system of translations), the linguistic spectra

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[1] Neither Heilbron's nor Šajkevič's model could be replicated since the *Index translationum* data have not been available online for almost two years. The official website (www.unesco.org/xtrans) was last checked on December 16, 2021.

differed substantially from country to country. Country-to-country similarities were, thus, the basis for a network analysis that showed three large country clusters with internally similar linguistic spectra for the years between 1960 and 1983. This network can be seen in Fig. 1 where three types of lines distinguish various degrees of similarity: double (the strongest), single (medium) and dashed (the weakest). The lack of any line means that the similarity is very weak or non-existent.
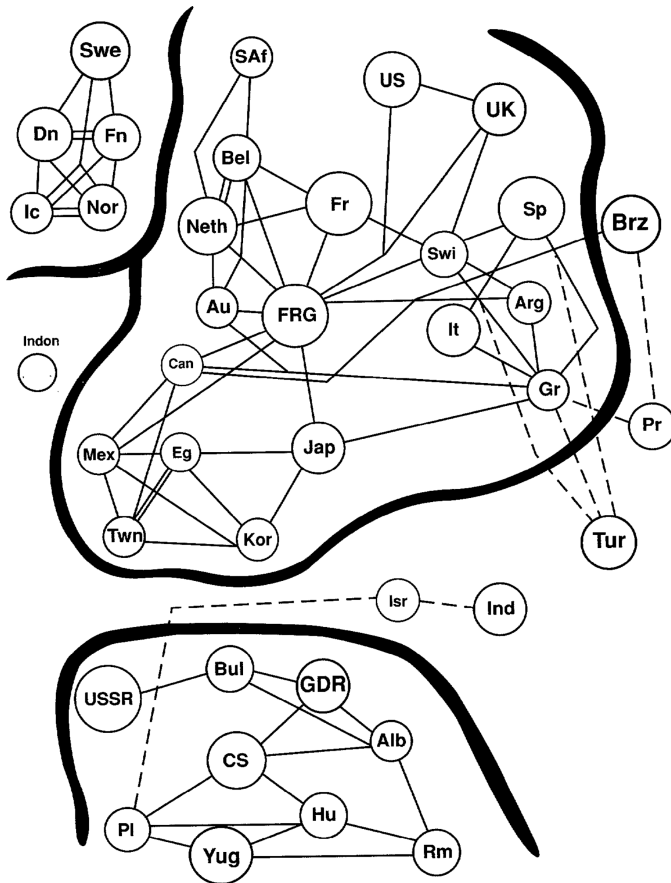
Fig. 1: Linguistic clusters of countries, 1960–1983 (Šajkevič 1992, 92). Reprinted with permission from Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal (PUM).

The upper left corner is occupied by five Scandinavian countries where a high proportion of translations take English or other Scandinavian languages as their source. The lower part represents the Soviet Union, Soviet satellite states

and Yugoslavia, all of which have a high proportion of Russian and a low proportion of English source texts. The central cluster contains countries that show little deviation from the world-wide linguistic spectrum. Clusters based on translated authors (rather than source languages) for the period 1975–1979 overlap substantially with the language-based clusters (Šajkevič 1992, 96). From a connectivity standpoint, people in countries that have more similar linguistic spectra experience greater synchronicity and contemporaneity with one another. Hypothetically, if bookworms from these countries meet, it is likely they will all have access to, and knowledge of, the same books and authors in translation (albeit from a third country or region). This, in turn, will give them a common conversation topic, a connection, with connectivity being at work.

Šajkevič's clusters reveal three circuits of connectivity based on different concerns. There is a socio-cultural Scandinavian circuit, a politically defined Communist circuit and a third circuit that perhaps cannot be described or analysed in more detail because of the imperfections and low information density of the dataset. Nevertheless, while these circuits and their boundaries may seem clear-cut, they are misleading in many ways, too. Although the circuits seem to operate on a single level, the socio-cultural and political versions in fact involve different dimensions of connectivity. Also, only one publishing format is represented (the book), but translations in literary magazines may be equally or more important in some countries or regions. Perhaps most obviously, Šajkevič's demarcation of a political (Communist) circuit of connectivity only reflects certain types of publishing, i.e. those from mainstream official channels that are represented in the *Index*. However unofficial underground publishing platforms in some Communist countries achieved a level of operation parallel to the official circuit (indeed the Polish term for samizdat was *drugi obieg*, which means second circuit). This circuit was important for the publication of both local authors and translations (Kind-Kovács and Labov 2013; Kind-Kovács 2014). Individuals active in samizdat publishing, whether as producers or readers, were, thus, part of an international circuit of connectivity that continually undermined the politically defined and censorship-enforced Communist circuit. Moreover, the wide range of translation publishing practices in place across the East-West divide during the Cold War suggests that the East-West interconnectivity can hardly be contained in a strict official vs. unofficial division (Popa 2006; 2010).

Whereas other publishing formats than books or the underground circuit cannot be identified from the *Index* because the data is not there, some circuits cannot be detected due the quantitative method. In a large-scale data analysis, a small group of authors and translations might easily slip under the radar despite their representation of a unique and important international circuit that allowed literature to cross a strict and ostensibly impenetrable divide. This is the case of

the "world republic of leftist letters," a circuit of connectivity across the Iron Curtain, especially in the early years of the Cold War, that combined political ideology with aesthetic values (Djagalov 2009; 2018; Dobrenko and Jonsson-Skradol 2018). While the chief aesthetic doctrine was socialist realism, it was based in the shared opposition to western economic and ideological values among intellectuals across the geopolitical divide. Both attitudes to this leftist circuit and the impact of being involved in it differed across the two spheres of the bipolar world. Western authors who wrote leftist critiques of the West and supported the Communist East, and especially the USSR, such as Howard Fast or Louis Aragon, had far more chance of being translated and published in the East; for everyone else, the prospects were minimal. The West was represented in the East by a relatively small number of writers. In the West, in contrast, membership of the world republic of leftist letters had a far less tangible impact on international literary transfers. Nevertheless, there were instances where an author was disconnected from some circuits as punishment for their affiliation with the Communist East. The Danish writer Martin Andersen Nexø, an adamant critic of the West and admirer of the Communist bloc, emigrated to the German Democratic Republic in 1951. As a result, German translations of his work were only published in Eastern Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and none appeared in West Germany for more than two decades (Vimr 2014, 151–56).

This brief exploration of connectivity with a starting point in the *Index translationum* dataset has revealed the limits of universalist and centrist approaches to the investigation of international literary flows from a global perspective because they tend not to consider the global diversity of translation situations and rather tend to focus on the issue of centrality and domination of a limited set of source languages and literatures. It has also demonstrated the strength of large-scale approaches in terms of exposing the key circuits and boundaries of connectivity. But at the same time, it has exhibited a major weakness of the approach involving the fact that many important circuits of connectivity may easily slip under the radar. Pattern identification that leads to the identification of circuits of connectivity needs to take place at multiple levels and scales at the same time. While some circuits like the official Communist circuit may produce many publications and leave behind a clear pattern enabling a high-level large-scale identification, others like the samizdat circuit may have more uneven output. Still others may be small-scale and time-limited; the relatively small influential ideological-aesthetic leftist circuit, for example, began to lose ground only a few years into its operation. Low-level and small-scale analysis involving qualitative approaches will be necessary for the latter instances.

3 Connectivity in Contemporary Translation Publishing

As we have seen, circuits of connectivity can be identified retrospectively through quantitative or qualitative analysis. However, they can also be uncovered by observing communication and decision-making processes as they evolve in real time. In what follows, I analyse a series of semi-structured interviews with publishers and acquisitions editors (n=47) in five smaller non-central European countries (the Czech Republic: 10, the Netherlands: 11, Norway: 8, Slovenia: 8 and Sweden: 10) to investigate connectivity in contemporary translation publishing. Although not representing different parts of the globe, these countries include the former political East and West and reflect a mix of cultural, social, and spatial proximities and distances as well as a major linguistic divide across Europe. All of the interviews were anonymised immediately after they were transcribed; they were carried out in English, Norwegian, Swedish or Czech; all translations are mine. While the main goal of this research was to examine the impact of subsidies on translation publishing decisions (Vimr: 2022), the interviews also considered broader information exchange and decision-making processes, including developments in recent decades. It is this latter part of the interviews that is discussed in this chapter. Acquisitions editors and others in similar positions play a key role in the decisions on acquiring translation rights that lead directly to the publication of translations (Franssen 2015b). Examining the links between connectivity on the one hand and the decisions of acquisitions editors on the other may reveal the underlying connectivity circuits that directly inform global literary transfers.

The topics related to connectivity arose naturally during the interviews and were often introduced by the interviewees themselves. Some of these issues have previously been the target of sociological analyses; this is the case, for example, of the abundance of data, texts and metatexts that acquisitions editors must sift through in order to make any decision (Franssen and Kuipers 2013). Sociological studies explain, for instance, how responsibility is distributed throughout the decision-making process, while global studies researchers consider the larger context of connectivity. Before I proceed to discuss circuits of connectivity, I will consider what the interviewees revealed about how connectivity in terms of information exchange and use of digital infrastructure and the consciousness of such connectivity impacts contemporary publishing on more general level. Internet and e-mail provide fast, easy and free ways for literary agents, foreign publishers and others to deliver information about their literary releases and pitch target country publishers about books in translation. At the same time, the constant receipt of new information and awareness of permanent

connectivity change how acquisitions editors behave. Subjective perceptions of connectivity may have as much impact on decision-making as actual instances of connection and information exchange.

As we have seen, connectivity alone does not increase agency but rather expands the awareness that everyone in the circuit is connected in the same way. When an acquisitions editor receives an e-mail about a book, they are aware that editors at other publishing houses may have received the same e-mail at the very same moment; a savvy scan of the pitch may even lead to an educated guess about who those other editors are. Particularly in the case of "big books" (cf. Thompson 2012, 188–222) – which are presumed to be or become international bestsellers and have greater commercial potential – publishers operate in a connectivity circuit that demands rapid action and high-stakes investments in books that have often not been written and whose prospects remain highly uncertain. This is a highly competitive environment where the "midlist has disappeared and the winner takes all" as publishers compete for the same books. A Norwegian publisher described the quest for the next big books: "We're a large publishing house, and so we have to take part in the big auctions, to be there in the competition and well-positioned when the next big thing comes along." The pressure to take immediate action is reinforced by a fear of missing out on a major international bestseller and of gradually falling out of the exclusive big books circuit.

The time pressure is exacerbated by the arrival of well-timed reminders that may be accompanied by more or less detailed information about competitors' bids. However, this awareness of instant connectivity and of agents' high-pressure strategies can easily have the opposite effect: publishers and editors may lose their sense of agency and take zero action. Here we see that although instant and ongoing connectivity helps to consolidate this circuit, consciousness of that connectivity can pull in the opposite direction. Decision-makers may reconsider their position in this market and their willingness to participate in its circuit. Many editors confirmed that combined with high acquisition costs and the uncertainty of this ultra-competitive market, the pressure from literary agents caused them to revise their strategy and adjust their profile. Some abandoned the big books circuit altogether, such as the following Czech publisher:

> We realised that we don't want to follow all the latest trends. We're not good at it, and we usually decide too late anyway. [. . .] As for auctions, we learned that they don't pay off, and luckily, we're in a comfortable enough position that we don't need to buy at auctions. [. . .] The market moves much faster now. Once, literary agents sent you a package of books. Now, they send a pdf and phone two or three days later to ask if it's a yes or a no and claim that they're already receiving offers. There's pressure to make a decision when we haven't even had enough time to read the book.

Digital connectivity has also transformed how publishers communicate with readers and made those readers part of publishing decisions to an unprecedented degree. Publishers are becoming increasingly reader-centric where they were once author- or bookseller-centric (Thompson 2021, 462–69). At the same time, self-publishing, crowdfunding, social media publishing platforms like WattPad and print-on-demand services are helping individuals and small publishing houses enter the book market, and thus, also putting pressure on traditional publishing and distribution models. Furthermore, for-profit publishers may benefit from the market-wide book sales figures that have become more accessible through commercial services like Nielsen BookScan (Childress 2012). For large and traditional publishers, less and less importance is attached to the expert opinions that reviewers (professional readers) provide to newspapers and magazines. Instead, publishers and acquisitions editors are turning to readers, reader data and the personal views expressed publicly on platforms such as goodreads.com. These services allow users to stay in touch with each other, form networks based on similar tastes and share reading lists, recommendations and opinions. Meanwhile undisclosed algorithms provide additional book suggestions based on undefined similarity traits, thus creating algorithmic circuits of connectivity. More than ever before, acquisitions editors refer to the insights of non-professional readers to support their decisions. For these editors, the focus is on gathering information about both the title under consideration and similar books on the market since similarity is arguably a key selling point for some publishers. Reflecting on a failed attempt to diversify a genre literature portfolio, one editor from a large Swedish publishing house who also claimed they regularly used goodreads.com to find out about new titles put it: "People want to eat more of the same food. They're not all that curious . . . Or our marketing is wrong." While large for-profit houses tend to rely on digital networks, smaller publishers may take a different tack and turn to international book festivals (which should not be confused with book fairs). The attendees of these events include readers, authors, translators and publishers.

Furthermore, connectivity, and more specifically the immediacy of e-mail communication and use of online auctions, has transformed the role of book fairs from business events into social gatherings. While information about books circulates constantly and translation rights for most books are sold outside book fairs, editors, publishers and literary agents have not abandoned these events. Meetings in person help reinforce or recalibrate their circuits of connectivity. Traditionally, personal contacts have been of the utmost importance to acquisitions editors and publishers. For many publishers, personal recommendations from international peers are the most reliable way to learn about new books, especially if editors share tastes and have comparable experiences with other books and

authors. Furthermore, if a book appears in the catalogue of multiple publishing houses with a similar profile in different countries, then editors may find it easier to defend the title to editorial boards. The tendency to imitate publishing decisions internationally leads to transnational isomorphism, which has a homogenising effect (Franssen and Kuipers 2013). This is especially true for for-profit and genre publishing while other segments – such as upmarket literary fiction – may exhibit more heterogeneity (Sapiro 2016, 93–94). From a connectivity standpoint, transnational isomorphism in commercial and genre publishing highlights the role of specific circuits of connectivity. These depend on various networks of actors and are associated with a range of publishing practices typical of large corporate publishers. At the same time, the long-term homogenising effect suggests a common pattern in transnational publishing among many publishing houses. That pattern should be discernible via data analysis, which may then prove the existence of this circuit of connectivity.

4 Pattern Recognition and Circuits of Connectivity

Apart from general trends, the interviews made it possible to investigate circuits of connectivity at work. As suggested above, pattern recognition is a crucial means of identification of circuits of connectivity for researchers. However, pattern recognition is also performed by publishers and other actors in the publishing field. The practice of transnational imitation leading to translational isomorphism suggests that decisions are driven by a basic cognitive capacity to recognise and analyse patterns along with a tendency to recycle them (cf. Neverveen Pieterse 2021, 54). Translation publishing involves various actors who range from scouts and literary agents to translators, publishers and booksellers. These actors operate within their own circuits of connectivity while also observing the publication and reception patterns of others further down the line. Literary scouts work for many publishing houses simultaneously, attempting to find new books that are best matched to each of them (Franssen 2015b, 63–84). To meet this goal, they identify, analyse and follow the publishing patterns of each house based on their publishing catalogues. These patterns establish the profile of the publishing house, and the scout, literary agent or translator aims to pitch a selection of titles that have the highest chance of succeeding and being acquired by the publisher. Publications patterns are just as important for acquisitions editors who are trying to sway an editorial board's final decision and for publishing houses in their communications with booksellers and readers. New books should be a good fit for the existing

catalogue and publishing pattern. If a book does not fit, editors tend to reject it irrespective of its quality, arguing that, as one large Norwegian publisher put it, "this book isn't for us. It should be published by someone else." This is because they know that their readers may not accept a book that strays from the pattern: "When readers and booksellers see the name of our house, they know this [book] is a bit tough to read and demanding. Which means that if we publish an author with bestseller potential, they're seen as a bit weird from the very beginning" (small publisher, Sweden).

