

TEXTXET:
CENTERS AND PERIPHERIES

**IN ROMANCE LANGUAGE
LITERATURES IN THE**

AMERICAS AND AFRICA

Edited by

Petr Kylvoušek

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Centers and Peripheries in Romance Language Literatures in the Americas
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Centers and Peripheries in Romance Language Literatures in the Americas and Africa

Edited by

Petr Kylvoušek



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Introduction

Petr Kyloušek

Every scholarly discourse needs two necessary delimitations: firstly the field of research, in our case the Romance literatures of the Americas and Africa, and secondly the methodology that will allow the matter to be adequately and consistently examined.

To the first point. Why Romance literatures? The first possible reason is an indirect comparison with literatures written in English. As with the Romance literatures, the shared historical feature is the original colonial expansion and export of European language and culture to territories that later at different times and in different contexts broke away from the original metropolis, became independent politically, culturally, and / or economically, and created their own culture and literature, in many cases influencing the cultures of other countries, including the former colonial metropolis. In the case of English-language literatures, as summarized, for example, in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (Ashroft, Gareth, Tiffin, 1989), the current diversity and global spread are the results of the cultural diversifications of one European language.

In the case of the Romance literatures, the situation is more diverse due to the cultural background. Each of the Romance literatures had its own moment of glory, time of dominance and relative decline within the European space, and each its own course of cultural influences. This is also related to different periods and formations of colonization processes and cultural transmissions. Spain, Portugal, France and Italy created their colonial empires at different times of varying length, with different economic, political, and military capacities, on a different scale and with various types of impact among culturally differentiated peripheral areas. Similarly, the disintegration of the colonial power of each empire took place in varying ways, including temporal and geographic factors. Keeping all of this in mind, certain common and shared features may be identified and explored in the frame of center-periphery processes.

Synthetic and intensive work on French-language literatures has been carried out by Jean-Marc Moura (*Littérature Francophone et théorie postcoloniale*, 1999), in a more recent perspective by Yves Clavaron (*Francophonie, postcolonialisme et mondialisation*, 2018) and, in a comparative approach, by Jean-Marc Moura, Silvia Contarini and Françoise Aubès (*Interprétations postcoloniales et mondialisation: Littératures de langues allemande, anglaise, espagnole, fran-*

çaise, italienne et portugaise, 2014). The Nanterre research group around Jean-Marc Moura has also published a critical anthology, *Écrire la différence culturelle du colonial au mondial: Une anthologie littéraire transculturelle* (2022).

For Hispanophone literatures, important synthetic works from our perspective have come from Jorge Locane (*De la literatura latinoamericana a la literatura (latinoamericana) mundial*, 2019), Pedro Sánchez (*Literaturas en cruce. Estudios sobre contactos literarios entre España y América Latina*, 2018), and Walter D. Mignolo (*Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, 2000); for Lusophone literatures José Carlos Seabra Pereira (*As literaturas em língua portuguesa. Das origens aos nossos dias*, 2019), Ana Mafalda Leite (*Literaturas Africanas e Formulações Pós-Coloniais*, 2003) and Silviano Santiago (*Uma literatura nos trópicos: ensaios sobre dependência cultural*, 2000) have been influential.

Interliterary comparisons and insights can be found not only in all the above publications, but also in many other studies dealing with postcolonial literatures. Nevertheless, more work remains to be done. We seek to enrich and expand the research field by applying a unified conception and methodology of the relationship between centers and peripheries, not (merely) from the perspective of the centers, but precisely from the perspective of the emergent literatures, i.e. from the perspective of the processes and dynamics of deperipheralization. We aim to show how and under what conditions cultural areas initially attached to their centers emancipated themselves along with the causes of the differences and similarities that developed between and among them. Decolonization processes have regularities that can be traced, compared and generalized, following which a richer understanding can be achieved as to how and why individual writers, groups, and newly emerging literatures have influenced world literature and thus the former metropolises.

What will be our methodological assumptions? While much work has already been done in this area, it is necessary to evaluate the main previous methodological pillars in the light of more recent critical approaches, and on this basis to build our own methodology for analyzing center-periphery relations and deperipheralization processes.

In his explanations of the emergence of the world economic system, the notions of center (core), periphery and semiperiphery were applied by sociologist and economist Immanuel Wallerstein in his *Modern World-System. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (1974; here Wallerstein, 2011). The terminological transfer to the field of culture and, more narrowly, literature proved appealing and has been taken up and implied, albeit in different ways, by authors such as Pascale Casanova

in *The World Republic of Letters* (Casanova, 2004; *La République mondiale des Lettres*, 1999), and Franco Moretti in his programmatic essay *Conjectures on World Literature* (Moretti, 2000).

The second center-periphery model approach we draw from is the linguistic theory elaborated by the Prague linguistic circle (Vachek, 1966 a, b; Daneš, 1966). Although the influences and inspirations among the aforementioned academics vary in several ways, there are nevertheless important points of convergence that unite the work of Wallerstein, Casanova, Moretti and the Prague structuralists, namely the synthetic insight into phenomena as a structured dynamic system in which the periphery can be a source of innovation and transformation of the center.

The end of the 20th century brought another robust and methodologically inspiring work, Pierre Bourdieu's *The Rules of Art* (Bourdieu 1995; *Les Règles de l'Art*, 1992), a text which links sociology, economics, culture and literature to map the structural processes of the literary field in terms of axiology. Bourdieu's notions of value, symbolic capital, dynamic temporality and center-periphery were taken up not only by Casanova but also by the sociological school around Gisèle Sapiro (2009).

The aforementioned concepts have been heavily discussed, criticized and questioned in the last two decades. Critical voices can be assigned to two argumentation lines, with the first entailing a rejection of Eurocentrism, and the second involving the fundamental transformations of culture and literature in the era of globalization. The two lines of argument are coupled, for example, by Arjun Appadurai in *Modernity at Large: The Cultural Dimension of Globalization* (2000), the third section of which, Postnational Location, points to a need to change national conceptions of literature as well as a castigation of what Appadurai calls "Eurochronology" (Appadurai, 2000: 30).

