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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 rethinking 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.

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 Algeehewitt, 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 Literatúry 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 Dirx (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 prizes. 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 perspective² 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 Fóllica 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).

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; Fóllica 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), bibliomigracy (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 metropolises 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 decentering 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 Beirut, 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 non-human 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 Fóllica 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 multi-dimensional, 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 (Fóllica 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 extratranslation, 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 Afro-diasporic 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 Fóllica (IN3-Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) studies how translation destabilised the principles of Latin American periodicals by introducing unexpected connections with foreign literatures. Fóllica 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, Fóllica 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, Fóllica 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," Fóllica'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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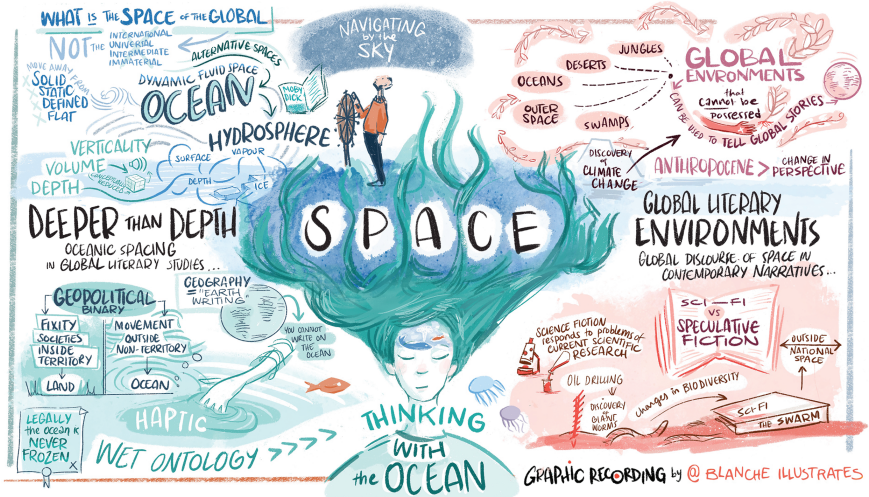
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