At the same time, publishers are constantly assessing what others in the national market are publishing or may be planning to publish. If two books on a similar topic are launched concurrently by different publishers, chances are that one will fail. Similarly, if many publishers compete for a single book, the price of translation rights will be pushed too high. Publishers, thus, tend to define themselves in relation to others in the sector. Pattern recognition has a key role in book choices and related communication among all participants in the translation process. It can help editors develop a sense of continuity, define their areas of interest and assess what is right for a publisher (or imprint) at a given moment based on the publishing, sales and reception histories and an awareness of the possible actions of others in the sector. Nevertheless, this pattern identification is not a universal decision-making tool. As Franssen (2015b, 110) points out: "This 'identity' logic appears typical of a field divided into smaller niches, rather than a field where everyone competes with everyone in a general fashion." Indeed, when asked about the most important factors in book acquisition decisions, editors tended to start with the quality of the book (or their personal taste) and then cite personal networks and intuition.

Most editors and publishers rely on networks of friends and colleagues in the translation and publishing industries including literary scouts, trusted translators, literary agents, reviewers, professional readers and foreign editors. The pattern recycling strategy is a direct outcome of the use of these contact networks. Acting sometimes on request but most often unsolicited, all these individuals provide editors with suggestions and advice, and this input then needs to be processed. If an editor finds a book that matches their personal taste, they will use their intuition, which – based on their explanations of this concept – often involves assessing whether the book belongs to diverse circuits of connectivity at different levels. Here the aim is to intuitively select books that meet abstract criteria which connect their original text, author, culture, theme or other features to the target publishing house, its publishing patterns and readers. The publishing catalogues of affiliated foreign publishers are only a source of inspiration. Indeed, blind pattern recycling would undoubtedly lead to failure since no two book markets are the same. For a book to succeed in

translation, one or more circuits of connectivity need to be in place between the original and target cultures.

One of the most common of these circuits relates to *geography and geographic proximity* with editors opting for books from neighbouring or nearby countries. Geographic proximity goes hand in hand with cultural proximity and historical ties, factors which often also expand the pool of countries considered proximate. As one small Czech publisher commented:

> [O]ur segment is non-commercial literature, not entertaining or descriptive works, but literature that is more critical [. . .]. These are the friendly relationships that we've been building up in Central Europe over the past 20 years. We've been publishing authors from Slovenia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Poland, Germany [. . .]. We don't have the capacity to extend our geographical scope. I wouldn't be opposed to publishing a young Indian author, for instance. That would certainly be interesting, but we have no connections in the region. And we only publish some twenty books a year anyway, which isn't enough for all the authors we'd like to publish. We don't need any new networks and cover new territories.

While this perspective was expressed by a Czech publisher, Norwegian and Swedish publishers stated that they tend to apply the same principle and are keen to translate from other Scandinavian languages (compare the Scandinavian circuit of connectivity in Šajkevič's analysis). Similarly, Slovene publishers favour translations from other Balkan languages along with Italian and Hungarian. There are many reasons for these preferences: first, the source culture is often more recognisable to readers, who may have preconceptions about the geographically proximate country, its history and culture. Second, it is easier to keep in touch and exchange visits with authors and publishers who are located nearby. Moreover, it is cheaper and more practical for these authors to attend public readings in the target country.

Publishers also observe the titles published in translation in neighbouring countries but this information tends to be less influential, and personal networks have more impact on their decisions. Some publishers pointed out that their inferences may be negative. One mid-sized Dutch publisher put it: "If a book has been translated into French but not into any other language, it won't succeed here." Along similar lines, many editors suggested that there is a divide between the Germanic and Romance traditions in Europe. Some books, they reported, are in high demand in Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese, others in German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian, and only a few perform well in both groups of markets. This indicates that these two major macroregional circuits of connectivity operate in Europe. Interestingly, some publishers in the Czech Republic and Slovenia made similar claims though none of them located their own country within either circuit. As important as the UK and US markets are as sources of literature for translation, only a few editors said that

they follow the UK and US translation markets. This practice was most prominent in Norway, where it was backed by three publishers, while only one house from each of the other countries endorsed this approach. A small Norwegian publisher stated: "Massive success in the original country is not important – every market is different. Perhaps it matters if [the book] goes on through the English market. Norwegians follow the English market. [There are] similar reading cultures." Most often the significance of an English-language translation is that it gives the editor a version of the book they can read when the original work is written in a language they do not speak.

Another notable circuit of connectivity relates to the *topic of the literary work*, which may connect the author and the book to the new target audience. A mid-sized publisher in Slovenia summed this up: "There are different considerations. Usually, you're not only looking for a book but also for a context. [. . .] It's about the kind of messages you're promoting." Some themes may be timely in several countries at the same time. Currently, this especially relates to topics around gender, race and identity:

> We know, for example, that there's a young feminist movement and a movement interested in questions of identity and race, and so, of course, we have that in the back of our minds and notice when the topics a book is dealing with would really interest this readership. (Small publisher, Sweden.)

> Our [professional] reader says, "There's this theme about the lesbian community" and she suggests that this is a hot issue right now, this is what people are reading about, and I [the editor] say, "You're right." (Large publisher, Czech Republic.)

Other topics are more closely related to a specific region:

> [W]e need to have a selling point; it needs to connect with what's going on in Norway. We've published so many books that don't do that. They're too weird and obscure. (Small publisher, Norway.)

> I came across that work not long after [the author, who writes in a minor language the publisher had never translated before] won the EU literature prize, but I was mostly struck by the topic: Freud in Vienna. That connects to our history, so in this case, the topic made a real difference. I was surprised by how successful that book was. (Large publisher, the Czech Republic.)

Typically, when the connectivity circuit is based on a topic, the source language, source literature and often also the author are not pivotal for the editor provided that a suitable translator is available for the given language combination. In most other cases, editors who are pondering whether to introduce a previously untranslated author will assess the individual's overall potential, asking, for example, whether the book is part of a series and whether the author has written or

is planning to write another work of potential interest. When the connectivity circuit relates to the topic, the editor will consider the book alone since there are usually no plans to publish another title by the author or another work from the given literature if this territory is being explored for the first time. The publisher does not aim to sell and promote the author, but rather the book in question.

For some publishers, the key circuit of connectivity concerns *genre*. Typically, this relates to commercial publishers and genres such as crime fiction, thrillers, romance novels and chick lit. However, circuits of connectivity are also created around other genres like poetry, children's literature, comics (graphic novels) and highbrow literature, known as literary fiction in the publishing industry. A closer analysis reveals that genre-related connectivity is not straightforward. Rather it is historically situated and variable, with subgenres representing many layers of sub-circuits of connectivity. This includes distinct layers for the types of crime fiction published in Scandinavian countries on the one hand and for those published in the Netherlands on the other:

> Most books on the US bestseller lists don't sell very well here. Only a few do. If you take crime fiction as an example, it's too different from Scandinavian crime fiction, and the way it works . . . being interested in a specific genre doesn't mean you're also open to new stuff. Readers are perhaps more conservative. So, if it's too different from Scandinavian crime fiction, it'll be seen as too niche, too weird, too this or that . . . this has happened. In the past, English crime fiction was so popular that we used to compare Norwegian writers with English ones. Now it's the other way round: if we want to sell a foreign author, we have to compare them with one of our writers. [. . .] Swedish crime fiction is almost as popular as Norwegian crime fiction, but the Danish market is quite different. [. . .] In the Netherlands, they translate a lot, but if you look at the kind of crime fiction they buy, it's too explicit. That doesn't work here. (Large publisher, Norway.)

Some publishers base their activities upon a *niche* circuit of connectivity finding a sector not already occupied by other publishers in the given country or linguistic region. This tactic is often associated with smaller houses that focus on publishing translations from smaller literatures and less explored territories. One small Norwegian publisher commented: "One reason we focus on minor languages is that the big publishers don't really look at them. This is an opening for us to find the treasures the big players won't grab. And it's easy to get funding." These circuits are often clearly demarcated around specific national literatures, regions or literary styles. In Sweden, there are several publishers who focus on a single national literature (for example, French, Italian, Polish or Czech works). Elsewhere, certain houses only publish modernist fiction or concentrate almost exclusively on Russian fiction of the first half of the 20th century. Niche publishers often rely on external funding that can mitigate the risk of loss. Nevertheless, the bureaucracy

associated with the application process may lead to *red-tape-based disconnections* from the circuit:

> When we applied for funding in Brazil and Spain, the application form was 30 pages long. But when I apply in Finland, it's two pages in a large font. The Spaniards require lots of officially certified documents, signatures, a tax residency certificate. With all those stamps, the application process could easily cost more than what they'd give me in funding. (Small publisher, Czech Republic.)

Circuits of connectivity are not exclusive of one another, they are not aligned either, but they may overlap, and for a book to be chosen for translation, it normally needs to belong to more than one circuit, as Fig. 2 illustrates. Individual circuits may carry different weight in the decision-making process. There is no fixed, ideal or pre-defined number of connectivity circuits that editors consider.
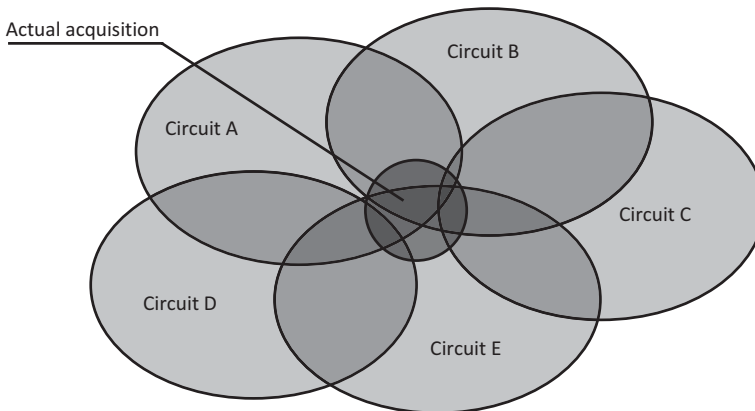
Fig. 2: Potential overlap of the multiple connectivity circuits that may influence decisions on acquiring translation rights. For the hypothetical actual acquisition, circuits A, B and E are the deal breakers, while circuits C and D are considered less important.

The examples of circuits considered in this section are by no means exhaustive. Rather they are merely some of the most common and observable circuits which editors hinted at during their interviews. Many circuits of connectivity are surely missing from this analysis because of the limited number and choice of target countries and the synchronic nature of my research. The data contained no evidence of any politically motivated connectivity circuit in Europe today comparable to the Communist circuit that was revealed in Šajkevič's analysis of data from the 1960s and 1970s. A more global, non-Eurocentric investigation could bring more breadth and detail to these findings.

5 Conclusion

When applied to research into the international circulation of literature, the notion of connectivity provides an alternative to centrist and universalist approaches by focusing on a global diversity of situations that give rise to translation publishing. In research into translation history from a large-scale perspective, the approach may help identify major circuits of connectivity in global literary circulation as exemplified by a re-interpretation of the *Index translationum* data. At the same time, it is apparent that to capture the whole range of situations, research cannot be limited to large-scale quantitative analysis. Small-scale qualitative approaches are necessary to reveal more circuits of connectivity including the layers that otherwise may slip under the radar due to multiple factors, such as low quality of the large dataset or relatively low numbers of datapoints that yet establish a pattern of remarkable translation activity.

The concept of connectivity is also enlightening when studying the current translation practice. Interviews with publishers and editors about their translation and acquisition practices prove the concept is revealing in at least two ways. First, it highlights the impact of connectivity in terms of using current communication technology and being conscious of global connectivity as practised by actors in the translation field. To a certain degree, connectivity, and more specifically the current communication practices based on current connectivity models, make publishers and editors redefine their identity, rethink their publishing choices and reconsider the circuits of connectivity they wish to take part in. Connectivity expands publishers' consciousness of their own and others' publication patterns. This, in turn, makes pattern recognition and recycling central elements of translation pitching, selection and publishing as well as promotion and sales.

Second, circuits of connectivity contribute to an understanding of global literary circulation as layered and diversified. The identification and analysis of circuits of connectivity exposes the granularity and situatedness of literary circulation. In addition, knowledge of connectivity circuits can clarify aspects of decision-making that may appear intuitive and arbitrary. To explain how acquisitions editors make choices, Childress (2012, 608) proposes the garbage can model in which "various combinations of previous strategies, beliefs, tools, lessons, and personal preferences are deployed in a haphazard and inconsistent fashion for any given project" (see also Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972). In contrast, the research described in this chapter suggests that there is more structure and logic to the process. Acquisitions editors tend to choose books that are part of multiple partially overlapping yet unaligned circuits of connectivity. These circuits also provide a link between the book in question and the publishing pattern of the target house, imprint or book series.

Each target linguistic space is a centre of its own but also embedded in a wider circuit of connectivity based on features that may range from a common history to linguistic, cultural and political affinities. This is particularly apparent from how geographic connectivity circuits combine with personal contact networks. Topic-based circuits of connectivity, on the other hand, explain how books by little known authors from unexplored territories may suddenly break through into many target territories at the same time. Finally, genre-based circuits and their sub-circuits and internal dynamics confirm (see also Franssen 2015a, 397) that large-scale and commercial translation publishing is more complex and less universal than is often acknowledged.

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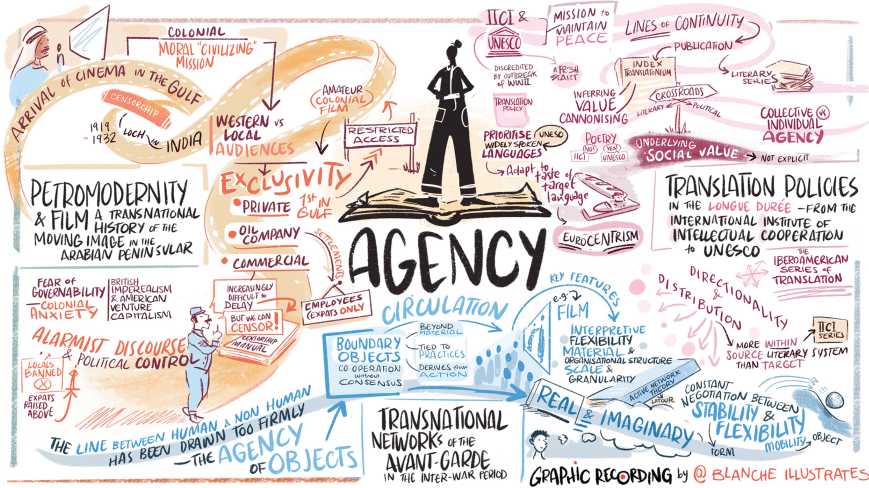
Part V: **Agency**

Elisabet Carbó-Catalan and Reine Meylaerts

Translation Policies in the *Longue Durée*: From the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation to UNESCO

In its diverse manifestations throughout history, culture has been used for the formation and consolidation of collective identities (Thiesse 1999). Its potential to enhance political projects has justified governments' interest in implementing cultural policies and developing paths for cultural projection abroad. The latter can be accomplished through government bodies, but also through specialised national institutions or government representations in international organisations. As part of such cultural policies, translation offers a privileged vantage point from which we might analyse the preconceptions and values guiding the ways actors conceive of relations between different cultures, how power relations between cultures are manifested and (re)negotiated, and the ways images for foreign projection (Dumont 2018) are conveyed through translations, to name but a few examples.

In this contribution, we address the case of two related intergovernmental institutions that have engaged in the field of translation: the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (1926–1946, IIIC from now on) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1946-, UNESCO from now on). Created with similar aims but in different periods, the two share the overall goal of fostering mutual understanding and ultimately ensuring world peace through their actions in the cultural and intellectual domains. We set our focus on these intergovernmental actors to highlight the role of governments and international organisations in what the sociologist of literature Pascale Casanova called the World Republic of Letters (1999), emphasising the features and specificities of their engagement in this field.

In this chapter, we first describe the relationship between the IIIC and UNESCO in order to justify our choice of addressing the two together through a *longue durée* approach. Second, we describe our understanding of "translation policy" as a concept, to then provide an overview of the translation policy set

forth by the IIIC and ultimately retrace some of its features in the UNESCO's translation policy.

1 Introduction: Continuities and Discontinuities Between the IIIC and UNESCO

The International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation was formally founded in Paris under the auspices of the League of Nations in 1926. In a period still marked by the consequences of World War I, the IIIC was constituted with the goal of fostering mutual understanding and maintaining world peace through the promotion of intellectual and cultural relations in a variety of domains, spanning from education and museology to literature and libraries (Renoliet 1999). The IIIC functioned as the executive branch for a group of institutions that came to be known as the Organization of Intellectual Cooperation, which included – in addition to the IIIC in Paris – the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC), based in Geneva, and a number of National Committees on Intellectual Cooperation.[1] They worked in collaboration: the ICIC had deliberative functions, that is, it was in charge of decision making, while the IIIC carried out executive tasks, and the National Committees ensured proper coordination between each national field and the Paris and Geneva headquarters. According to their functioning, these institutions can be addressed in isolation, as they involved different actors and were characterised by their own internal dynamics (Mitchell 2006). We focus our analysis on the IIIC, but its relations with the other actors working in the field of intellectual cooperation must be taken into account, which is why we will often refer to the ICIC as well, although it is not our main object of research.