Another critique that has emerged in the last decade inspired by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's interpretation of the *worlding* (Spivak, 1985) takes a somewhat different approach. New concepts (Moraru, 2017) have been created in a rejection of notions of hegemonic superiority and inferiority (*indebtedness*), enabling a view of literary agency as open space, multiplicity, exchange and interliterariness. Similarly, Feng Cheah (2016), following David Damrosch (2003), sees literature as a circulation of texts reflecting a globalizing economic order, but also having the potential to change this order, as the world is not geospatially limited, but evolves through an open *temporality of becoming*. I agree with Marko Juvan that these critical approaches have a strong ethical potential drawing on Heideggerian phenomenology (Juvan, 2019), but I also agree with Juvan's critique, namely that the values of texts are related to evaluative instances: conservative modes and mechanisms, for example, are part

of hierarchical and inequality-producing systems that no analysis can simply ignore. Nor does open processuality abolish centralities and peripheries.

In terms of a global view—paradoxically in consonance with Moraru and Cheach–Ottmar Ette's extensive monograph *TransArea. Eine literarische Globalisierungsgeschichte* (2012; eng. *TransArea. A Literary History of Globalization*, 2016; fr. *TransArea. Une histoire littéraire de la mondialisation*, 2019) is perhaps more feasible. *Transarea* features carefully selected examples from individual literary works, through which Ette illustrates the constitutive dialectical tension between the local and the global through four stages of world globalization from the beginning of the modern period to the present day. The literary works and authors presented by Ette depart from national contexts, creating transnational insular configurations. In this, Ette concurs with Édouard Glissant (1981, 1997) and Kathleen Gyssels (2000), who have both been inspiring in our reflections on Caribbean literatures. For Ette, the Caribbean area is the privileged site of a non-territorialized conception of literature. On the other hand, while Ette's conception does produce a descriptive set of analogous phenomena, it seems to lack a systemic analysis through which causality might be more easily and accurately delineated.

What Ette presents in a kind of almost synchronic synthesizing view, Alexander Beecroft's *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (2015) conceives diachronically in terms of the historical development of the relationship between civilizations ("ecozones") and "literary biomes." We find this work particularly inspiring for its emphasis on the importance of local conditions in the emergence of new literatures at the margins of great ones. It is precisely these new literatures and literary fields that we wish to delineate and examine in our studies of processes of deperipheralization.

The question of causality is then emphasized in a second critical line concerning globalization and world market processes occurring since the 1980s. The main arguments here are connected to the decline of national literatures and cultures, or rather their former importance. In this context, Bourdieu's distinction between market-oriented production and the elite production of the autonomous part of the cultural (literary) field becomes blurred, even indistinguishable, especially in the context of postmodern individualization and the value-dominance of market mechanisms (Scheps, Dziewor, Thiemann, 1999). The implication is that Bourdieu's conception of the autonomous field cannot always be applied to the new conditions (Crane, 2009). Reasonable arguments against the invalidation of Bourdieu are presented in the collective monograph *Art and the Challenge of Markets* (Alexander, Hägg, Häyrynen, & Sevänen, 2018), a text which focuses on globalization trends in culture, especially in visual arts, cinema and music. Individual chapters focus on cultural policy in the

United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Sweden, and Slovenia. One seemingly counter-intuitive view taken here is that globalization is in fact not a force which merely homogenizes national cultural spaces: each country responds to neoliberal economic trends in a specific way anchored in domestic cultural and political settings, which are related to, among other factors, regional identity self-image.

Art and the Challenge of Markets includes Larissa Buchholtz's analysis *Beyond Reproduction: Asymmetrical Interdependencies and the Transformation of Centers and Peripheries in the Globalizing Visual Arts* (Buchholz, 2018a: 227–304), the main ideas of which figure in her article *Rethinking the center-periphery model: Dimensions and temporalities of macro-structure in a global field of cultural production* (Buchholz, 2018b) published in *Poetics*. By analyzing the market in terms of artifacts in the visual arts in the decade 1998–2007, Buchholz refutes Bourdieu's invalidation of the distinction between market-oriented artistic production and high art. While globalization has greatly expanded market opportunities for many artists from formerly peripheral areas and facilitated their entry into the global market, consecratory institutions—exhibitions, magazines, academia, etc.—have remained embedded in a so-called “US-European duopoly.” While a moderate (possibly superficial) trend of changes may be evident, the dual structuring of the field between the commercial and elite artistic poles persists, as does the asymmetrical relationship between the dominant consecration centers and the peripheries.

Given that globalization has in practice not erased axiological hierarchization within artistic genres, within which languages are not preserved in natural isolation, it then becomes all the more necessary to reckon with the relativization and specification of globalization processes in the field of literature and to take into account individual linguistic territories, including complex center-periphery and periphery-periphery relations. A sample of such an approach based on these precepts is illustrated by the study *Facing Asymmetry: Nordic Intellectuals and Center-Periphery Dynamics in European Cultural Space* (Nygård and Strang, 2016) published in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, in which the authors' arguments are directed against Pascale Casanova's unitary, monocentric conception. From the perspective of Finland and the Nordic countries, that is, from the European periphery, Nygård and Strang point to the strategies by which writers and intellectuals participate in forming European modernity. Asymmetry and inequality do not imply direct subordination, as a periphery has the ability to orient itself and choose between several centers, to act in several fields simultaneously and to operate with various degrees of reciprocity between centers and peripheries. Modernity has no one single—central—source: its forms are shaped elsewhere (*modernity is elsewhere*), i.e. a

periphery can be the center of another periphery, whereas a center can manifest peripheral features (*provincialism of the core*). Even the question of the retarded development or “backwardness” of a periphery is relative, as the center and periphery may view the very notions of temporality and spatiality in widely divergent, often even contradictory ways. This critique of a unitary centralist model of time and space is then developed in *Decentering European Intellectual Space* by the same authors (Jalava, Nygård, Strang (eds.), 2018) in a broader intellectual context and with an emphasis on inter-European and international exchange.

In the literary sphere and in a largely non-European context, the issue of center-periphery relations is addressed in *Centres et périphéries de la littérature mondiale. Une pensée connectée de la diversité* (Dehoux (ed.), 2018), a collective monograph introduced in more detail in Chapter 1 below. Perhaps the most pertinent point for our conception is the absolute necessity to relate centrality and peripherality to specific literary spaces, as exemplified in the cases of Central Europe (Marko Juvan, 2018: 91–118), India (Dehoux, 2018: 53–88), and Arabic spaces (Letellier, 2018: 149–166).