The IIIC was active from the '20s to mid-'40s, when the outbreak of World War II battered the League of Nations (LoN) and its specialised bodies. Indeed, the IIIC ceased its activities with the occupation of Paris and remained dormant during the war. Despite an attempt to resume activities between 1945 and 1946 by creating an international centre of intellectual cooperation in Havana, this project never came to life. With the new international order emerging after World War II marked by the hegemony of the United States, and lacking active

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1 In addition to the mentioned organisations, this umbrella term also included specialised bodies such as the International Museums Office and the International Educational Cinematographic Institute.

support from the French government, whose interests and possibilities had radically changed since the 1920s, the IIIC was ultimately replaced by the UNESCO. A resolution that formally recognized the continuities between both institutions was signed in 1946, agreeing to "ensure, under the UNESCO'S responsibilities and through the appropriate measures, the continuity of [the IIIC's] work since 1924 in terms of assets, personnel, and the IIIC's work program" (Renoliet 1999, 178).

The emphasis on the (dis)continuities between the two institutions has transformed over the years, with their relationship being a matter of history, but also a matter related to memory, that is, to the discourses and representations of history. In light of the outbreak of World War II, it was generally assumed that the League of Nations and its specialised bodies had failed in their mission to keep the peace. As a result, the legitimation of postwar institutions, namely the United Nations and UNESCO, relied on rejecting the League of Nations' and the IIIC's legacy from a discursive point of view: postwar institutions needed to be associated with a fresh start to avoid being discredited. Today, the fact that the UNESCO is "the material and the spiritual heir" (Renoliet 1999) of the IIIC is often acknowledged, sometimes as a way of legitimising the former by appealing to its precursor. In any case, the UNESCO's debt to its prewar predecessor has rarely been examined in detail, with few exceptions, such as the contributions read at the international conference "60 ans d'histoire de l'UNESCO" ("Sixty Years of UNESCO History"), held in Paris in 2005, and in Jo-Ann Pemberton's analysis of the core ideas upholding intellectual cooperation both at the IIIC and UNESCO (2012).

We intend to partially fill this gap by addressing the two in the *longue durée*. Instead of a binary narrative that would characterise both institutions in terms of failure or success, our approach focuses on their continuities and discontinuities. The IIIC's involvement in the field of translation is here examined through the close reading of archive material, but our analysis moves beyond the analysis of single episodes in the short term. Our analysis aims at shedding light on the evolution, reshaping, and reformulating of practices and values. To do so, we study the IIIC's incursions in the field of translation in relation to UNESCO's translation policy. In other words, this is a relational analysis based on a *longue durée* approach that aims to shed light on the history of both institutions: the IIIC's history is the UNESCO's prehistory, and its analysis contributes to understanding the UNESCO's current functioning. Likewise, the UNESCO's functioning is a way of examining and reevaluating the outcomes and impact of the IIIC's work.

Any relational analysis of the IIIC and UNESCO needs to take into account the features they share and those that distinguish them – and numerous lines of

continuity can be traced between the IIIC and UNESCO. We may draw from Bour-
dieu's field theory to describe the two as actors occupying similar positions in
the heteronomous pole of the literary field (Bourdieu 1992). Situated at the very
crossroads between politics and culture, we may address them from their cultural
dimension, considering them as performers of cultural mediation (Roig-Sanz and
Meylaerts 2018) and as actors embedded in the transnational cultural space (Bo-
schetti 2010). At the same time, if we consider their political dimension, their in-
tergovernmental character and their power to enhance visibility and garner
prestige would cast them as actors that contribute to deploying strategies of cul-
tural diplomacy. In this framework, the book functions as a diplomatic object
(Hauser et al. 2011) and as an aesthetic product. Culture, in a broad sense, can
function as a source of soft power (Nye 2004), while cultural mediators working
within or in collaboration with these institutions may also act as (in)formal diplo-
mats. Notably, the two bodies under study pursued several common tasks, such
as the revision of textbooks, promotion of international exchanges between uni-
versities, exploration of issues related to copyright law, and coordination of li-
braries and archives.

Nevertheless, such continuities would by no means imply that the two bod-
ies did not have major differences. Profound historical changes distinguish
their chronologic frameworks in terms of geopolitics, the role of literature and
of the intellectual in society, as well as in the functioning of their communica-
tions and publishing industries. Several statutory points mark clear differences
between the UNESCO and the IIIC: first, the UNESCO aimed to develop less elit-
ist cooperation by prioritising the cultural over the intellectual, given that elit-
ism was often considered one of the IIIC's flaws:

> Two visions and two eras stand in opposition behind these acronyms: the UNESCO, in-
> spired in the Anglo-Saxon and representing the twentieth century, is marked by more
> massive dissemination of knowledge, while the French-inspired OCI is anchored in the
> early twentieth century, in which elites were charged with guiding the people. (Renoliet
> 1999, 325)[2]

UNESCO sought deeper involvement from governments in order to overcome
the long-standing ambiguity that characterised the IIIC, in which it was often
unclear whether members were representing their countries per se or were

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2 "Deux visions et deux époques s'opposent derrière ces deux sigles: à une UNESCO d'inspira-
tion anglo-saxonne et représentative du second XXe siècle marqué par une diffusion plus mas-
sive des connaissances, répond une OCI d'inspiration française ancrée dans le premier XXe
siècle qui charge les élites de guider le peuple."

acting as intellectuals who represented their fields of expertise (Grandjean 2020).[3] While the IIIC was born as an eminently intellectual organisation that later became more enmeshed in political and government matters, the UNESCO was created as an intergovernmental organisation devoted to cultural and intellectual affairs from the start. In addition, the UNESCO has benefitted from greater autonomy than the IIIC did, as the latter worked under the direction and close supervision of the ICIC, with complex relations, considerable rivalry (Grandjean 2018, 380–84), and heavily disparate economic resources (in terms of their quantity and funding source) characterising their relationship.

2 Translation Policies

The global scope and complex structures of both the IIIC and UNESCO entail several methodological challenges that justify their being generally approached from specific disciplines. Today, we have several works at our disposal that have been crucial to recovering the IIIC from oblivion (Iriye 1997; Renoliet 1999; Laqua 2011; Dumont 2013; Grandjean 2018; Herrera León and Wehrli 2019), but most of them seem to address said body from the perspective of the historian of international relations, with the discipline conditioning the research questions and objects of study. The IIIC's activities have rarely been studied from a specifically cultural or literary perspective (Banoun and Poulin 2019; Pita González 2019; Roig-Sanz 2022); conversely, the UNESCO's literary activities have benefitted from more interest over the last few years (Maurel 2001; Giton 2012; Klengel 2018; Brouillette 2019; Intrator 2019; Guerrero 2021). Our contribution to this historic work focuses on translation given its potential to help understand broader cultural policies. We seek to reconstruct the IIIC's and UNESCO's forms of engagement in this field and to explore the ways their procedures and practices shaped specific translation policies.

"Translation policy" is a term that can cover a variety of meanings (see Meylaerts 2011). We understand translation policy here in a broad sense and define it as a series of intentionally coherent values, principles, and decisions made by public or private actors regarding translation and translation-related activities, in

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3 More detailed accounts should explore to what extent the consolidation of members as State representatives is not so much a difference between the IIIC and UNESCO as a reflection of the consolidation and institutionalisation of a trend that was already ongoing within the IIIC, which, over the years, seems to have displayed a more and more *realist* approach, to borrow a term from the field of international relations.

order to guide their translation affairs (see also Meylaerts 2011). Policy may manifest itself through activities that promote (or hinder) translation (such as scholarships or prizes), through choices guiding the translation process (e.g. the choice to create a translation series or select a specific genre, but also to apply specific textual translation strategies), and through the actors implementing (or hindering) these translation activities and choices (organisations, institutions, publishers, editors, translators). This understanding is socially oriented and considers strategies of implementation that go beyond the text itself. The study of translation policies constitutes a path to approaching the agency of certain institutions in society, and the study of their design and evolution further sheds light on the diversity of actors involved in any policy making. While the degree of autonomy of single institutions may vary, none is completely self-determined or autonomous. Rather, their actions are the result of a confluence of interests and decisions of a variety of actors, including the people working within the institutions, as well as external actors collaborating with them (which may include government actors, members of the diplomatic corps, and actors from the cultural and the intellectual domains, to name but a few examples). The socially conditioned character of any policy also suggests that they are especially suitable for working within a *longue durée* framework, as changes in policies reflect epochal and structural changes in terms of shared social values.

The IIIC, for instance, was not entrusted with the task of policy making, nor did it possess sovereignty over a given territory. Quite the contrary, it was subordinate to the ICIC, to the League of Nations, and to national governments. A priori, the IIIC's main task was to implement the ICIC's decisions, and its agency was limited by several factors: the rivalry between the IIIC and the ICIC, with the former pushing to obtain more faculties while the latter feared being outshined, the IIIC's precarious finances, the economic context, and the power struggles between countries at the League of Nations. However, it did enjoy some degree of autonomy for policymaking of its own. As we shall demonstrate, the IIIC's executive tasks allowed for a field of possibilities regarding the ways the ICIC's general recommendations or resolutions were to be implemented.

As far as the sources are concerned, to reconstruct the features and understand the values, principles, and decisions guiding the IIIC's translation policy as part of its broader cultural policy, we draw on material from the IIIC's and UNESCO's archives in Paris and from the League of Nations' archive in Geneva. The values, principles, and decisions guiding the IIIC and UNESCO in their translation activities as part of their cultural policies are sometimes explicitly stated in policy documents concerning translation, but can also be reconstructed from other documents, such as minutes from working meetings, internal reports, speeches, and correspondence among members. As described by

González Núñez, practices "help create policy in a very real way, even if this practice is not always explicitly mandated through legal rules" (2016). The relevance we attribute to practices stems from these institutions' specific way of functioning: they share a structure whereby the work relies on collaboration from a great number of external actors consulted as experts for specific projects. Indeed, the IIIC and UNESCO also share "the best networking mechanism" (Omolewa 2007), i.e., national committees, and, as suggested by Omolewa, they can be addressed as networks. If we acknowledge the crucial role of networks in these institutions' functioning, we should also consider such networks when addressing their policies.

3 The IIIC and its Ambitious Translation Policy

To begin our comparison, we will proceed in chronological order and address the IIIC's translation policy first. The IIIC deployed several projects in the field of translation[4] and discussed a far vaster number of possible lines of action, mostly related to the translation of scientific works and the translation of intellectual and literary works.

The IIIC worked in collaboration with the ICIC's University Sub-Committee to address the translation of scientific works. They conducted an enquiry in collaboration with National Committees during 1927, after which they were able to affirm that in a number of countries speaking lesser-known languages the practice of accompanying scientific publications with summaries in wider-spoken languages was already consolidated. Thus, they recommended that countries not familiar with this practice add such summaries, and they encouraged the publication of compendia of analytical summaries in wider-spoken languages, following the example of the *Revues des travaux scientifiques tchécoslovaques-Czechoslovak research work*.[5]

The translation of literary works mainly involved the IIIC's Section of Literary Relations and the ICIC's Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters. The former was first directed by Chilean poet, teacher, and diplomat Gabriela Mistral and then by Franco-Brazilian journalist and writer Dominique Braga. The latter sub-

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4 In this chapter, we focus on translation as an object or domain of intervention, and not on the internal practices of translation enacted by the IIIC in its daily affairs, though the latter's relevance must be acknowledged to draw a full picture of this institution's translation policy.
5 Translation of Scientific Works – Report of the Institute of Intellectual Cooperation to the University Sub-Commission. UNOG, 13C/59896/24804.

committee's members included French writer Paul Valéry, Spanish diplomat and writer Salvador de Madariaga, German writer Thomas Mann, Italian historian Pietro Toesca, and the Romanian professor George Oprescu. During the IIIC's early days, several meetings were organised to design an activity program related to translations of literary and intellectual works. In the following pages, we analyse these proposals regardless of whether they were eventually adopted, as it is precisely through the reconstruction of the discussion and negotiation process that the values and principles comprising the IIIC's translation policy can be reconstructed.

3.1 The First Steps: Designing a Program

One of the first documents addressing the potential lines of action in the field of translation is a report that Paul Valéry presented in the Sub-Committee's second session, held on January 12th and 13th of 1926.[6] Drawing on several PEN Club proposals, the poet suggested drafting several lists:

> Catalogues of works for which translation would be particularly desirable, lists of expert, well-read translators, of editors publishing translations, of critics of foreign literatures [. . .] [and] a table of already translated works.[7]

In his opinion, such lists would benefit a variety of actors: publishers could find translation gaps; authors would easily identify translators and publishers and inquire on their skills; translators would benefit from more visibility; and readers (specialists, such as scholars of foreign literatures, but also non-specialists) would easily access information on materials of their interest. However, Valéry did not view all literary circulation as equal. He referred to the list of works recommended for translation as a "repository of transmissible literary values,"[8] which implies that, to him, not all literary works were valuable enough for promotion:

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6 Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters' Minutes of the Second Session, January 1926. UNOG, 13C/48930/45160.

7 Paul Valéry's report. Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters' Minutes of the Second Session, January 1926. UNOG, 13C/48930/45160. The quote in French reads as follows : "des catalogues d'ouvrages dont la traduction serait particulièrement désirable, des listes de traducteurs experts et lettrés, d'éditeurs publiant des traductions, de critiques s'occupant de littératures étrangères [. . .] [et] une table des ouvrages déjà traduits."

8 Paul Valéry's report. Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters' Minutes of the Second Session, January 1926. UNOG, 13C/48930/45160.

It is clear that we should only encourage translations that truly enrich our understanding of a nation, that can tell of its treasures, treasures that nation does not even recognize in itself. Some works are completely vain, while others are so promptly and immediately successful that it's no longer our job to get involved in their destiny.[9]

Those translations deemed as worthy of promotion were those whose interest lied in the facts and ideas conveyed, not in their formal innovation and originality. By the same token, given that "we cannot flatter ourselves with thinking that we might transmit a work's formal values from one language to another,"[10] it was believed that poetry could not be successfully translated.

As can be grasped, the lists Valéry proposed were of different natures: some of them would have been descriptive, functioning as a directory, while others would have a prescriptive nature and could quickly resemble a literary ranking, which could prove tricky for the IIIC, given that its policy was to "avoid attempting to enforce its view; [. . .] seek to co-ordinate what already exists, to bring together elements that at present are isolated, to provide authors and artists with instruments of work, and, lastly, to obtain and supply information."[11] Since determining who would draft this list was also problematic, Valéry proposed entrusting the selection to national delegates, a committee, or an autonomous institution specialised in translation, which would also do the following:

give grants for the translation and publishing of recommended works, as both translation and publishing are practically indivisible. Beyond the Commission's regulatory and directive function, whose main objective is to equalise, through somewhat artificial means like translation grants, the literary treasures of a diversity of languages, and fill in the often-scandalous gaps, there is room to compensate for the spontaneous translation, publishing, and reprinting of translations.[12]

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9 Paul Valéry's report. Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters' Minutes of the Second Session, January 1926. UNOG, 13C/48930/45160. The French quote reads as follows: "il est clair qu'on ne doit encourager que les traductions qui enrichissent véritablement la connaissance d'une nation, et lui communiquent des trésors qu'elle ne trouve point en soi-même. Il est des œuvres d'un type si banal, et il en est d'autres d'un succès si immédiat et si prompt que ce n'est point notre affaire de nous mêler de leur destinée."

10 Paul Valéry's report. Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters' Minutes of the Second Session, January 1926. UNOG, 13C/48930/45160.

11 Commission for Intellectual Cooperation – Composition of Sub-Commissions (Bibliography – Arts and Letters – Academic Relations – Intellectual Property) – Report to the Council on the Seventh Session of the Commission for Intellectual Cooperation held in Paris from January 14–18, 1926. UNOG, 13C/49855/14297.