Do such works signal a negation of the concept of center and periphery in Pascale Casanova’s model? As the Nordic theorists and authors mentioned above in Amaury Dehoux’s monograph, let us look critically at the theoretical pillars underpinning Pascale Casanova’s theory and, by evaluating and supplementing them, try to further define our methodological principles.

Despite the quasi-ironic critique of Christopher Prendergast (2001, 2004), one mainly based on individualized counter-examples such as a misunderstanding of “small literatures,” Franz Kafka and Irish authors, Pascale Casanova cannot be denied one advantage: the ability to model how modern national literatures (Italian, French, German) have been constituted and *de facto* emancipated through dialectical disputes with other dominating and competing literatures. Casanova has also summarized fundamental principles concerning how centrality functions and how centrality establishes mechanisms of consecration and authorization, both internally as well as through the integration of peripheral elements—language, aesthetics, authors. Nevertheless, the weak point emerges from the strong one: the unitary, monocentric view of world literature as a amalgamated system is not only Paris-centric, but can only exist within the horizon of French literature and the French reception and integration of non-French authors. Pascal Casanova barely perceives other literatures as systems distinct from the structuring of the French literary field. Indeed, unless a unidirectional view only from the center outwards is the only trajectory accepted, Casanova’s simple extension of Bourdieu’s conception of the literary field to an international scale cannot be functional interliterarily,

i.e. any consideration of literatures (centers and peripheries) outside of Paris as autonomous systems which interact to form “world literature” is beyond the paradigm represented in Casanova. While one clear strength of Pascale Casanova’s conception is the multifaceted application of Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital and its accumulation, as with Bourdieu (see below), what is missing is a connection to a theory of value and a consideration of the connection between the literary and the non-literary, or better said, how literature and the aesthetic function integrate non-literary values. Let us add one more critical aspect: the unidirectional and mechanically deterministic straightforwardness of the center-periphery dynamics, dominant and dominated. This variation of the Hegelian / Nietzschean master-slave dialectic, filtered through an Marxist interpretation, lacks precisely the twists and turns in these relationships.

Inspired by the Hegelian heritage, again in a straightforward and unidirectional way from the dominating center to the dominated peripheral space, Pascale Casanova’s conception of literary dynamics is close to that of Franco Moretti (2000, 2004), whose construction of the inequality of literary spaces (systems) is, however, projected into genre theory (Moretti, 1997, 1998), above all, into the tension arising between dominant European patterns (*western patterns*) and local forms (*local characters, local plots*). In the conclusion of his seminal essay *Conjectures on World Literature*, Moretti also refers to the polysemic theory of Itamar Even-Zohar (Moretti, 2005: 159), to which we also subscribe. The principle of the systematicity as well as the dynamism of a given literary territory or space thus emerges as a weighty consideration.

Another important starting point for our methodology is represented by the critical evaluations made in *The Rules of Art* by Pierre Bourdieu, whose basic concepts such as literary field as well as the relationships and fluidity among systems of political, economic, social and symbolic capital within which literature and art are embedded have proven quite useful. The sociological approach to literature, the role of institutions and the incorporation of culture and literature into the economic, political and ideological functioning of society are consistently taken into account in the chapters of this book. In the context of literature as feature of the identity self-image of modern states, we also refer to other sociologists and historians, namely Benedict Anderson (1991), Ernest Gellner (1983) and Gérard Bouchard (2001). Nevertheless, the methodological transfer of sociological approaches must be supplemented, and Bourdieu’s literary field theory should be refined through at least three points: (1) the identification of the essential defining features of the literary field in terms of their identification and operability in examining the relationship between center and periphery; (2) the necessity of specifying the axiological structuring of the literary field both in the case of literatures initially constituted as centralities

as well as concerning literatures that have emerged on the peripheries of particular centralities; these axiologies have been shaped differently in principle, bringing implications for aesthetics and poetics; (3) the necessity of clarifying the question of value and recognizing the functional boundary between literature and non-literature, autonomy and heteronomy.

- (1) While with Wallerstein as well as in the linguistic theories of the Prague Linguistic Circle, center and periphery are definitionally specified, in literature and culture they have generally been intuitively understood as givens. Therefore, we find it necessary to propose in the introduction to the section on deperipheralization (Chapter 1) a minimalist definition of the identifying features of center and periphery—ontological, axiological and mixed features—by which center and periphery can be identified from a literary point of view. In attempting this sort of delineation, we remain fully aware of the situational relativity resulting from relationality, relationship intensity, distance, etc. Accordingly, we lean towards the dynamic gravitational model of Jean-Pierre Grimmeau (1994) and Jean-Marie Klinkenberg (2008) in which the center creates its periphery or peripheries, and the periphery in turn determines the center or centers to which it relates, often in different ways in different domains (literature, music, philosophy, politics, etc.) These relations are aptly illustrated in the aforementioned works of Nygård, Strang and Jalava (Nygård, Strang, 2016; Jalava, Nygård, Strang (eds.), 2018).
- (2) In *The Rules of Art*, Pierre Bourdieu analyses the processes in the literary and artistic field during the constitution of French modernity and the avant-gardes, i.e. under conditions of an axiologically saturated, even oversaturated field. Such axiological saturation cannot be reckoned with in the case of literatures emerging on the peripheries, therefore it is necessary to model a different functional configuration of axiology and creation of a different aesthetic memory, a different tradition, with different attitudes towards heteronomy and autonomy, a situation illustrated using the case of the deperipheralization of Quebec literature (see below Chapter 1, Part 1, Chapter 3). We consider this extension to Bourdieu's theory of the literary field a potentially significant contribution made by our book in terms of the axiological structuring of peripheral fields in general.
- (3) Implicit in sociological approaches, including that of Pascale Casanova, is the assumption that literary value can function as other forms of value. It has been the traditional view of literary criticism, however, that it is necessary to distinguish between literary value and other value systems—history, politics, ideology, etc., if only because literature is often the main effective vehicle of these systems. Like all human activity, literature is

value-heteronomous, and appraising proportions of autonomy and heteronomy is a matter of degree and polarity. Yet to be effective as “literary” and to be considered as such, a text must function within a specific literary discourse in which the basic categorizing function is (usually) aesthetic. Therefore, we consider it necessary to supplement methodological considerations with the concept of value, norm and aesthetic function as elaborated by the Prague structuralists, especially Jan Mukařovský (2000, 2018) and Milan Jankovič (2005). In doing so, we also seek to draw aesthetics and poetics into considerations of the aesthetic innovations which former peripheries provide for world literature.

In the chapter *Global Translation: The Invention of Comparative Literature, Istanbul, 1933* (Apter, 2004: 76–109) in the collective monograph *Debating World Literature* (Prendergast (ed.) 2004), Emily Apter points to the constituted scholarly approaches of “national” theories that distinguish Anglo-Saxon *doxa* from the French, German, and Slavic, thus hindering the development of one methodologically consistent approach to world literature (Apter, 2004: 77). Nevertheless, the differences inherent among these “national” critical systems can also be taken positively as scholarly assets that enable research complementarity. It is no coincidence that in this book we refer often to the work of Northern European and other theorists who argue against centralizing models of intellectual and cultural areas. By the same token, we draw on concepts formulated in Central and Eastern Europe which have been only partially recognized by other methodologies insofar as they have been translated into French and English. One contemporary mediator within this intellectual space is the Slovenian Marko Juvan (2018: 91–118; 2019). Like Franco Moretti (2004: 150), Juvan refers to Itamar Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory, which is in turn linked to the reflections of Yuri Lotman. The polysystem points to the inhomogeneity of literary fields, within which reciprocated influences are not perceived in isolation, but form subsystems. Juvan (2018) also refers to Dionýz Ďurišin (1992) and his theory of *interliterary communities* in the Central European space, a concept which maps well onto our paradigm of inter-peripheral relations as not transiting through centers, i.e. the marked ability of peripheries to shape their literary space and their literary field autonomously, e.g. among themselves.

The above references indicate the methodological approaches and research objectives of our work. Our first step will be to expose and discuss the defining features of the center and periphery in terms of literature, and from this starting point to analyze dynamic relations between centers and peripheries in the Romance literatures of the Americas and Africa. In contrast to the unidirec-

tional conceptions of Pascale Casanova and Moretti, we do not consider the vectoriality of influence as a permanent given; instead, we emphasize processual variability, especially in terms of former non-European peripheries. Therefore, our attention is focused on the causality of deperipheralization, i.e. the conditions under which individual emerging literatures have been constituted as independent systems and literary fields entering and influencing the former metropolises, including their aesthetics and poetics. This aim is reflected in our three-section layout devoted to (1) deperipheralization processes and constitution of new centralities; (2) roles and transformations of former metropolises in the processes of deperipheralization; (3) case studies focusing on specifying sub-phenomena which may provide insights and transversal comparisons concerning modes such as language, aesthetics, themes, worldview, publishing market, etc.

Chapter 1 *What is the Center and What is the Periphery* deals with general defining features. Here the ontological, axiological and mixed categorization differences are outlined, and by comparing the French and Quebec situations, essential differences of the emergent literary tradition as influenced by deperipheralization processes are shown. The chapter also attempts to extend the center-periphery model to other situations connected to monocentric and polycentric cultures, relations of superiority and subordination between centers, as well as complex configurations in which a given center is also a periphery or semiperiphery of another center or other centers.

The central chapter, *Processes of Deperipheralization*, offers a synthetic overview of various deperipheralization processes that have come forth in the Romance literatures of the Americas and Africa. The cultural-historical approach taken here has in view the emergence and formation of autonomous literatures in the respective areas. The comparisons are structured around significant differentiating causal factors: colonization and decolonization processes, strategies of acculturation, strength of centralities and cultural resistance of peripheries, peripheral strategies including inter-peripheral relationships, etc. Thus for example in the case of the Americas, the difference between the initial Francophone configuration, strongly centralist with deperipheralization processes vigorously opposing the center, and the peripheries of Quebec, Haiti and Martinique all produced different results. By contrast, in a historical perspective the Spanish-Hispano-American area appears polycentric with a migrating center and an opposition between local-national production and a higher, commonly shared literature. Also crucial for Hispano-American literature is the phenomenon of in-between peripheries between two cultures and languages, as is the case with Chicano literature in the United States. Substantial differences can be seen in a comparison of Brazilian literature and

the newly emerging literatures of the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, all of which differ in their ties to the United States, Great Britain, and, arguably, France, in addition to their relation to the original metropolis and to the former British colonies in southern Africa. The difference between the French-language literatures of the Maghreb and those of sub-Saharan Africa is also significant, since the French centralizing acculturation efforts had varying impacts on an already constituted written tradition on the one hand and oral cultures on the other. The semi-peripheral position of metropolitan Spanish and Portuguese literature in relation to 19th- and 20th-century French modernity and avant-garde as well as the influence of Paris on the deperipheralization of its former peripheries are also touched upon in the various contributions in the chapter. The subchapters mention inter-peripheral phenomena and contacts linking the Americas with Africa, including the contribution of the Harlem Renaissance to the constitution of the Négritude movement in its Francophone and Lusophone forms. The emphasis on deperipheralizing processes includes reminders of the necessary institutional elements (cultural and educational bodies, publishing, book market, cultural policy) which guarantee the development of literature along with consecrating authorities (literary criticism, journals, etc.). Evidence of emancipatory processes can be found in the autonomous literary movements that permeate world literature and the literary fields of former metropolises. These innovations generally concern the relationship between the aesthetic norm and the peculiar linguistic norm along with the use of literary language independent of the normativity of the former center.

Centralities (Part 1), the short section which follows, aims to provide a perspective on the various ways that centers function. The sub-chapter on Paris and France shows how the centralizing force, through its ability to concentrate the elites of the periphery, turns into a catalyst for the centrifugal tendencies and affirmations of the periphery. In addition to the Négritude movement as well as the magazine and publishing house *Présence africaine*, Paris is also the source of important emancipatory theories which are direct antecedents to what became known as postcolonial thought. It must not be forgotten, however, that discourses of decolonization and postcolonialism have also influenced the themes and aesthetics of the center, as is shown in French literature as well as recent migrations from Africa to the Italian literary space. One of the studies in this chapter also deals with the complex relations between centers, in this case the position of the Gallimard publishing house in the ongoing dispute within the Hispanic area between Spanish and Hispano-American authorities.