12 Paul Valéry's report, included in the Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters' Minutes of the Second Session, January 1926. UNOG, 13C/48930/45160: "donner de primes à la traduction et à l'édition des ouvrages recommandés, traduction et édition, car les deux actes sont pratiquement indivisibles. En dehors de l'action régulatrice et directrice de la Commission, dont

This proposal reflects an interventionist, top-down approach to translation and to literary activities as a whole, aiming to facilitate the publication of translations and to fill certain gaps, while explicitly addressing non-commercial production. Although some of his proposals did not see swift adoption, Valéry's report seminally outlined several measures that were further discussed and, in some cases, ultimately implemented. Here, the poet also anticipates ways in which governments might legitimately participate in the literary field – by countering commercial trends and reinforcing what Bourdieu would call the pole of restricted production, that is, the segment of the literary field in which "producers produce for other producers" (1983, 320) and not for the market or mass-audience.

In late 1926, the Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters adopted several resolutions that institutionalised translation as a field of intervention. They encouraged the "translation of works of every period (and more particularly of works which appeal only to a public which is too limited to make publication a financial success) [and] the translation of literary works written in the less well-known languages." On the one hand, this resolution solidified the top-down approach that can be gleaned in Valéry's initial report while giving the IIIC a market-correcting role in the sense exposed in the previous paragraph – a role that aligns with the elitist views often attributed to said Parisian institution. On the other hand, the IIIC included the diversification of the literary-marketplace supply within its policy, with special emphasis on peripheral literatures. To fulfil such goals, the Sub-Committee recommended that the National Committees draw annual lists of works suitable for translation and forge an international society or academy of translators.

To implement such resolutions, the IIIC created a Committee of Experts on Translation in 1927.[13] The Committee started its work by drawing from a detailed IIIC report that abundantly described the situation of translation and the potential obstacles of possible lines of action. First, to fulfil the goal of facilitating the

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l'objet principal est d'égaliser en quelque sorte par des moyens artificiels par des primes à la traduction les trésors de lectures des diverses langues, et de faire combler des lacunes parfois scandaleuses, ·il y aurait lieu de récompenser la traduction spontanée, l'édition et la réimpression de traductions."

13 The committee was composed of Valéry Larbaud (French writer and translator), Marike Stiernstedt (Swedish writer), Gabriela Mistral (Chilean poet and diplomat), Anton Kippenberg (German publisher), Enrique Díez Canedo (Spanish writer, translator and literary critic), André Levinson (Russian journalist, writer and drama critic), Serge Elisséeff (Russian-French scholar and Japanologist), and Jean [János] Hankiss (Hungarian professor of literature). Stefan Zweig (Austrian novelist and playwright), Miroslav Haškovec (professor at Brno University), and Edmund Gosse (English poet and critic) were invited but did not attend the meeting.

selection of works for translation, they discussed elaborating lists of books recommended for translation. The experts considered that any list of this kind should be based on national lists compiling bibliographical information on already existing translations, and, since such lists didn't exist, they found that the IIIC's intentions were not readily achievable. However, it was believed that such a list would be extremely useful to further disseminate already translated works, which was the second strategic line envisioned in the report. To this end, the publication of a collection of foreign classics and a popular collection of contemporary works was discussed. Third, the report delved into the need to improve the quality of translations. In light of the previous goals, the committee of experts recommended that a permanent organisation on translation be created to draft a list of translations, pen yearly lists of the best works published in each country, award translation prizes, and publish a gazette on contemporary literature and technical translation problems. To complement such actions, the experts recommended that the office publish a collection of classics as well as a collection of contemporary literature for the general public, study the legal framework for translations, propose common legislation, and explore collaboration with the PEN Club.

The Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters examined the experts' work in its 1927 session[14] but dismissed most of it: they believed it would be impossible to found an office for translation given the Institute's limited resources. Further, they were wary of awarding translation prizes. Instead, they recommended that the IIIC limit itself to studying technical problems in the field of translation and help establish relations between authors, translators, and publishers.[15] The previous recommendations, and the implicit rejection of the experts' most ambitious proposals, must be read in light of the technical reasons mentioned above, but also in terms of the rivalry between the ICIC and the IIIC: the measures that were ultimately approved conferred little agency to the IIIC.

Nevertheless, the experts' proposals became the seeds of some ambitious ventures. In the legal domain, this resolution led to the study of legal obstacles to translation. The IIIC's Legal and Literary Sections and the ICIC worked in collaboration with the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law to examine legislation in copyright law, that is, the existence of bilateral agreements, and also the common ground between the Berne Convention and the Pan-American Conventions. The IIIC also functioned as a consulting office for actors in the literary field with questions regarding copyright law. In the literary domain, several

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14 Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters' Minutes of the Fourth Session, 16–19 July 1927. UNOG, 13C/60957/45160.
15 Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters' Minutes of the Fourth Session, 16–19 July 1927. UNOG, 13C/60957/45160.

projects saw the light as a result of these sessions. From 1929 and 1931, there was an attempt to publish a gazette specialised in translation in collaboration with the International Federation of PEN Clubs and its national branches. Under the title *Cahier des Traductions*, the gazette was to publish lists of the names and addresses of authors, publishers, translators, and critics interested in the circulation of foreign literatures, as well as articles on translation by renowned figures. Although it never saw the light due to funding issues, the massive effort to gather data, in collaboration with PEN Clubs and National Committees on Intellectual Cooperation, reflected the ambitious plans of the IIIC's Literary Section.

3.2 Promoting Literary Circulation through Translation

Among the experts in translation's recommendations, two ventures stand out for their long trajectories, both under the umbrella of the IIIC and the UNESCO. The first, *Index Translationum*, addresses the issue of improving the circulation of preexisting translations, while the second one, the publication of a collection of literary classics, responds to the perceived need to diversify the available translations in the literary marketplace.

The idea of creating a list of published translations had been previously endorsed by organisations such as the International Literary and Artistic Association, the International Federation of PEN Clubs, and the International Federation of Professional Societies of Men of Letters. However, they encountered challenges in doing so because it would have required collaboration from various professional sectors (publishers and librarians, at a minimum) as well as combining data from several countries. This presented a precious opportunity for the IIIC, which was better suited to satisfy this need given its international nature and its global scope in the intellectual domain. The IIIC began by conducting an investigation into translation across 29 countries,[16] which showed that most book catalogues didn't distinguish between translations and originals. To further advance the project, an experts committee was constituted, meeting several times between 1931 and 1932.[17] Thanks to its work, the *Index Translationum* saw the light and became the

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16 South Africa, Germany, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cuba, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, the United States, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, India, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Mexico, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and Ukraine.

17 The committee was composed of Julien Cain (France, administrator of the French National Library and Member of the International Committee of Expert Librarians), Enrique Díez Canedo (Spain, intellectual, translator, and secretary of Madrid's PEN Club), Roberto Forges Davanzati

first international list of published translations, that is, the first international bibliography of translations. Created in 1932, at first the *Index* included Germany, Spain, the United States, France, Great Britain, and Italy as trial countries, covering 14 countries by 1940 (Naravane 1999; Banoun and Poulin 2019). After an interruption during WWII, the UNESCO resumed its publication in 1948, first as a book, then as a compact disc, and ultimately as an online database, and significantly expanded its geographic coverage, thus pushing it to become one of the main resources for scholars studying translation flows, alongside book-industry databases, national databases, and online catalogues from libraries and bookstores (Poupaud, Pym, and Torres Simón 2009). In the meetings held prior to its launch, and throughout its first years of existence, it was generally established that the *Index* would pay special attention to "small countries whose languages are little known."[18] This reflected its participants' common view that the IIIC's policy needed to directly improve knowledge of lesser-known literatures and foster egalitarian relations among actors in the international literary field. Efforts to uphold the *Index*'s representative character and principle of equality can be gleaned in several initial choices: the *Index* was published in the two official languages of the League, French and English, but its name was written in Latin, a dead language, to avoid favouring any other languages. Also, to avoid using a specific language in the categories (author, title, etc.), font selections offered a solution: bold characters were used for the author, small caps for the translation's title, italics for the source title, and so forth. The content of the bibliographical list and its classification also posed several problems. Concerning the types of works it would include, it was decided that the *Index* would mention, in alphabetical order, all the works referenced in national book lists. The IIIC adopted a compilatory role in an attempt to deflect responsibility for any omissions, and also to avoid subjective

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(Italy, President of the Italian Society of Authors and Publishers, who was then replaced by M. Pilotti as Italy's National Delegate before the IIIC), Basile Munteano (Romania, essayist, literary critic, and former librarian of the Romanian Academy), Ernst Reinhardt (Switzerland/ Germany, administrator or Börsenverein der Deutschen Buchhändler in Leipzig and publisher), Stanley Unwin (England, vice-president of the International Congress of Publishers and publisher), and Z. L. Zaleski (Poland, member of the Translations Commission at the International Literary and Artistic Association, vice-president of the International Federation of Professional Societies of Men of Letters). The committee also involved M. de Montenach as secretary of the ICIC, Attilio Rossi (interim director) on behalf of the IIIC, Dominique Braga as advisor of Literary Relations, and Valerio Jahier as a writer. Jean Belime and Daniel Secretan were also present as secretaries of the IIIC.

18 Letter from Albert Dufour-Feronce (director of the International Bureaux and Intellectual Cooperation Section in Geneva) to IIIC director H. Bonnet, 21 October, 1931. UNESCO, Correspondence, F, IV, 12.

judgments involved in thematic classification (in categories like literature, art, science, etc.). Categorising according to source language or country of origin was also discussed, but the issue was tricky given the mismatch between linguistic and political borders:

> [. . .] At the Boersenverein der deutschen Buchhändler and Deutsche Nationalbibliographie, we have retracted ourselves from any ulterior political motive and would propose that only language can constitute the base of a bibliographical list, as publishing contracts are always understood to cover the whole of a linguistic territory [. . .]. The book trade, as a whole, assumes that the language in which a work appears is what determines its outlet.[19]

Despite this discussion, classification by country was finally adopted for practical reasons: given that the data would come from national institutions it would simplify the work involved. And within each country, translations would be divided according to their source language. In other words, geographic and national principles were important aspects of the IIIC's translation policy, which at the same time confirms and reflects the growing prominence of States within the IIIC. The fact that the discussion between linguistic and national criteria was settled in favour of the national is suggestive of those mechanisms that have historically naturalised the national as a structuring category in the cultural domain.

Despite the egalitarian values guiding the IIIC, the archives show that the *Index* fulfilled specific functions around (power) relations in the literary space. From its very origins, a vivid interest in creating statistics on importing versus exporting and on frequently versus rarely translated authors can be gleaned by studying the IIIC's work meetings. On the one hand, this reflects the way translation export rates may be indicative of a country's hegemony in the cultural field, and, on the other hand, it also reveals how translation emerged as a source of prestige in the internationalist mindset, in which predominantly importing countries were commended for their openness toward and interest in other countries.

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19 Letter from the Director Committee of the Boersenverein der Deutschen Buchhandler to the IIIC's Executive Committee through Julien Cain, director of the French National Library and director of the Expert's Committee on Translation Bibliography, 3 June 1933. UNESCO, Correspondence, F, IV, 12: "le Boersenverein der deutschen Buchhändler et la Deutsche Nationalbibliographie [. . .] sommes éloignés de toute arrière-pensée politique lorsque nous posons le principe que seule la langue peut constituer la base d'une bibliographie, car les contrats d'édition s'entendent toujours pour l'ensemble d'un territoire linguistique [. . .]. Le commerce du livre, dans son ensemble, part du principe que c'est la langue dans laquelle paraît un ouvrage qui en détermine le débouché [. . .]".

Concurrently, the IIIC also developed initiatives concerning the publication of new translations. As mentioned, among the various measures, the experts in translation recommended the publication of "classic, foreign collections [and] collections of translated contemporary works for broad dissemination." The strategies through which the IIIC sought to diversify the literary market not only concerned the origin of literary works, but also their targets, as its members considered that good translations tended to only be accessible to the elite, while popular editions were rarely published with quality translations of contemporary literature. By seeking to publish "a popular collection of valuable contemporary works in translation," the IIIC sought to move past the prejudiced idea that the masses didn't appreciate good, modern literature, but it also implicitly acknowledged that its other activities did target the elite. Thus, we might nuance the idea that the IIIC was elitist: although the main target was the elite, reaching out to the masses was, to some extent, part of its policy.

Although the publication of literary collections was not among the measures approved by the Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters, the idea wasn't all for naught: it was brought up at a meeting of Latin American delegates held in Paris in March 1927 by Chilean poet and diplomat Gabriela Mistral, who was also participating in the discussions about translation as director of the Literary Section. Indeed, she used her double position as Chilean national delegate and section director to consolidate this project. Thanks to the collaboration between Mistral and the Peruvian professor Andrés Belaúnde, the Ibero-American Collection saw the light in 1930 (Pita González 2019). The collection brought together classics and representative works from Latin America, with some 12 volumes published in French translation between 1930 and 1940, when the Second World War interrupted the IIIC's work and left the publication of several volumes that were already underway unfinished.[20] Even though other countries or regions were expected to follow suit, only one other literary collection saw the light, the Japanese one (1936–1938) (Millet 2014).

The Ibero-American Collection offers vast material with which one may reconstruct the IIIC's translation policy. The history of the Ibero-American Series is inextricably bound to the members of its Publishing Committee,[21] who oversaw

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20 Among them, *María* by Jorge Isaacs, *O mulato* by Aluísio Azevedo, and *Martín Fierro* by José Hernández. For a complete list of published and unpublished works, see Pita González 2019, 270–72.

21 The committee was chaired by Gonzague De Reynold. Dominique Braga, a French-Brazilian writer and Chief of the Literary Section, acted as secretary general of the Collection, while Valério Jahier served as its secretary. With different degrees of implication, the following actors took part in this committee or collaborated in some way: Gabriela Mistral (Chile), Victor

the various stages of the life cycles of publications, from fundraising to distribution. The published books were penned after Latin American countries' independence, but only by writers who were no longer alive at the time of publication. Choosing texts for publication involved plenty of discussion, given the stalwart objective of balancing literary and political considerations. The collection published fiction (mostly novels) and non-fiction (historical volumes, folklore, and essays), even though its publishing committee insisted on prioritising fiction, as other genres, like historical volumes, posed greater challenges:

> I recently came to know that the Portuguese did not receive Joaquim Felicio dos Santos's book on Diamonds in Brazil at all well, and that they have found me responsible, to an extent, of publishing a work that contains severe opinions on colonial rule.[22]

In a similar vein, Mistral expressed that Spain tried to control historical Hispano-American volumes, even attempting to mutilate Bolívar's letters through Spain's member of the ICIC, Julio Casares: "Every time that a Hispanic-American issue has been brought up, Spain has tried to revise everything being done, even being so imprudent and disagreeable as to try, through Casares's hand, to mutilate Bolívar's letters."[23] As reflected in the previous quotations, publications were carefully monitored by member States so as not to counter national interests or tarnish the nation's image. But political factors were not the only ones influencing the choosing of texts and genres: poetry was excluded from the series given that, according to the chief of the IIIC's Literary Section, Dominique Braga, it was untranslatable without significant loss, an idea already present in Valéry's report. Through this example, we can see how personal opinions shaped the institution's policy, with those behind said policies benefiting from great symbolic

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Andrés Belaúnde, Gonzalo Zaldumbide (Ecuador); Georges Le Gentil and Ernest Martinenche (both professors at Sorbonne University), Paul Rivet (Musée de l'Homme), Raymond Ronze (a historian specialised in French and Latin American university relations), the brothers Ventura and Francisco García Calderón, and Mariano Brull (Cuba).

22 Letter from Georges Le Gentil to Dominique Braga. 18 April 1932. UNESCO, Correspondence, F, VI, 3: "Je viens d'apprendre indirectement que les Portugais ont très mal accueilli le livre de Joaquim Felicio dos Santos sur les Diamants au Brésil et qu'ils me rendent responsable, dans une certaine mesure, de la publication d'un ouvrage qui renferme des appréciations sévères sur le régime colonial." As a result, Le Gentil requested that a Portuguese member be present in the Publishing Committee to avoid future misunderstandings, thus making explicit the strategic relevance of the experts' origins.

23 "Cada vez que se ha tratado antes de algún asunto hispano-americano, España ha exigido revisar lo que se hace y ha llegado a imprudencias y fealdades como la de pretender, por la mano del señor Casares, mutilar las Cartas de Bolívar": Letter from Gabriela Mistral to Dominique Braga, 26 November 1934. UNESCO, Correspondence, F, VI, 2.

capital (as with Valéry), or occupying key positions in the institution's structure (which was Braga's case).

Various features of the IIIC's translation policy at textual level can be reconstructed by examining the corrections that the Publishing Committee issued for submitted translations. For instance, they prioritised style in the target language ("The translation is clear, smooth, quite French"),[24] as also reflected in the Committee's requests to edit translations that it deemed too literal, or too faithful to the original's style:

> The Committee thus finds it pertinent to ask you [. . .] to revise your text. Please note that that would imply deviating a bit more than you have, perhaps, from a literal translation. You must have wanted, out of faithfulness to the original, to remain very close to the Portuguese language [. . .], thus, we would suggest relying less on the Brazilian text, giving the French language the elegance and literary quality that characterise Nabuco's prose.[25]

While the Publishing Committee operated with a preexisting understanding of what constitutes a good or bad translation, the stylistic criteria for translations remained undefined and instead were rather implicit, as gleaned through the following complaint by a translator who received conflicting suggestions from the two reviewers of his translation:

> This [editing] work often leaves me perplexed; on the one hand, the observations issued by the Brazilian reader would almost literally recreate the text; on the other hand, the French reader would rather have a French phrase with the same meaning, using more fluid and even more correct language. Agreeing with the latter, I cannot always find a solution that would satisfy both parties.[26]

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24 Letter from Georges Le Gentil to Blaise Briod, 8 November 1929. (UNESCO, Correspondence, F, VI, 3).

25 Letter from Dominique Braga to Victor Orban, 17 February 1931 (UNESCO, Correspondence, F, VI, 3). "Le Comité croit donc devoir vous demander [. . .] de bien vouloir procéder à un travail de révision de votre texte. Remarquez qu'il s'agit avant tout de s'écarter un peu plus peut-être que vous ne l'avez fait de la traduction littérale. Vous avez voulu, certainement par fidélité à l'œuvre originale, rester très près de la langue portugaise. [. . .] il y aurait intérêt à se déprendre maintenant du texte brésilien, de façon à donner dans la langue française l'élégance et la qualité littéraire qui caractérisent la prose de Nabuco."

26 Letter from Manoel Gahisto to the Director of the IIIC, 27 January 1929 (UNESCO, Correspondence, F, VI, 3). "Ce travail [de révision] me laisse souvent perplexe; d'une part, les observations du lecteur brésilien tendent à obtenir une transposition presque littérale du texte; de l'autre, celles du lecteur français tendent à établir une phrase française de même sens, mais d'un langage souvent plus fluide et même plus correct. D'accord avec le dernier, je ne trouve pas toujours aisément la solution convenable pour tous deux."

Just like *Index Translationum*, this collection can also be examined in light of its role in the (re)negotiation of power relations in the cultural field. In the understanding that translation already constitutes a form of consecration of a text, its inclusion in a collection published by an international institution would confer it further value and suggests that it is worthy of international interest. It also tacitly consecrates the text's country of origin, conferring it prestige in the World Republic of Letters.

3.3 Consolidating Translation as a Specialised Activity

By observing the activities described thus far, we may gather that the IIIC ultimately contributed to consolidating translation as a specialised field of activity, raising awareness around translators' work. For example, the IIIC issued a list of recommendations for works related to the *Index Translationum* requesting that publishers always include the name of the translator and the source language's title in their publications. In literary collections published by the IIIC, all translations were signed by their translators, which was not always the case at the time, and translators were often asked to sign review copies of their books, with the translator's symbolic capital being used to promote translations. Beyond these practices, archive material can offer further insights regarding the IIIC's view of translation and its role in the consolidation of this activity. Translation was viewed as the product of the interests of a network of authors, translators, publishers, and readers. Within this network, the IIIC found itself a crucial role in improving the playing field for all of the actors involved in the translation process:

> The writer who wishes to have his work translated doesn't know whom to address to find a qualified translator [. . .] and he doesn't have sufficient means of quality control for this translation, or any protection if his text is betrayed. Meanwhile, the translator isn't protected from the editor's abuse [. . .]. There's no list of books showing the public which foreign works they can read in their own language or in any other language they know. Lastly, the editor has insufficient means for control, nor does he have sufficient access to review organs that might guide his research process to discern which foreign works to translate. [. . .] The current state of translation is unsatisfying, to the author, the translator, the editor, and especially to the readers.[27]

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27 Report to the Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters on the Committee of Experts in Translation. Note presented by the Institute to the Committee of Experts in Translation, UNOG 13C/60353/24804: "L'écrivain qui veut faire traduire son œuvre ne sait à qui s'adresser pour obtenir un traducteur qualifié [. . .] [et il] ne dispose d'aucun moyen de contrôle suffisant sur la qualité de la traduction, d'aucun moyen de protection si son texte est trahi. De son côté, le traducteur n'est pas protégé contre les abus de l'éditeur [. . .] aucun recueil bibliographique

As the idea of "the editor's abuse" suggests, these interests might be conflicting, and this conflict marks several aspects of the IIIC's translation policy. For example, the perceived problem regarding the quality of the translations available in the market often comes up in the archive documents. Be it because of insufficient skills, time, or compensation, most actors seem to agree upon the need to improve the quality of translations. However, for the IIIC, quality is not just a problem in and of itself, it is also a problem given that bad translations can dampen an author's recognition abroad and therefore counter his interests:

> [Good translations] are quite rare, and often little known [. . .] too many excellent works have not been translated, while certain mediocre works have enjoyed the honor of being translated. It's thus undeniable that certain top works don't enjoy the place they deserve abroad, given their lack of a good translation.[28]

In the IIIC's understanding, the author ought to have the right to control the fate of his work by approving or rejecting the translation. Against this backdrop, the IIIC discussed the creation of a translation-control office, but the idea was ultimately found unviable. Paradoxically, an office specialised in translation would have contributed to the field's professionalisation, even if conceived to protect authors while reinforcing a subservient view of translators. Indeed, the confluence of actors' interests in the literary field often favoured the institutionalisation and professionalisation of translation, although its autonomy remained precarious given that the interests of other players in the game were not always aligned with those of translators. We may read other initiatives in this same light: proposals to improve translations included the awarding of literary prizes for translations and the promotion of translation criticism in magazines, which would have contributed to homogenising certain practices in the field of translation and promoting exchange regarding translation decisions. Building specific value-creation mechanisms would have conferred social prestige to translation, while

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ne vient renseigner rapidement le public sur les œuvres étrangères qu'il peut lire dans sa propre langue ou dans telle autre qu'il connaît. L'éditeur enfin ne dispose pas des moyens de contrôle et des organes de renseignements suffisants pour le guider dans ses recherches, pour lui indiquer les œuvres étrangères à faire traduire. [. . .] [L]'état actuel de la traduction n'est satisfaisant ni pour l'auteur, ni pour le traducteur, ni pour l'éditeur et ni, en définitive, pour l'ensemble des lecteurs."

28 Report to the Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters on the Committee of Experts in Translation. Note presented by the Institute to the Committee of Experts in Translation, UNOG R1050/13C/60353/24804: "[Les bonnes traductions] sont trop rares, trop peu connues souvent [. . .] trop d'œuvres excellentes demeurent non traduites tandis que certaine littérature médiocre a les honneurs de l'interprétation. Il est indéniable enfin que des chefs d'œuvre n'ont pas à l'étranger la place qui leur revient, faute d'une bonne traduction."

also aiding its constitution as a specialised and differentiated profession in the intellectual field. The goal of improving the quality of translations was thus pursued to fulfil various functions: protecting authors' interests and improving knowledge and understanding among peoples, but also promoting the professionalisation of translators, and therefore the autonomization of translation as a field of activity.

4 Tracing the UNESCO's Translation Policy to the IIIC's Previous Work

UNESCO's early days were largely influenced by the IIIC's legacy. The policy developed by UNESCO in the field of translation throughout its more than 75 years of history can be divided, as is the case with the IIIC, between interventions on a structural level and interventions aimed at publishing new translations.

The UNESCO's maintenance of *Index Translationum* until 2013 attests to the effectiveness of interventions at a structural level: for a long time, it has remained a key resource for professionals and scholars working with translation and foreign literatures, with its infrastructure fulfilling a myriad of functions for multiple actors in the literary field. Legislation on translation constitutes another domain affecting actors in the literary field in various ways. UNESCO has greatly contributed to this domain by advancing copyright law and intellectual property, especially with the adoption of the Universal Copyright Convention in 1952 and its revision in 1971. The IIIC and the ICIC's work in collaboration with the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law built the foundations for these milestones.

Legislation on translation concerning the revision of copyright law also contributed to consolidating translation as a field of expertise. In this spirit, the UNESCO has recommended that professional associations of translators be set up in countries where they don't yet exist, promoted their affiliation to international professional organisations, and created translator-training programs. The UNESCO's role in the professionalisation of translation can also be traced back to the IIIC.

Regarding the promotion of new translations, the UNESCO resumed the publication of literary collections and has created several translation programs that confer grants for translation. In fact, the IIIC's literary collections mark the origins of the UNESCO's Collection of Representative Works (1948–2005). The contrasting elements between the collections published by the IIIC and by the UNESCO reflect the evolution of cultural values, the professionalisation of translation, and the

consolidation of cultural cooperation: in contrast to the IIIC's policy, UNESCO specifically focused on literature, did include poetry in its collections, and has also published living writers. On the other hand, the upholding of certain principles reflects the two bodies' similar agency. Like the IIIC, the UNESCO also delegated decision-making around which works should be translated to national actors, be they members of national committees, national academies, or national chapters of the PEN Club. They also share some shortcomings: a certain Eurocentrism can be gleaned in the directionality of their translations: French was the only target language of the series published by the IIIC, although, at the time of its creation, texts were supposed to be published in English, Italian, and German as well. The UNESCO's Collection of Representative Works was characterised by more geographic variation (it included Arabic, Latin American, Persian, Italian, and Asian series) but the directionality of exchanges remained Eurocentric: while, at first, the UNESCO fostered translations from and into peripheral languages, it ultimately prioritised widely spoken languages as target languages, with English and French being the most frequent by far.

Nonetheless, the fact that the IIIC and the UNESCO published collections of classic or representative works speaks to the internationally accepted view that literature is a way of bringing peoples together and fostering better relations. While it remains true that scholars and historians of cultural diplomacy and intellectual cooperation struggle to find methodologies with which to examine the impact or effects of such projects, their sustained development over the years reflects a consensus regarding their usefulness or, at least, their potential. The latter is also indisputably related to the fact that such collections constitute a two-way transfer of symbolic capital: peripheral countries have found a platform for further visibility, while the IIIC and UNESCO have seen their international character reinforced. The fact that the IIIC's series was created at the request of Latin American delegates, and that the UNESCO's Collection was first confined to Arabic literature[29] in 1948 and then extended to Latin American literatures in 1949, reflects the interest of peripheral countries in these kinds of programs and speaks to the specific ways in which the "periphery" practices cultural diplomacy and cooperation. Regarding the functions fulfilled by these collections, further research might also detail these collections' distribution and circulation. The IIIC's Ibero-American Series paradoxically circulated further within the source literary system (in Latin America) than within the target literary system (in France) (Molloy 1972), which

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[29] The UNESCO and the Lebanese government agreed upon the establishment of an International Commission for the Translation of Great Books, which would assume direct responsibility for the translation of Western works into Arabic, as well as of Arabic works into English, French, and Spanish.

reflects the international dimension of nation-building processes. According to Gitton, "UNESCO's Collection seems to have touched a restrained elite, Western and westernised, without managing to reach the great public" (Giton 2014), with both assessments suggesting that the circulation of translations published by both institutions, both in geographic and social terms, needs to be critically assessed, as do the social functions they have performed.

5 Conclusions

The notion of translation policy has offered us a key tool to analyse and compare the IIIC and UNESCO's translation practices, as well as the decisions, values and principles behind them. In other words, the concept of translation policy, approached in the *longue durée*, can lead to new lines of research in the history of translation by linking previously isolated actors and phenomena.

The IIIC and UNESCO's translation policies can be characterised by viewing their interventions at a structural level, on the one hand, and at a more concrete level, on the other. At a structural level, both the IIIC and the UNESCO made or have made salient efforts to create or improve the infrastructure required for cultural transfer, with *Index Translationum* and their work around copyright law proffering great examples. Among their concrete practices, several programs to promote translations stand out, although the shortcomings in the circulation of the IIIC and the UNESCO's collections would explain why, today, translation grants constitute the main form of intervention to promote translations. The IIIC and UNESCO's translation policies reflect their evolution in the professionalisation of translation, overcoming the alleged untranslatability of poetry, while consolidating cultural and intellectual cooperation. The latter clearly reflects the ways their policies, understood as forms of agency, are directly tied to their positions in the field.

By reconstructing the IIIC's policy in the field of translation, we have unearthed the ambitious plans, but also the challenges, that this organisation faced in its daily practices. The IIIC's translation policy was designed to improve the circulation and knowledge of lesser-known languages and cultures, although this goal was more often declared than implemented. The inconsistency between the intentions that experts declared in their meetings and the measures that the IIIC ultimately implemented sheds light on the political rather than technical nature of this institution. That being said, the confluence of a variety of actors, from the IIIC's personnel to the ICIC's members, including specialised committees and occasional collaborators, has helped nuance our

understanding of a translation policy as a unified whole. The IIIC's case study shows translation policy in the making, with the values and principles upheld by the IIIC's members and collaborators operating in a delicate balance between the institution's economic possibilities, power relations with the ICIC and the League of Nations, and other related factors. Still, some actors managed to use their positions within the institution to advance their own views, especially Paul Valéry and Gabriela Mistral in the field of translation, thus reflecting the multiple articulations between individual and institutional agency.

In general terms, the IIIC institutionalised literary translation as a way of enhancing mutual understanding between cultures, an aim that has been central to the UNESCO's policy, too. The ways national interests surfaced in the IIIC's project reflect how translation doesn't always necessarily lead to the fulfilment of such idealist aims. Translation emerges as an activity that involves a network of political, economic, and professional interests, which simultaneously favours and limits its autonomy – and this balance is both its strength and its vulnerability. Translation, therefore, emerges as a necessarily international and interdisciplinary affair, with the IIIC and UNESCO's translation policy in the field attesting to their crucial role in the social history of translation. As has been shown, the IIIC and UNESCO have contributed to the autonomization and professionalisation of translation, which suggests that historians of cultural diplomacy and cultural cooperation must seek out such impact in the *longue durée.*

We would like to conclude this chapter by mentioning a few lines of research that would complement and complete our work: 1) textual analysis of translations published by the two organisations, 2) examinations of the IIIC and UNESCO's translation policy in relation to external translation policies, 3) combined analyses of personal and institutional archives in order to reconstruct the personal in the institutional, and 4) diversifying national approaches to the history of international organisations, as well as accounting for other non-state actors' modes of participation, including women, confessional groupings, and substate collectives. The history of the Ibero-American Collection can also be read in relation to the cultural policies deployed by Latin American countries. In other words, these institutions' international policies were deeply interwoven with existing national policies, and the institutions were careful not to tread on or question national priorities.

Archive Material
League of Nations Archive (UNOG)
UNESCO Archive (UNESCO)

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Valeria Grinberg Pla

Eslanda Robeson: A Writer on the Move Against Global Anti-Blackness

1 Context, Motivation, and Methodology: Why Eslanda Robeson's Work Matters

Eslanda Goode Robeson (1895–1965) was an Afro-American anthropologist, writer, and activist who used travel as a means to learn from and with Black peoples, especially women, around the world to build transnational and transregional connections and to argue for racial and gender justice.[1] She was a persuasive public speaker and a passionate writer who devoted her life to using both the spoken and the written word to serve the many causes she believed in, from independence for all countries still under colonial rule to equal rights for women. In the words of her biographer, historian Barbara Ransby (2013), Eslanda Robeson had the "guts," "resilience," and "perspective" to "speak out with empathic eloquence and steel-willed resolve against so many of the injustices of her day: McCarthyism, colonialism, sexism, racism, fascism, imperialism, wars (cold and hot), and class exploitation" (xiii). In her advocacy, Eslanda Robeson, as we shall see, embraced political Blackness while, at the same time, she envisioned a nonracialist society, that is, a complete "dismantling of the idea of racial difference in governance and other institutional arrangements and practices" (Guadeloupe 2022, xxv).