The case studies collected in the third section (Part 3) are not ordered by area, but according to dominant issues such as the formation of literary lan-

guages, aesthetic concepts and innovations, the effects of globalization, etc. This ordering facilitates the capture of analogies both to and within deperipheralization processes as well as a number of relatively new tendencies. Another intriguing theme is represented by the emergence of newly formed centralities, which have in turn created their own peripheries, as is the case with Quebec and Brazil. This generative capacity of former peripheries—precisely because the memory of their former peripherality is preserved in the structuring of the new literary field—demonstrates a substantially different functionality of the centrality, represented for example by a greater degree of openness towards migratory currents as well as new impulses coming from indigenous populations.

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What Is the Center and What Is the Periphery?

Petr Kyloušek

The structuring of cultural spaces and the distinction between centers and peripheries would seem a self-evident reality, for example following from the recognition and identification of cultural influences and cultural clashes. Nevertheless, circumstances are inevitably often more complex with regard to specific situations, whether they concern the relationship between literatures or individual writers who move among intercultural and supercultural spaces. One cannot but agree with Jean Bessière's statement that "definitions of center and periphery can serve as paradigms only if they are minimalist" (Bessière, 2018: 19).¹ Since such demarcations always involve relational issues involving multiple variables, the more limited we can keep our categories, the more precise and definitive our descriptions can be.

Before discussing more specific issues, it is necessary to formulate the essential elements according to which one or another relationship between two or more literatures can be defined in terms of a relationship between center and periphery. To do this, we will use a simple (and simplifying) dichotomous division in which the individual features can be categorized as ontological, axiological and mixed, i.e. those whose ontological and axiological characteristics remain closely linked. Nevertheless, the proposed dichotomy should be seen not as a system of exclusive oppositions, but as a schematization of rhizomes through which dynamic center-periphery processes develop. The variability concerns the position of both centers and peripheries, since in such a project it is the relationality itself that is dominant. A center with one or more peripheries can itself be framed as a periphery in relation to another center or centers on the basis of the same (or at least comparable) characteristics. For the sake of comprehensibility, we leave aside for now more complex relations among issues involving semicenters and semiperipheries. Still, as we shall see in the following chapters (especially in section Part 1 of the book on processes of autonomization and deperipheralization), the relationship between a particular center and a periphery can be constructed synchronically as a historical

1 "Seules les définitions du centre et de la périphérie peuvent servir de paradigmes, à la condition qu'elles soient minimales."

reality at a moment or diachronically over time. These notions of center and periphery should be understood as descriptive, not as evaluative or qualitative judgments, i.e. the categories are merely meant to serve as frameworks with which to examine factual data and / or cultural artifacts.

Center	Periphery	Characteristics
continuity	discontinuity	ontological
stability	instability	
ahead of the periphery	lagging behind the center	
production > reception	reception > production	
self-sufficiency	non-self-sufficiency	ontological and axiological
originality	imitation	
superiority complex	inferiority complex	axiological
authority, authentication and legitimation of values	absence of authority and power for authentication and legitimation of values	
concentration of values	dispersion of values	
axiological saturation	absence of axiological saturation	
strongly hierarchical axiology with vertical structuring and stratification of values (superposition of values)	non-hierarchical axiology with horizontal structuring of values (juxtaposition of values)	
processes of exclusion, strict demarcation	processes of inclusion (mixing, hybridization), looser demarcation	

1 Continuity/ Discontinuity, Stability/ Instability

The defining ontological features of continuity/ discontinuity and concomitant stability/ instability concern not only the accumulation and duration of literary and symbolic capital as described by Pascale Casanova, but also the identitarian images that a literature creates for itself within its own terminology, then proposes for itself externally as its own naming. Let us leave aside for now the much debated question of what exactly is literature as such as well as questions connected to “national literature.” According to commentators such as Anderson (1991) and Casanova (2004), the latter is a category which formed as a historical concept as medieval universalism began to wane, asserting itself definitively from the 18th century onwards and culminating in the 19th century in the context of the formation of nation-states based mainly on constructed or “imagined” notions of linguistic, cultural and historical continuity (Gellner, 1983). The notion of national literature is a distinct historical construct that, while related to the accumulation of symbolic capital, is not necessarily identical with the reality of the accumulation itself. If the reality of accumulated cultural capital cannot be questioned, naming often becomes more complex, as the process then transcends into the realm of the construction of ideological identity. Changes in appellation are often a telling indicator of the historical dynamics at work in these processes.

The continuity/ stability of a particular center is generally not clearly perceived by the center itself let alone discussed, as the privileged position of the center (as well as elites within it) is simply considered “natural.” This feeling or assumption, which seems self-evident, becomes territorialized over time, sometimes through the integration of cultural contributions of territories deemed national in a cultural sense and which may transcend the original linguistic or even national boundaries. To use France as one example from many possible historico-cultural contexts, how many readers today refer to the initially *stricto sensu* “non-French elements” which formed what is called “French literature”? Who today contemplates the historical specificity of Occitan literature, who thinks about literatures in dialect over time, about the importance of the Plantagenet dynasty and its Anglo-French territories for Courtois literature? Yet at one time or another all of these multifarious influences were incorporated into the continuity of French literary capital, as have been authors of Belgian, Swiss, Romanian, Irish as well as many other origins.

We may then begin by marking peripherality as an opposite condition characterized by instability regarding self-naming and recurrent attempts at demarcation. Consider, for example, the situation of culturally heterogeneous countries such as Switzerland or Belgium. In spaces like these we can observe clear

uncertainty as to how to label the literature, i.e. according to which criteria. Are works in French produced on Belgian territory to be named Belgian literature, French-Belgian literature, Walloon literature, etc. (Quaghebeur, 1990)? Which authors can be appropriated and on what basis? How far back in history? The fact that not only can questions like these be posed, but are often keenly debated in various contexts shows us the endurance of a center-peripheral consciousness.

The fluctuations and liminalities of naming can be used as an index of discontinuity/instability with regard to emerging peripheral literatures in dialogue with the center/s with which they can be defined. These processes represent a common phenomenon among the fields covered in this monograph. How can Mexican, Peruvian, Argentine literature be defined in terms of the Hispano-American space? How and on what basis do we differentiate the literatures of the various Francophone African countries that we refer to as sub-Saharan? The position of Martinican literature vis-à-vis French literature also remains uncertain. Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant point out this fact in *Éloge de la créolité/In Praise of Creoleness*: “the denominative instability of the written production of our countries: Afro-Caribbean, Negro-Caribbean, Franco-Caribbean, French Speaking Caribbean, Francophone Caribbean Literature, etc., all qualifiers which from now on are, in our eyes, ineffective” (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 96–97).

Descriptions of the situation of Martinique and Belgium can similarly be applied to the literature that once called itself simply Canadian (mainly in opposition to “English” literature), then, more precisely, French-Canadian (in opposition to Anglo-Canadian literature), and since 1964, the even more clearly demarked *littérature québécoise*. The latter designation refers to a change in both the territorial demarcation, i.e. territorialization, as well as the list of authors who are considered representatives of the designated literature. Whereas French-Canadian literature had once referred to all authors writing in French throughout Canada, Quebec literature has been territorially narrowed to the province of Quebec, and since the 1980s has gradually integrated more immigrant authors, Native American authors and, more recently, allophone authors, especially Anglophone authors who are associated in some way with the Quebec territory. The dynamics of discontinuity are unmistakably shown in the example of Quebec, which in the process of autonomization and deperipheralization came to be transformed into an integrative continuity by overcoming linguistic, ethnic and cultural differences. In later sections of this thesis (see Part 1, Chapter 2, Part 1, Chapter 3), processes are explored by which Quebec centrality was constituted by differentiating itself from French centrality in the very axiology of its linguistic and cultural definitions.

The discontinuity stands out especially in moments or eras when a newly forming modern nation-state or national community comes to see its literature in terms of a rebirth or revival. An example of this kind of recognition (or reconstruction) is what Pascale Casanova (2004: 303 ff.) has designated the “Irish paradigm” of the early 20th century. Another obvious case is the Czech National Revival, with its progressive stages and transformations over the 18th and 19th centuries, including the questioning of the very meaning of Czech history as radically formulated by Hubert Gordon Schauer (1886) as to whether it makes sense to create a unique Czech culture and strive for (eventual) centrality, or to forgo “Czechness” (*češství*) and enter a larger Germanophone centrality. As it attempts to reflect the self-image of Czech culture, the canon of Czech literature is itself discontinuous, with many seemingly empty (or nearly empty) periods of “darkness” to be rediscovered, rehabilitated, reconstituted. This ongoing constructive process concerns not only the period preceding the Czech National Revival, but also the literary output of the second half of the 20th century, which is commonly split into the categories of domestic literature and the literature of exile. In this as well as in other ways, Czech literature indicates features of a periphery, a situation similar to other, modern, (re)constituting literatures of Central, Northern, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

2 Advancement/ Lag

It is apparent that the dichotomy of advancement / lag seems to buttress Pascale Casanova’s concept of the zero “Greenwich meridian of literature” advancing in time as a constant (Casanova, 2004: 4, 87 ff.): the dynamic center innovates, moving forward, and the periphery follows in an attempt to catch up. Such a view seems linear, however, as it gives little consideration to the periphery’s own initiatives, including its capacity to innovate by pulling from older domestic traditions as well as from other resources besides its “primary” center, and indeed Casanova does not deny the contribution of peripheral authors to the transformation of central aesthetics.

Nevertheless, what is determinant for us in this category is the perception of time and space itself, namely the difference between how these concepts—individually and in combination—are perceived from the periphery towards the center and back again. Arjun Appadurai explores a similar paradigm from an anthropological and sociological point of view in *Modernity at Large* (Appadurai, 2000), the third section of which, “Postnational Location,” especially the chapter “The Production of Locality” (178 ff.), are devoted to valorizing what can be called the transformation of the periphery. In relation to time,

Appadurai points to the necessity of repudiating what he calls “Eurochronology” (Appadurai, 2000: 30). The possibility (in some situations, even the certainty) that the periphery may not live within the same sense of temporality and spatiality as the center has not only to a great extent been undervalued, but in many cases not even considered at all. The periphery may inhabit a different temporality, for example in movements (in Casanova’s linear model) along its own zero meridian. One compelling bit of testimony comes from Marguerite Yourcenar (1903–1987), a French-Belgian artist of peripheral origin and creative trajectory who eventually asserted herself in the Parisian center. Yourcenar thematized the relationship between center and periphery through several approaches in her novels and commentaries, for example in the Preface to the reissue (1963) of her early work *Alexis ou Le Traité du Vain combat* (*Alexis or The Treaty of Vain Combat*, 1929). Here she contrasts sources of inspiration:

[...] we forget too much the existence of a kind of law of delayed diffusion, which means that cultivated young people around 1860 read Chateaubriand rather than Baudelaire, and those at the end of the century read Musset rather than Rimbaud. I myself, who do not claim at all to be characteristic [of my generation], lived my youth in relative indifference to contemporary literature, partly due to my study of the past [...], partly to an instinctive distrust of what might be called fashionable values.

YOURCENAR, 1971: 32²

Marguerite Yourcenar shows a grounding in universality which is in a way an “absolute” temporal (and only incidentally cultural) accumulation, with transcendental consequences for memory and art. The author returns to this theme several times, for example in *Mémoires d’Hadrien* (*Memoirs of Hadrian*; Yourcenar, 1956: 38) as well as in her autobiographical trilogy *Souvenirs pieux* (*Dear Departed*). Here in connection with the provincial roots of her mother’s family she characterizes the temporal and cultural space of the city of Liège:

The grand style of Saint-Barthélemy’s baptismal fonts, sculpted around the year 1110, seems four centuries ahead or a millennium behind. On

2 “[...] nous oublions trop l’existence d’une sorte de loi de diffusion retardée, qui fait que les jeunes gens cultivés vers 1860 lisaient Chateaubriand plutôt que Baudelaire, et ceux de la fin du siècle Musset plutôt que Rimbaud. Pour moi, qui ne me prétends du reste à aucun degré caractéristique, j’ai vécu mes années de jeunesse dans une indifférence relative à la littérature contemporaine, due en partie à l’étude de celle du passé [...], en partie à une instinctive méfiance envers ce qu’on pourrait appeler les valeurs de Vogue.”