As the wife of acclaimed singer and actor Paul Robeson, who pursued an international career spanning Western Europe, the former Soviet Union, and the United States, Eslanda Robeson was part of a "transnational, multilingual, highly connected, and mobile elite" (Roig-Sanz and Subirana 2020, 12) despite being a black woman living in the first half of the twentieth century. Barbara Ransby, too, notes that for Eslanda – or Essie, as she was called by family and friends – being Mrs. Robeson meant "access to otherwise unreachable people and places"

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1 Following Francio Guadeloupe (2022), I understand that, on the one hand, "anti-Black racism refers to the way, since the horror of transatlantic slavery [. . .], that brown-skinned people of sub-Saharan African descent became known as Black people. In being given this name, they have been symbolically and materially disenfranchised on the basis of the idea of racial difference" (xxv). On the other hand, "political Blackness, a term borrowed from Stuart Hall, designates those people who resignify and transform Blackness into a political identity similar to that of the proletariat. In doing so, they seek to dismantle the racial and unjust economic order" (xxv).

(Ransby 2013, 6).[2] This access enabled her to play a significant role in the cultural transfer of ideas about racial, gender, and social justice into many national and political contexts, becoming an important, albeit now overshadowed, figure within the Black, anticolonial, feminist, and leftist internationalist networks of her time.

So, in this chapter, I analyse Eslanda Robeson's wanderings and writings through the lenses of agency and connectivity, as these interconnected concepts provide an analytical framework to discuss the range and implications of her transnational movements and archipelagic cultural mediations and, thus, rethink space. As key concepts in global literary studies, agency, connectivity, and space also set the base for situating Eslanda Robeson within a worldwide Black and feminist intellectual history in the context of the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993) and beyond. Indeed, as Ransby (2013) suggests, a "careful look at Essie's writings, speeches, and activism forces us to shift our attention from the Soviet Union [and East-West relations] to the growing sense of community and solidarity that was being forged in the Global South" (7), a bond that grew out of her travels first and foremost to Africa, in 1936, 1946, and 1958, but also to Mexico and Central America (1940), China (1949), Trinidad (1958), and Australia and New Zealand (1960).

As I have previously argued (Grinberg Pla 2020b), twentieth century Afro-Caribbean literature challenges the very notion of the national literary canon due to its transnational and transcultural character, which goes beyond linguistic, cultural, national, and regional borders. Similarly, Eslanda Robeson's writings cannot be reduced to the Afro-American context (or the African, for that matter), as her lifework fosters a transnational, transatlantic, cross-cultural, and translingual cultural geography spanning India and China, the Caribbean and Latin America, Europe, and the U.S.

It is in this sense that a new measuring of space beyond the national is necessary to fully understand Eslanda Robeson's literary and political practice. What is more, as she displaces the centrality of the West – be it London, Paris or New York – to look at what's happening in Africa, China, or Latin America, she pushes us to review Western, and hence colonial dichotomies such as centre and periphery, dominant and dominated, global and local, and North and South, as already noted by Ransby. So, the notions of connectivity and agency serve as tools to study Eslanda Robeson's production, trespassing the limits of the nation-state. Through the connectivity lens, we will see the breadth of her transnational and translingual relations emerging from her movement through space. Here I

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2 I will refer to her interchangeably as Eslanda Robeson, Eslanda, and Essie throughout the chapter, to acknowledge her multiple positionalities in the different ways she was called and she herself chose to sign her texts, sometimes as Essie and others as Eslanda Robeson.

understand movement in a multidimensional way that impacts peoples' lives and perceptions: as displacement in time and space in travel, migration and transit, as dislocation of time and space in dance and trance or through travel, as the motion of the body while performing manual work. As an analytical tool, movement captures how the embodied knowledge produced by migrating or travelling intellectuals such as Eslanda Robeson, interrupts the linear logic of place and time central to modern nations, against the grain of the phallogocentric split of body and mind.

I argue that is the very experience of movement, of a life on the move, that contributes to the creation of her antiracist, feminist agenda in defiance of colonial and patriarchal social impositions and expectations. In other words, her position as an activist against global anti-Blackness is informed by movement, and not defined as an ethnoracial category. In this context, Carole Boyce Davies' notion of "migratory subjectivity" (1994, Ch. 1) also plays a key role in understanding how her actual movement impacts her writing. Conversely, through the lens of agency I address the multiple roles she fulfilled as an international cultural mediator. Using Édouard Glissant's notion of the archipelago in *Treatise on the Whole-World* (2020 [1997]), I am able to more fully capture the transnationalism of Eslanda as well as her contribution to the international circulation of gendered, antiracist, anticolonial ideas.

Historian Imaobong Umoren (2018, 2) best describes Eslanda as a "race woman internationalist," that is, a public figure who "travelled and w[as] part of black diasporic networks and organisations in the United States, Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean [. . .]" because she was invested in solving "racial, gendered, and other forms of inequality facing black people across the African diaspora."[3] This definition is important as it underscores the link, or even better, the entanglement, between movement (i.e. travel) and internationalism (i.e. social movement). Indeed, Eslanda Robeson travelled extensively: to London, Paris, Madrid, Berlin, and Moscow in Europe; to South Africa, Basutoland, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, and Congo in Africa; to Trinidad in the Caribbean; and to Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Mexico in Latin America, to name some of the places that she connects in her

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3 "Race women internationalists self-identified as members of the 'darker races of the world' and voiced what historian Nico Slate has called 'colored cosmopolitanism.' According to Slate, the term describes men and women of color who forged 'a united front against racism, imperialism, and other forms of oppression' and who 'fought for the freedom of the colored world' even while calling into question the meaning of both color and freedom" (Umoren 2018, 2). This is another way of saying that race women internationalists embraced political Blackness while contesting the racial colonial order that divided people between dominated (Black, Indigenous, usually female) and dominating (White, coloniser, usually male).

thinking about race and gender (in)equality, and which will be part of what I call her archipelagic cultural mediations, following Glissant (2020 [1997]).

As an international cultural mediator (see Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018, 3), Eslanda's agency was geographically widespread as well as manifold in terms of her multiple roles: writer, editorialist, cultural ambassador, reporter, keynote speaker. In her many concomitant capacities, she produced a significant body of writing, some of which circulated publicly (in books and magazines) while many other pieces were destined for specific readers and, thus, circulated privately in the form of letters; in this way, she also mediated between the private and the public spheres. From her groundbreaking travelogue *African Journey* (1945) to her numerous journalistic pieces, letters, and public talks against Apartheid, segregation, and colonialism, all of Eslanda's publications and speeches purposely cross several national, cultural, and linguistic borders – as she did herself in her "large, unconventional life" (Ransby 2013). In this sense, both her work and her biography invite us to conceive space, culturally and otherwise, in a new way, one not defined through nation states or the geographies determined by colonial dominions past and present, but rather by the archipelago:

> Archipelagic thinking suits the pace of our worlds. It has their ambiguity, their fragility, their drifting. It accepts the practice of the detour, which is not the same as fleeing or giving up. It recognizes the range of the imaginations of the Trace, which it ratifies. Does this mean giving up on self-government? No, it means being in harmony with the world as it is diffracted in archipelagos, precisely, these sorts of diversities in spatial expanses, which nevertheless rally coastlines and marry horizons. We become aware of what was so continental, so thick, weighing us down, in the sumptuous systematic thought that up until now has governed the History of human communities, and which is no longer adequate to our eruptions, our histories and our no less sumptuous wanderings. The thinking of the archipelago, the archipelagos, opens these seas up to us. (Glissant 2020, 17)

Consequently, the framework developed by Diana Roig-Sanz and Jaume Subirana (2020) to study *Cultural Organizations, Networks and Mediators* seems more than appropriate to capture Eslanda Robeson's transnational and transregional archipelagic agency as a race woman internationalist. The framework also helps to describe her contributions to the many conversations about race and gender (in) equality that took place within the international informal networks and in the transnational institutions she was a member of, such as the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), the International Committee on African Affairs (founded in London in 1937), and the United Nations. She attended the very first UN convention in San Francisco in 1945 and was from then on accredited with the *New World Review* as a reporter.

As both a cultural mediator and race internationalist, Eslanda Robeson impacted the transnational, transregional, and multilingual dissemination of ideas

against racism in literature and beyond (see Ransby 2013, 205–206; Umoren 2018; Joseph-Gabriel 2020, 173). She wrote essays, chronicles, travelogues, political speeches, testimonials, plays, and novels while also contributing to a redefinition of the literary field as not completely separated from the political. According to Ransby, "she sought to research, understand, and write about changing global realities not as a disinterested scholar or an ostensibly impartial reporter, but as a passionate and engaged historical actor, a scholar-activist, and a radical writer trying to both uncover the truth and influence the future" (2013, 205). What is more, her writing furthered the conversation on ethics, citizenship, and belonging on a global scale by shifting the focus away from the relationship with former colonial metropoles to look at transversal (Grinberg Pla 2020a) and translingual (Odertey-Wellington 2018) connections between Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas and their cultural capitals. By so doing, Eslanda Robeson's interventions disrupt both the prevalent male gaze as well as nationalist ideologies, or – to say it with Glissant – "the sumptuous systematic thought that up until now has governed the History of human communities," because it is not "adequate to our eruptions, our histories and our no less sumptuous wanderings" (2020, 17).

To reconstruct Eslanda Robeson's "sumptuous wanderings" beyond the limits of what's actually been published and is therefore available in print form, I delved into some of the archives that host her manuscripts and documents, which are kept in collections – as happened so often in her lifetime – devoted mainly to her husband, Paul Robeson, and whose material traces, like both their biographies, are scattered in a transatlantic manner but, alas, respond individually to the organising logics of their respective national and local sites.[4] Working

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4 Despite the ongoing pandemic and the ensuing restrictions, I was able to conduct archival research at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem in July 2021, where some of Eslanda Robeson's correspondence as well as some of her articles and speeches are kept in microfilm, and at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin during November 2021. Die Akademie der Künste has a significant collection of Eslanda Robeson's manuscripts, speeches, articles, and longer pieces, both published and unpublished, as well as personal letters and photographs. This is not surprising, due to the Robesons' deep connections to the Soviet Union, especially to the former German Democratic Republic, where they both spent long periods of time and where Eslanda Robeson was awarded the Clara Zetkin medal in 1963. I am grateful to the staff at the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the Harlem Branch of The New York Public Library and the staff at the Akademie der Künste, from the *Lesesaal* to the *Reproduktionsauftrag* team, and most especially to the director of its *Musikarchiv* (that's the division that houses the collection, since Paul Robeson was first and foremost a singer), Peter Konopatsch, who was most helpful and patient with all my inquiries. As of today (April 2022), the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, that hosts the most important collection of Eslanda Robeson's papers, continues to limit on-site research to

with the Eslanda and Paul Robeson collections asks for an anarchival approach, that is, for a reading practice against the grain of an archival selection and organisational logic determined by the dominant discourses in academia (what Glissant calls the "sumptuous systematic"). In a sense, since Eslanda Robeson's activism exceeded national/ist frames, disrupting both gender and racial hierarchies, as a researcher one has to look for a cultural analysis methodology that is appropriate to the scale and scope of her lifework and that allows us to bring into focus her sumptuous wanderings and the archipelagic character of her cultural mediations.

As Diana Roig-Sanz and Neus Rotger argue in the first chapter of the present volume, it is necessary to "aim at decentralisation from both a geographical and a thematic standpoint, as well as with regards to the theories and practices we set in motion and the agents involved" (2022, 2) to uncover and recover the complex transnational and translingual dimension of cultural mediation. This is especially critical if we aim to bring into focus the work of a race woman internationalist such as Eslanda Robeson. Additionally, an intersectional angle (Crenshaw 1991) is needed to capture how antiracism and gender inclusion are the vectors that allowed her to transcend national and linguistic constraints and build cross-cultural solidarity on a global scale, while at the same time recognizing the specificity of each context and especially the situationality of Black women within those contexts.

Eslanda's husband's fame opened many doors for her, but it also cast a shadow over her accomplishments as a public intellectual and a cultural mediator in her own right, as happened to both Amy Ashwood Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey, as well as to Shirley Graham DuBois (see Boyce Davies 2015, 27). It goes without saying that Barbara Ransby's critical annotated biography as well as Imaobong Umoren and Annette Joseph-Gabriel's studies of Eslanda's internationalism are crucial steps towards ending the gendered and racialized bias that has skewed her reception until recently. This chapter also contributes to that effort.

2 Eslanda's Agency as a Black Female Internationalist

In "How I became a writer (if I am writer)," a speech Eslanda Robeson delivered at the Writers' Union in Moscow in January 1959, she explains that the decision to publish a biography about her husband (*Paul Robeson: Negro*) emerged from

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Howard University faculty, staff and current students due to the ongoing pandemic and, therefore, I am still waiting for permission to study it.

a desire to provide a more accurate depiction of his sociopolitical views, which were also hers – that is, she sought to *correct* public opinion,

> Paul's amazing success in theatre and concert created many problems, not the least of which was inaccurate reporting about his personal beliefs, which have always been very important to him. [. . .] Anyway, things came to such a pass that an entirely wrong picture of Paul was being built up by inaccurate reporting; [. . .] So we decided that something must be done to correct this.

> Paul asked me to make a list of some of the significant facts about his life [. . .], to compile a sort of fact-sheet about his background which could be given to reporters during an interview, so that at least some accuracy could be guaranteed. This I did. Paul liked it so much, and it became so useful, that he asked me to expand it. I expanded and further expanded it, and eventually it grew into a book, PAUL ROBESON, NEGRO, and was published in England and the United States in 1930. Thus my first book sort of came into being as a weapon of defence, not because I was a writer. (Robeson 1959, 2)

This statement is emblematic of the way in which, for Eslanda Robeson, public writing served as a manifold mediation between the private and the public sphere, the political and the cultural realms, and between black and white audiences. And in the same sense that writing (about) *Paul Robeson, Negro* implied an editorial gesture, all her other writing endeavours were aimed at setting the record straight with regards to racial, gender, and social justice, according to her ideals of freedom and equality regardless of race, gender, class, and nationality. Following Eslanda's own rhetoric in "How I became a writer," one can see how writing will always be both an editorial intervention about the place of Black peoples, especially women, in the world. As a cultural mediator, she constantly worked to translate the plight of Black peoples and to argue for women's rights to diverse audiences with whom she sought solidarity or from whom she demanded respect in various different national, social, and political contexts. Her rhetorical strategies thus support the translations of ideas across different social, cultural, and national contexts, culminating in a poetics of commensurability around issues of racial and gender justice across borders.

If cultural mediation always implies an act of translation in an extended sense of the term – since racism, for instance, is coded differently in different contexts – the type of transnational and cultural mediation practised by Eslanda Robeson also relies on translation in a more literal sense, because translations are needed to establish conversations between anticolonial, antifascist, and antiracist activists who do not speak the same language. Indeed, as a transnational and transregional cultural mediator, Essie often depended on interpreters to facilitate communication with peoples who were not fluent in English, as well as on translators and interpreters who delivered her speeches in the target language when necessary. At the same time, it is my understanding, from her own observations

in her correspondence and diaries, that she made a conscious effort to learn several languages to facilitate her cross-cultural communication abilities. Especially in informal situations, she used her knowledge of Russian, French, and German, which was, as she writes in *African Journey*, the language she spoke best (see Robeson 1945a, 116).

As Brent Hayes Edwards (2003) points out, "Taking up questions of the travels of discourses of black internationalism requires investigating in particular the multiplicity of translation practices and transnational coverage more generally – that are so crucial to the fabric of [. . .] transatlantic print culture" (9) and – I would like to add – that are equally crucial to the fabric of transnational and transregional cultural mediation.