the one hand, it foreshadows the draped figure and the mastery nudes of Ghiberti; on the other, the muscular back of the legendary philosopher Crato depicted in the act of being baptized, which harks back to the bas-reliefs of Augustan Rome. This work by a certain Renier de Huy, who sculpted in a classical style, reminds one irresistibly of a philosopher from of the Liège region who thought in the classical manner a century later and was as a result burnt at stake in Paris in 1210 on the site of what is now Les Halles for having taken his inspiration from Anaximander and Seneca: the pantheist David de Dinant. *Quis est Deus? Mens Universi*. [...] Situated between the Cologne of Albert the Great and the Paris of Abelard, communicating with Rome and Clairvaux through the comings and goings of clerks and churchmen, Liège remained until the end of the thirteenth century a stage on the roads of the spirit. (Yourcenar, 1992: 64–65)³

Yourcenar's reflection here certainly does not represent a scholarly analysis of the phenomenon, nor is it meant to. Nevertheless, it testifies both to her own observed reality as well as to a broader way of envisaging the peripheral status of the space in which the writer situates her roots. It is also essential that she characterizes this periphery as a site of intersections, i.e. a meeting place of various cultural exchanges. Through her testimony, Marguerite Yourcenar suggests that under certain conditions the periphery creates an autonomous space-time *sui generis*, which, although it must reckon with the temporality of the center, can also transcend the center at certain moments of its development. Multiple examples can be found in the works and authors surveyed in this book which valorize the periphery by showing its capabilities and advantages. Here we will content ourselves with referring to a number of revealing passages in the following chapters on deperipheralization (see further Part 1, Chapter 3, Glissant, Ollivier, Des Rosiers; Part 1, Chapter 5, Anzaldúa, Part 1, Chapter 7, Candido, Guimarães Rosa, Freyre, Silviano Santiago, etc.). And indeed, a similar argu-

3 "Le grand style des fonts baptismaux de Saint-Barthélemy, sculptés vers 1110, semble en avance de quatre siècles ou en retard d'un millénaire. D'une part, il prélude aux drapés et aux nus savants de Ghiberti; de l'autre, ce dos musclé du légendaire philosophe Craton recevant le baptême nous ramène aux bas-reliefs de la Rome d'Auguste. Cette œuvre de Renier de Huy, qui modelait à l'antique, fait irrésistiblement rêver à un philosophe du pays de Liège qui pensa à l'antique un siècle plus tard, et fut brûlé à Paris en 1210 sur l'emplacement actuel des Halles pour s'être inspiré d'Anaximandre et de Sénèque, le panthéiste David de Dinant. *Quis est Deus? Mens Universi*. [...] Placé entre la Cologne d'Albert le Grand et le Paris d'Abélard, en contact avec Rome et Clairvaux par le va-et-vient des clercs et des hommes d'Église, Liège reste, jusqu'à la fin du XIII^e siècle une étape sur les routes de l'esprit." (Yourcenar, 1974b: 78–79).

ment to Yourcenar's can be found in the essay of Kundera on the composer Leoš Janáček (Kundera, 1993: 212; Kundera, 2004) as well as in Kundera's promotion of Central European writers such as Robert Musil and Witold Gombrowicz as creators who from the "belated" periphery anticipated the central(ized) avant-garde (Kundera, 1993).

3 Concentration of Temporality and Negation of Temporality

There are undoubtedly differences among peripheries that draw on an already constituted cultural tradition (and can thus play a game of temporal valorization between the poles of universality and innovation) as compared to nascent or re-nascent literatures that began to take shape only in the 19th century or even later. Temporality can be reflected here in two positions. The one is the aforementioned catching-up, a movement manifested in the accelerated accumulation of time in overlapping currents and movements. On the other hand, a hasty over-acceptance of stimuli proceeding from (but not exclusively from) the center represents another aspect of the dynamic relationship between center and periphery. While in central literatures, movements and aesthetic incentives are spread along a timeline as the gradual displacement / replacement of the old by the new, often in the periphery everything accumulates within a single present. This is a feature of a specific phase in the development of many of the literatures that will be discussed: Quebecan, Brazilian, Angolan, etc. This phenomenon has implications for the axiological structuring of the literary field (see below), which is the way of creating universality and a literary tradition within several emergent or newly constituting literatures.

We often find a radical abandonment or devalorization of the temporal factor in cases in which the cultural periphery must confront the absence of a history of its own as it engages with its inability or refusal to accept the putative cultural and political superiority of the center. The non-acceptance of histories written and imposed by others manifests itself in various forms in almost all the emerging literatures of the Americas and Africa. In its most radical form, it appears in the reactions of decolonization emanating from the former slave regions of the Caribbean, the identity for many of whom is derived from an absent Africa from which they have been stolen and which has been stolen from them. A common feature of such attitudes is an emphasis on spatiality, but without territorialization, that is, without spatial anchoring. A variant of this conception is for example one of the keys to the poetics of the Martinican author and philosopher Édouard Glissant. The negation of centrality, and

thus of temporal and spatial factors, is the axis of his conception of the Totality of the World—the All-World (*Tout-monde*), which is dominated by the actual Place from which writing is organized and which transcends the dichotomy of center/periphery in a dialectical synthesis which presents itself as a network of “archipelagic thought” (*pensée archipélique*):

The true relation is not from the particular to the universal, but from the Place to the totality of the world, which is not totalitarian, but its opposite in diversity. The Place is not a territory: one agrees to share place, conceives it and lives it in the idea of wandering, even in defending it against all denaturation.

GLISSANT, 1997: 194⁴

Seen from the periphery, the notions of lead and lag are generally relativized, denied or turned into advantages. At the same time, a progression is taking place within argumentations of the “peripheral.” While Marguerite Yourcenar acknowledges the distinction between center and periphery, Édouard Glissant’s conception challenges this distinction and replaces it with an entirely original concept. The organization of cultural space as proposed by Glissant is a model which denies Pascale Casanova’s zero-meridian; Glissant’s paradigm can be seen as the result of the autonomization of peripheries and their deperipheralization on the way to their own centrality. This is also a sign of a shift from an axiological conception of modernity to postmodernity, a move that will be explored below.