In her quest for racial equality with a focus on female leadership across multiple linguistic and national borders, Essie was in contact with and needed interpretation for many languages. During her stays in London and Paris, she was exposed to many varieties of English and French as she connected with numerous Afro-Caribbean and African intellectuals who were deeply involved in anticolonial struggles. Also, in the context of her anticolonial struggles she was immersed in many African languages, especially but not exclusively Rotoro (during her stay in Basutoland, present-day Lesotho), Zulu and Afrikaans, Luganda, Swahili, Ngala, Kongo, Kituba, Fante and Ewe. As committed antifascists, Eslanda and Paul Robeson travelled to Spain during the Civil War, coming in contact with Spanish, a language she continued to be in touch with during her visit to Costa Rica, Guatemala and Mexico, and as part of her involvement with antiimperialist causes in Latin America. Because of their leftist orientation, the Robesons had strong ties to the former Soviet Union and stayed there repeatedly, also for long periods of time, in Russland and Germany, and even travelled to China. As a result, Russian, German, various other Eeatern European languages and Mandarin are part of their multilingual landscape.[5]

Not surprisingly, many of her journalistic pieces were disseminated in either Russian or German in different outlets within the former Soviet Union. Her book *African Journey*, which appeared in English in 1945, was also published in Russian in 1957 as *Путешествие по Африке/Puteshestvie po Afrike*. This is an excellent example of the type of transnational, cultural mediation between Black anticolonial activists and Communist intellectuals that Eslanda Robeson practised. More research is needed to better understand how translations helped circulate Eslanda Robeson's ideas in different national contexts and within diverse collectives, but

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5 Here it is also worth mentioning that, as a reporter for the United Nations, Eslanda was embedded in a highly multilingual political body.

for now I would like to focus on cultural mediation itself as a form of translation lubricating the many gears of Black and feminist internationalism which, thus, enabled Eslanda Robeson's agency in many different national, regional, political and cultural contexts worldwide.

Another type of cultural mediation practised by Eslanda Robeson had to do with her emphasis on the need to listen to women with regards to political matters and racial justice issues alike. Being a Black woman she belonged to "a subordinate group within the global racial and gender hierarchies" – see, for example, Keisha Blain (2015) on Black women nationalists – and, like them, she "asserted their political agency and demanded equal recognition and participation in global civic society" (196). She did so without calling herself a feminist, by challenging patriarchal norms and values both within and beyond Black intellectual and social circles and by always arguing for women's rights. It should not be surprising that she collaborated with the short-lived "Sojourners for Truth and Justice," a group of women activists that exercised "a postwar black left feminism" (Ransby 2013, 188).

A clear example of Essie Robeson's advocacy for women's rights can be seen in the speech she gave in East Berlin in 1963 under the title "Equality for Women? Men's Attitude Must Change." Of particular interest here is her intersectional awareness of Black women's embodied knowledge based on the racial and gender discrimination to which they are systemically exposed because they are black and female. Accordingly, she finishes the following quote by making a not so liminal side comment: "Again, Negro women, particularly understand this,"

> The reality of American (and Western) society – of the "Free Democratic World" is that although women constitute slightly more than half the population, the society is man-dominated: Men make the laws, men enforce – or deliberately do not enforce – the laws.

> It can be said that there are women in the Congress, in the Parliaments. But how many? There are only 2 women Senators and 11 women representatives in the present United States Congress. In the present British Parliament there are only 25 women in the 600-odd membership. There are no women in the Cabinet. All of which means that the representation of women is token only. There are no women making policy. (Again, Negro women, particularly understand this). (Robeson 1963, 1; underlined expressions in the original)

Another telling example of her feminist activism and of the way she understood gender inequality as a systemic issue, can be seen in her piece about "The Role of Women in the Emancipation of Africa," where she unequivocally asserts:

> I honestly believe the reason women do not take more active part in PUBLIC LIFE and especially in GOVERNMENT is because MEN – consciously or unconsciously – have been able to KEEP THEM IN THE HOME, COOKING THE FOOD, CARING FOR THE CHILDREN,

KEEPING THE HOUSE TIDY, and they naturally want to keep the women doing all this, be-
cause it is a very comfortable arrangement for them. MEN. (3; capitals in the original)

It is also not a coincidence that Eslanda Robeson wrote about Paulette Nardal
(see Brent Hayes Edwards 2003, 152), showing interest in the life and work of a
fellow race woman internationalist she met during a long stay in Paris in 1932. In
so doing, she exhibits an intersectional awareness of the position assigned to
Black women in different national and regional contexts that goes hand in hand
with Nardal's own "sense of the historical interrelations of race and class" as well
as her "sense of the particular difficulties affecting Antillean women" (Hayes Ed-
wards 2003, 153). During her many stays in Paris and London, Eslanda deepened
her intersectional awareness of the discrimination faced especially by Black
women, leading to her critique of sexism within Black internationalist circles. She
also explored commonalities in the fight against racism in the African colonial,
the Caribbean colonial and the U.S. American postcolonial landscape, leading to
her archipelagic global connections.

Eslanda Robeson's relevance as a global cultural mediator is barely known
to this day, despite the abundance and sharpness of her many publications in
magazines and periodicals during her lifetime. This is the counterpart of the little
recognition she has earned so far as an intellectual and a writer, although she
did publish several books and numerous shorter journalistic pieces. In this re-
spect, Ransby (2013) points out that while Essie's articles circulated among inter-
nationalist, feminist, panafricanist, and leftist circles worldwide at the time they
were published, they failed to reach a wider audience, while her "correspon-
dence alone deserves an edited volume" (9). She further notes that rejections of
Eslanda Robeson's many literary pieces (both novels and plays that never saw
publication) "tell yet another story" (9). I wonder how much of that story is one
of convergence of oppressive systems of race and gender that have contributed
to the historic invisibility of Black female writers, to say it with Kimberlé Cren-
shaw's (1991) intersectional terminology.

Indeed, until not too long ago, literary criticism and cultural history were fo-
cused mainly on the role played by Black male intellectuals (see Boyce Davies
2015, 25; Boyce Davies 2009, 217–219; Bay, Griffin, et al. 2015, 1–2). This is partly
so because several Black international organizations, such as Marcus Garvey's
UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association) underscored "strong male lead-
ership as fundamental to universal black liberation" (Blain 2015, 199), advocating
a paternalistic view of women. Louis Parascandola (2016) notes the historical ne-
glect of Amy Jacques Garvey's contributions, despite her significant role as editor
and as a prolific writer for the *Negro World*, focusing on "important and often con-
troversial political and social issues rather than the stereotypical domestic matters

expected of most woman's pages. Collectively, her almost 200 editorials and other writings treat [. . .] women's struggles globally as well as the resistance of various ethnic groups against colonial oppression" (xv). Keisha Blain (2015) also contends that Garveyite newspapers such as the *Negro World* did offer a platform for Black women to get involved as writers and activists and even "exemplify the ways black nationalist women in the UNIA sought to resist male patriarchy within the male-dominated organization" (206).[6]

Unlike Black female intellectuals associated with the UNIA, Eslanda Robeson did not have to contend with such openly patriarchal views of women's roles within society and, yet she, too, was subject to a similar gender-shaded reception. This is obvious in the paratext accompanying the publication of "A Negro Looks at Africa," that appeared in *Asia and the Americas* in 1944. While Eslanda focuses on the political implications of her research on Africa, connecting the struggles of Black peoples in the Americas, the Caribbean, and Africa, the short biographical note at the foot of the article puts her marital relation to Paul Robeson first, before mentioning her professional qualifications to speak about such matters: "ESLANDA GOODE ROBESON, wife of the famous singer and actor Paul Robeson, holds a B.S. degree in chemistry from Columbia University and will receive her Ph.D. in anthropology [. . .] in January. For her fieldwork in anthropology, Mrs. Robeson visited South, Central and East Africa [. . .]" (501; capitals in the original).

On a final note, I would like to offer that this type of patriarchal framing of Eslanda Robeson's work may very well explain her hesitations to call herself a writer, "Two books, and still I'm not a Writer" (Robeson 1959, 3), "Two and one-half books, and still I'm not a Writer" (Robeson 1959, 4) – beyond rhetorical pathos. In other words, it is fair to assume that, while it opened many doors for her, being married also offset professional recognition: as long as she was Mrs. Paul Robeson, she was seen as such. Looking at this mixed reception with respect to her agency, there is a certain ambiguity in the way traditional gender roles and expectations for women affected her career, as she strategically used her position as the wife of an internationally recognized artist to her advantage.

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6 In the same vein, Parascandola (2016) writes that "Amy Jacques Garvey negotiated a difficult combination of nationalism with a feminist agenda through what Ula Y. Taylor describes as 'community feminism,' which blends self-determination and feminism. [. . .] The community feminist construct posits that the traditional womanly role as helpmate does not contradict a position of leadership, although it challenges the patriarchal agenda, often putting the women in conflict with the men in the organization" (xx–xxi).

3 Establishing Connectivity Through Movement and Translingualism

There is a parallel between the neglect of Eslanda Robeson's work until recently due to sexist stereotypes associated with her race and gender, as discussed in the previous section, and the Eurocentric bias of her reception that emphasises her transatlantic connections to Europe and Africa (that is the vertical connection between former colony and colonial centre and between the African diaspora and its origin) as well as her bold East-West connections amidst the Cold War. While all these are without a doubt significant connections in the way Eslanda positions herself as a global activist, she also established a rather transversal link between anticolonial struggles in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and India, decentring both the European colonial capitals and Harlem, New York in the global antiracist struggle, as is apparent in Ransby, Umoren, and Joseph-Gabriel's chronicles of her life.

The transversal synergy between the many sites of former or present colonial oppression that emerges with such force in Essie's writing resonates with Glissant's conception of the Whole-World as a constant in-relation being that refuses to be limited to just one place or to be determined by one metropolitan centre (see 2020, 109–110). Eslanda Robeson's report on attending the first United Nations conference in San Francisco in 1945, titled "Unofficial America Goes to the Conference," is a clear example of "the rhizome of all places that make up the totality, and not a uniformity of place in which we would evaporate" (Glissant 2020, 109). Significantly, she opens up this piece by establishing the global urban corners of her Whole-World experience and desire. As you can see below, European, African, Asian, Latin, and U.S. American cities are named side-by-side and, thus, are placed in horizontal relation to one another, as archipelagic sites of transversal cultural exchange:

> I have been fortunate in that I have seen many of the most beautiful and interesting cities in the world, and I had thought I had used up most of my enthusiasm for physical places.
>
> Budapest and Prague, Moscow and Madrid, Stockholm and Paris, New Orleans and London, Cairo, Marseilles and New York are for me almost together at the top of a long list of wonderful cities, which list includes (again, for me) the more orthodox Vienna, Washington D.C., Helsingfors, Berlin, Boston, Capetown, Mexico City, Edinburgh, Leningrad, Johannesburg, Odessa, Guatemala City and Alexandria.
>
> Of course I still have a long list to check off; I haven't yet seen such fabulous cities as Rio de Janeiro, Shanghai, Calcutta, Yokahama, Buenos Aires, Tashkent, Bombay. To see these is something to live for. (Robeson 1945b, 1)

In this article it is noteworthy that movement, i.e. actually going to and experiencing global locations (together with the wish to continue to travel as a way to connect to even more places), foregrounds Essie's archipelagic sense of belonging to the world. Her storyline concludes its arc as she finishes the report by shifting American citizenship away from its territorial attachment to one fixed identitary location (that is from Being in a nationalistic sense), into being connected to issues of social justice on a global scale, as world citizens,

> We Americans are not just American citizens any longer,– we are also World Citizens, whether we like it or not. [. . .]

> In our former naive isolationism, we smugly thought that what went on in Ethiopia, Manchuria, Spain, Europe,– did not concern us. It was interesting, worrying, and perhaps even deplorable, but America was comfortably removed from these troublous parts of the world by the deep Atlantic and the wide Pacific Oceans. Why go to look for trouble? (Robeson 1945b, 11–12)

For this type of manifold cross-cultural global connectivity to work, transnational cultural mediators such as Eslanda Robeson are bound to cross the borders of different disciplinary fields while performing several overlapping roles and engaging in multiple activities, from public speaking to publishing to organising, as noted by Roig-Sanz and Subirana (2020, 3) with regards to cultural mediators in the Ibero-American context.

Eslanda Robeson most notably transgresses boundaries by practising anthropology in an unorthodox way that blends research with activism and rejects the white supremacist notions of a primitive Africa in opposition to a civilised West (see Ransby 2013, 154–155). Again, speaking with Glissant, Essie had a rhizomatic understanding of mutual learning, of "raising up the network, the rhizome of open identities, who talk and listen to one another" (Glissant 2020, 154), in all spheres of life, from politics to science to education, which in turn informs the transversality of her global activism against anti-Blackness. This is evident in the following rendering of a conversation she had with several Chiefs in Mbarara, Uganda, about the coloniality implied in anthropology as a Western discipline:

> I asked [. . .] what they thought of visiting anthropologists, and how they liked being "investigated." They smiled and said they were vastly amused, and would often take the searching and impertinent questions as a game, giving the most teasing, joking, and fantastic answers they could think of, so that the interpreter would have a most difficult time to translate the answers into something that would sound "serious and respectful." (Shades of scientific anthropological data!). (Robeson 1945a, 136)

Listening to peoples across cultural and national borders against the grain of racist, colonial assumptions requires actual linguistic competences. Without being a

polyglot, Essie was able to trespass language barriers and facilitate transnational cultural mediations through the practice of translingualism. Coined by Dorothy Odertey-Wellington (2018) in her introduction to *Trans-afrohispanismos*, translingualism implies "the notion of 'passing through' languages and cultures as much in a horizontal as in a vertical motion – and not so much the idea of arriving at them – resulting in culturally complex and ambiguous identities" (Odertey-Wellington 2018, 5; my translation). As a translatory movement, translingualism always means trespassing linguistic borders and disrupting fixed notions of national identity and cultural belonging to forge the type of alliance built by race and feminist internationalists alike, and especially the type of transversal, rhizomatic global connections established by Eslanda Robeson. Her unpublished writings about the Spanish Civil War, based on her travels to the front lines in 1938, display the use of translingualism, sometimes in the form of passing translations, like the one she gives in her travel diary "Journey to Spain," where she keeps the Spanish term "Cortes," which may be easily misunderstood as a Court of Law or Royal Court (and this is an excellent example of false friends), but immediately clarifies its meaning by offering the appropriate translation into English. In so doing, she not only displays deep cultural knowledge, but also shows that translatory movements themselves are an integral part of cross-cultural connections in which the local components are not erased, but remain present in the passage of knowledge:

> Monday, January 31 – Interviews and more interviews. The delegates for the Cortes are all arriving today and tomorrow. The opening of the Cortes, the Parliament, is tomorrow, February 1st. The coast is being heavily patrolled by planes for protection. (Robeson 1938)

In the following passage, in order to critique racism in the United States, she goes back and forth between Spanish and U.S. American racial standards in a translingual manner:

> K. tells of an incident when the battalion was visited by an old Colonel, southern, of the U.S. Army. He said to Law – "Er, I see you are in a Captain's uniform?" Law replied with dignity, "Yes, I am, because I <u>am</u> a Captain. In America, in <u>your</u> army, I could only rise as high as corporal, but here people ~~feel~~ are different~~ly~~ ~~about~~ race and I can rise according to my worth, not according to my color!" Whereupon the Colonel hemmed and hawed and finally came out with "I'm sure they are!" (Robeson 1938; underlined and crossed-out words in the original)

There, translingualism is at work in an extended sense, as Essie is using the Spanish Republican experience to contextualize and account for racism in the United States, while suggesting that the Spanish Republic fully embraces post-

racial equality.[7] This seemingly casual anecdote is central to Eslanda's focus on racial issues on a global scale. Again, this translingual strategy serves to situate U.S. racial policies within the whole-world of humanity (what she will call the human family, as we will see below). For Eslanda Robeson translingualism is a translatory process to bring about cross-cultural connections and, by doing so, to connect struggles for racial and social justice in different national and linguistic contexts (in the example I discuss here, Spain and the United States).

Above all, translingualism is a practice that articulates her own transgressions of linguistic, political, and cultural boundaries as an internationalist whose activism has taken her around the world. Here again I see a connection with Glissant's reflections on multilingualism as our "common condition," where multilingualism is not to be understood in a quantitative sense of how many languages one speaks, but rather as "one of the modes of the imagination" (Glissant 2020, 15). In other words, her translingual writing practice is rooted in a multilingual imagination of a world in-relation.[8]

As a transnational cultural mediator, Essie Robeson brought many spheres and places in touch with one another. Her ability to move between different positions and locations is central to her activism, because, as Imaobong Umoren points out, "[her] sojourns enabled [her] to create and participate in the transnational black public sphere and civil society, a figurative and physical global community beyond the imperial or nation state that engendered the growth of international organisations, associations, institutions, charities, and print culture" (Umoren 2018, 2). I would like to go further and propose that moving did not just enable Eslanda Robeson's activism – movement also shaped her relational understanding of race, gender, and class. From segregation in the United States to Apartheid in Africa to colonial rule everywhere, she contended that these were interconnected forms of racism affecting us all. Hence the need, especially for women, to fight collectively on a global scale. We all "belong to the human family," as she phrases it:

> **people are people, we belong to the human family, we are no different regardless of colour, race, background, religious beliefs, political ideas, we are members of**

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7 Eslanda held the conviction that the Soviet Union had attained postracial equality and, so, (even after Stalin purges), she believed that the Soviet Union had abolished "state-sanctioned racism" (Umoren 2018, 131). As Umoren further explains, "The country was seen as an ally in struggles against racism due to its claim to practice nondiscrimination towards women and its religious and ethnic minorities" (130). The Spanish Republic occupied a similar role model in Eslanda's eyes.

8 As previously mentioned, Essie did speak Russian, German and French, and, as Ransby asserts, "she conversed in multiple languages" (2013, 1). But, most importantly, because of her passing through other languages, Essie's use of English was not monolingual. Therefore it is pertinent to link her global activism as an internationalist with a multilingual imagination in Glissant's terms.

> **the human family and until we behave as members of the human family we just won't have a proper human family or a proper universal home for all of us.** (Robeson 1960, 376; bold in the original)

It is assertions like this that demonstrate Eslanda Robeson's non-racialism as an ultimate goal for the future.[9] As Paul Gilroy points out, the word "human" was "a staple component of the Cold War liberalism of the mid twentieth century. [. . .] Then, the alienated humanity that was associated with racial divisions could be replaced by a non-racial alternative that suffers, loves, acts and exercises its will, in reshaping the broken world we have inherited" (Gilroy 2005, 243). While Gilroy is thinking how Rastafari poetics "blasted [the word 'human'] out of its UNESCO context and started to make it serve futuristic purposes" (243), most certainly "the idea of the human" had the same appeal to Eslanda Robeson because of her relational approach to antiracism and anti-imperialism.

Like the black nationalist women studied by Kaisha Blain and like Claudia Jones, within the Black radical intellectual tradition discussed by Carole Boyce Davies (2009),[10] Essie believed that "the global colour line [that she sought so hard to dismantle] described both European colonialism in Africa and Asia and U. S. expansionism in places like Haiti and the Dominican Republic [. . .]" (Blain 2015, 145).

Eslanda Robeson was able to connect the dots between different forms of oppression affecting her and the lives of many others at a personal and a collective level, because she developed a relational approach to the social and the political, grounded in her own lived experience of moving among peoples and between places in her extensive travels. This can be seen clearly in *Journey to Africa*, a book based on what she learned about the anticolonial and antiapartheid struggles by

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9 It should be noted that Eslanda Robeson's appeal to our shared humanity is not colour blind, because it is a call for solidarity with the oppressed of the world that implies respecting different positionalities. Most importantly, it is part of her leftist Black internationalist agenda. As such, her non-racialism is linked to political Blackness in the terms proposed by Francio Guadeloupe (2022): "Only when we all become Black, in other words fully integrate into our psyches and institutional memory the reality that most have been racially dehumanised in the process of the Western imperial project, will the symbolic power of racism be no more. Then begins in earnest the work of dismantling racist institutional practices and racial structures whereby we need not refer to each other employing race-based identities. In the meantime, those labelled or implicitly designated Black, for instance blacks and browns, can do the work, as Stuart Hall reminds us to do, by becoming politically Black. What this entails is donning the signifier "Black" as a political identity that is nonracist, in order to combat racism and the economic structures that undergird it" (146–147).
10 It is not a coincidence that Eslanda Robeson wrote the introduction to *Ben Davis, Fighter For Freedom* (1954), a pamphlet written by Claudia Jones to demand his release from prison. Essie and Claudia were not just close friends, but also political allies as Black internationalists who advocated against race, gender and class oppression on a global scale.

actually going to South Africa, Basutoland, Kenya, Congo, and Uganda with her son Pauli in 1936 and engaging in dialogue with multiple African political leaders, educators, community organisers, and activists.

In this travelogue, she reflects on the knowledge she gained about the indignity of colonial rule and the cruelty of apartheid, not just from her own perspective, but also taking into account how Africans themselves viewed the situation. The insights she shares, which in her own words are nothing but "a protest against [the] inadequate reporting on Africa" (Robeson 1959, 3), result from the displacement in her thinking that occured as she moved from one space to many others, because she allowed for the movement in time and space to disrupt the anchor of her thought to just one fixed location of origin or identity. Her *Journey to Africa* is as much a journey of her body to and through different geopolitical places as it is a journey of her mind discovering different locations of thought. As such, it is an open invitation to her readers to do what she dared to do: embark on a journey to Africa, to learn from and with the African peoples.

This significant correlation between Eslanda's actual movement in time and space as in travel and her willingness to displace her own perspective lays the foundation for my use of movement as an analytical category to investigate Eslanda Robeson's heightened connectivity. As an archipelagic cultural mediator, she played a key role in the international network of activists against racism, sexism, and imperialism at a local and a global scale between the 1920s and the 1960s. She fought for race, gender, and class equality across borders, and deserves a place within Black left intellectual history. Moreover, movement not only triggers connectivity and supports the circulation of ideas – it is also at the core of the kind of transnational political thought Eslanda Robeson developed.

Only when we correlate movement with the development of a supranationalist, Black internationalist thought can we come to fully understand what Carole Boyce Davies meant when she claimed that "it is the convergence of multiple places and cultures [t]hat re-negotiates the terms of Black women's experience that in turn negotiates and re-negotiates their identities [. . .] between races, cultures, languages, and nations" (quot. in Umoren 2018, 6). Indeed, Carole Boyce Davies' (1994) definition of "migratory subjectivity" aptly describes, as Umoren (2018) acknowledges, Eslanda Robeson's relational identity on the move.

The following diagram shows how Essie built her migratory subjectivity by moving between specific locations,[11] as well as through the languages and cultures related to them that, thus, inform her translingual experience (Fig.1).

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11 For a map of most of the locations visited by Eslanda Robeson, see Ransby 2013, 82–83.
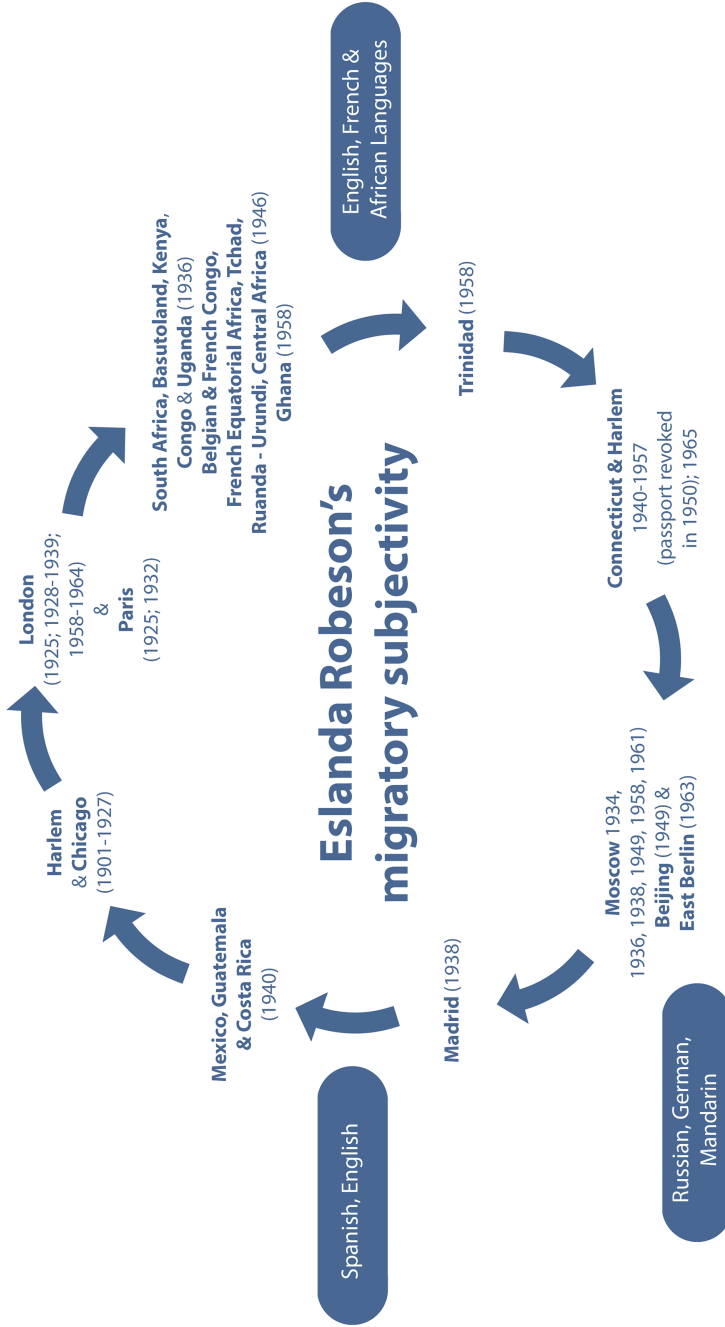
Fig. 1: This conceptual map displays the most significant locations upon which Eslanda Robeson builds her migratory subjectivity on the move.

The circularity of the above figure aims to highlight the flow of movement between places as connected to the flow of ideas. At the same time, it illustrates the transversality and horizontality of her cultural mediations. In Essie's experience as a Black internationalist, metropolitan sites such as London, Paris, and Madrid facilitated encounters with fellow migrants from India, Africa, and the Caribbean. They also served as stepping stones to the locations where the anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle was at its peak, such as South Africa, Ghana, and Trinidad. Accordingly, Annette Joseph-Gabriel concludes that Eslanda Robeson's work:

> demands a shift from the emphasis on European capitals as privileged sites to which colonised populations gravitated in building networks of anticolonial resistance. Ultimately, [her] expansive geography allows us to read decolonial citizenship as both acts of resistance and notions of belonging that troubled the metropole/colony binary by mapping a new Global South identity. (Joseph-Gabriel 2020, 173)

Moving through different locations allowed Eslanda to establish meaningful cross-cultural connections with regards to racism, sexism, and political oppression in different national and regional contexts. Conversely, she framed these issues in a manner pertinent both at a local and at global scale through translingual procedures that were central to her cultural mediations, as is apparent in this chart (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Eslanda Robeson's archipelagic cultural mediations between different global locations.

Using Glissant's poetic-philosophical approach once more, I call Eslanda Robeson's cultural mediations not just relational, but also archipelagic, since each location or nation she passes through can be seen as an island she is connecting to through her moving. In that sense, local racial or gender issues were not isolated problems in her eyes, but part of the archipelago, Glissant's metaphor for Black diasporic relationality that is formed through rhizomatic connections:

> As much as ever, masses of Negroes are threatened and oppressed because they are Negroes, Arabs because they are Arabs, Jews because they are Jews, Muslims because they are Muslims, Indians because they are Indians, and so on through the infinite diversities of the world. This litany is indeed never-ending.

> The idea of identity as a single root provides the measure according to which these communities were enslaved by others, and in the name of which a number of them led their liberation struggles. But could we not propose, against the single root that kills everything around it, an extension of the root into a rhizome, which opens up Relation? [. . .]

> Against Being, which asserts itself, let us show being, which attaches itself.

> Let us challenge both the returns of the nationalist repressed and the sterile universal peace of the Powerful.

> In a world where so many communities find themselves mortally denied the right to any identity, it is paradoxical to propose the imagination of an identity-relation, an identity-rhizome. I believe however that this is indeed one of the passions of these oppressed communities, to believe in this moving beyond identity and to carry it along with their sufferings. (Glissant 2020, 11–12)

Eslanda Robeson's mobility was constrained by blatant racism (and subdued sexism). Yet, she moved beyond the constraints, expanding her agency in a rhizomatic manner and developing a transnational antiracist thought.[12] "Moving beyond" also implies living a life not determined by racism (and sexism), nationality, or religion. There is passion in that refusal, a passion informed by connectivity (i.e. an identity-relation on the move).

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12 The following quote from *Journey to Africa* exemplifies how, for Eslanda, anti-Blackness was a fact of life she was determined to fight against, and, at the same time life was bigger than contesting racism: "At the hotel [in Mbnei, Belgian Congo], which was a very sad affair, we sat in the lounge while a great deal of conversation went on between the Belgian hotel owner and our D.C. [District Commissioner]. There was a lot of 'noir, noir' in very rapid French, and we tried to look blank as if we didn't understand the language. (I believe every Negro would understand and recognize the word 'black' in any language. He would certainly recognize the tone of voice which goes with the word!)" (Robeson 1945a, 119).

4 Not Exactly Final Words

This is my first attempt to critically engage with Eslanda Robeson's worldwide antiracist activism and her impact as a transnational cultural mediator. Building on research by Barbara Ransby, Imaobong Umoren, and Annete Joseph-Gabriel that provides valuable insights into the depth and scope of Essie's internationalism, I discussed how her lack of visibility is partially rooted in an intersectional bias that obfuscates the intellectual accomplishments of Black women in particular.

Furthermore, the very transnational character of Essie's agency as a race woman internationalist complicates acknowledging her work, because it surpasses the traditional national parameters that have historically framed literary and cultural production and its reception. Even transatlantic lenses seem at times too narrow to capture the whole breadth of Eslanda Robeson's commitment to fight all forms of colonialism, racial, and gender oppression even beyond the space encompassed by the Black Atlantic. The notions of transversality and translingualism, I suggest, provide a more comprehensive and accurate framework for understanding Eslanda Robeson's global literary engagements. As a procedure, translingualism articulates Eslanda's own passage through places, while transversality illuminates her refusal to reproduce a racist, hierarchical understanding of North-South, (post)colonial relations.

In this respect, Glissant's vocabulary offers a way to capture Eslanda Robeson's transversal, translingual relational approach as a Whole-World connectivity enabling her global agency. What is more, conceptualising her cultural mediations as archipelagic not only illustrates transversality and further disrupts the centre-periphery dichotomy as a critical lens to look at the world, but also links the global cultural landscape that emerges as a result from her transnational agency to the Black diasporic experience in their disseminated, i.e. rhizomatic, sites of cultural production.

Eslanda Robeson's positionality as political Black intellectual and internationalist was shaped by the many different encounters she had during her travels, and by the very experience of moving in time and space. The rhizomatic connectivity of her multiple travels is what informs her growing sense of being a world citizen, a member of the human family, with a moral commitment to contest all forms of racial and gender oppression. Her sense of being, rather than Being, fueled by a multilingual nonracist imagination, triggers her transnational advocacy on the move against global anti-Blackness. Indeed, the type of archipelagic connections between Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, Europe, and the Americas that emerge from Eslanda Robeson's migratory subjectivity as a political Black woman are an alternative to Western universalist notions of culture and, in this sense, of relevance for a new approach to global literary and cultural studies.

These last words are by no means final words, as much more is left to investigate about how Eslanda Robeson contributed to a global circulation of antiracist, feminist ideas through her involvement in multiple liberation and anticolonial movements throughout the world. In this chapter, I have made an effort to include as many extended quotes as possible of her unpublished speeches and articles, as well as some quotes from her less known print publications, to contribute to her visibility as a Black left intellectual and internationalist by recirculating her ideas in her own words. Materiality matters, especially in the context of a historical erasure of Black women as public intellectuals and activists in both global and national histories.

Acknowledging Eslanda Robeson's impact within the Black Atlantic and beyond, and raising her profile within Black intellectual history, changes how we think about cultural agency on a global scale, not just in the United States where she was born. Then, as a Black public intellectual and archipelagic cultural mediator, she is much more than a U.S. American author. Her work questions the notion of Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa as discrete cultural regions, like all the cultural production by Black diasporic artists, musicians, and writers. I am particularly interested in how Eslanda Robeson weaves Spain, Mexico, Guatemala, and Costa Rica into a translingual, transversal relation with the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, which will be the focus of my next foray into Essie's work. The traces of Essie's sumptuous wanderings and meanderings give us a glimpse into the rich and complex anticolonial movements of the twentieth century from the vantage point of a political Black female intellectual and activist, whose voice relates the cultural, literary, and political spheres as she argues against global anti-Blackness.

Eslanda Robeson's emphasis on the relationality that connects us all and how we have a responsibility to contest racism, sexism, and colonialism at a global scale is relevant to this day in a world in which we still need to say Black Lives Matter. It is important to publish and reprint most of her texts, so that she can be widely read. Only then will she stop being a "sister outside" (Boyce Davies 2009, 218) and will be credited for her contributions to the history of global antiracist thought. As much as we can learn from her about past struggles for racial and gender justice, we can learn from her visions for a non-racialist future. Her invitation to be part of the Whole-World is still open.

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