4 Reception / Production, Self-Sufficiency / Non-self-sufficiency

The ratio between reception and production is another indicator of centrality/peripherality. The studies collected under Gisèle Sapiro’s editorship in *Les contradictions de la globalisation éditoriale* (2009) show that peripheries publish proportionally more translations than do centers. Some peripheries do not yet have sufficient production potential of their own, or a lack of publishing houses, editorial offices and related support institutions hinders output. Peripheries are often largely importers of cultural artifacts, while centers are

4 “La relation vraie n’est pas du particulier à l’universel, mais du Lieu à la totalité du monde qui n’est pas le totalitaire, mais son contraire en diversité. Le lieu n’est pas un territoire: on accepte de partager le lieu, on le conçoit et on le vit dans une pensée de l’errance, alors même qu’on le défend contre toute dénaturation.”

self-sufficient in production and export their works to other centers or peripheries. Limited domestic readership may contribute significantly to peripheralization.

In general, processes of deperipheralization show the importance of developing a book market in its various components: publishing, distribution, literary criticism, cultural institutions, along with a sufficient reader communities able and willing to consume (all forms of) literary production. We will see in several environments that publishing and legitimizing self-sufficiency is the key factor in cultural emancipation, deperipheralization and establishing centrality. Moreover, the reliable functioning of a particular book market is closely related to axiological factors such as recognizing and consecrating literary values. Movements within markets also affect definitional categories that combine ontological and axiological features associated with the export/import of aesthetics as well as the diffusion of aesthetic impulses from centers to peripheries, as in the case of the originality/imitation dichotomy.

The importation of cultural norms and artifacts as well as the reception of aesthetic impulses from the center represent sets of complex and multifaceted phenomena. Peripheries are not passive recipients in this relationship. Incoming stimuli undergo selection in a process usually determined by both the resistance and the needs of the receptive literary field. The axiological configuration of a given literary field—its strengths and weaknesses—controls the active appropriation of what is received. Peripheries usually absorb what they perceive themselves as lacking within their own inner aesthetic tendencies. Every external influence is the result not only of supply, but also of demand and choice on the part of the receiver. While this general statement represents only a rough *précis* of multifarious processes, a specific reception situation depends not only on macro-factors but also on individual actors—authors, editors, translators, educators, etc.—and their goals and strategies. The power of appropriation then determines the characteristics and incorporation of the received works within a literary field.

Selectivity also impacts the role played by a particular author within the domestic reception environment. In his collection of essays *Une rencontre* (2009; *Encounter*, 2010), Milan Kundera draws attention to two nearly antipodal views of the influence of Anatole France in France and Central Europe, including Czech literature. Kundera cites Emil Cioran's statement of caution regarding France, "Never mention his name aloud here, everyone will laugh at you!" (Kundera, 2010: 44)⁵ While in the perspective of his own country, this

5 "Ne prononcez jamais ici son nom à haute voix, tout le monde se moquera de vous." (Kundera, 2011: 36).

writer became the scapegoat of the Surrealist avant-garde as a representative of musty academicism, at the time in Central European literatures Anatole France represented a model of the French critical spirit and rationalist skepticism. Many other authors and individual works receive such divergent receptions in different spatial and temporal environments. Recall the claim of Pierre Bourdieu (1990, 2002) that the entry of a text into another context changes its meaning. Authors are reinterpreted, texts are recoded and transcoded in different environments.

Whether through translation, adaptation, imitation, or through influence permeating the milieu of literary criticism, a work does not always or automatically merge entirely with domestic production, although often enough it enters into a particular subsystem within the reception environment. Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory (Even-Zohar 1978, 1979, 1990, 2010) describes the fertile heterogeneity that translated literature, and reception literature in general, can generate within a given literary field by a confrontation between domestic and imported aesthetics. These circumstances concern not only texts themselves, but also aesthetics and aesthetic impulses. The particular studies on deperipheralization in the following section dedicated to Romance literatures of the Americas and Africa show in general that even major cultural currents can take on unusual and unexpected features within different reception environments. This is the case, for example, not only with the Brazilian Enlightenment and notions of Romanticism and Realism, but also with Brazilian and Argentine Regionalism as well as local specificities such as those of the Mexican-American literature of the so-called Aztlán. The anticolonial modulation of the educational novel in sub-Saharan African literatures in French is also manifest in quite specific and diverse ways throughout this vast region. Similarly, the Quebec "novel of the soil" (*roman du terroir*) is not a variant of French Regionalism; it occupies a unique and much more significant space within Quebec literary production, affecting both prose and poetry, especially since it plays an essential role in the empowerment of autonomy by opposing the Parisianism and Exoticism of the Quebec modernist poets of the early 20th century. Similarly, Quebec Surrealism cannot be reduced to a subset of French Surrealism, as in the Quebecan context certain Surrealist components, especially the proximity to the abstract painting of Paul-Émile Borduas and to Claude Gauvreau's baroque search for an "exploratory language" (*langue exploréenne*), represent important aesthetic differentiating and innovative factors (Kyloušek, 2012). The Quebec example shows how the peripheral environment, while appropriating external stimuli, proceeds according to its own aesthetics and its own literary movements, which are often quite specific and autonomous. More examples of this phenomenon include Francophone Négri-

tude, Lusophone Negritude, Haitian Noirisme and Indigénism, Andean Indigenismo, Afro-Caribbean Neo-Baroque, Gaucho literature and Magical Realism, as well as Brazilian Anthropophagy. These tracks testify not only to the refraction of external influences within the environment of the periphery, but especially to how originally peripheral stimuli contributes and influences centrality.

5 Axiology

Axiological features are a decisive factor in terms of two different points concerning the literary field: the question of autonomy and axiological structuring. Let us leave aside the behavioral aspects of the superiority/ inferiority complex. It is enough to say for now that, mapped from sociology to the field of interliterary relations, the superiority/ inferiority paradigm can be seen as a side-effect of the relation to symbolic forms of capital and the manifestation of symbolic violence and domination (Bourdieu, Wacquant, 1992: 110–143, chapter *La Violence symbolique*).

In our context it would be more productive to concentrate on the much more fundamental question of the validation and legitimization of literary values, a set of processes which decisively determine the central/ peripheral status of literature. Taken as a continuum between a putative “pure” centrality and peripherality, the pole of periphery can be designated as a situation in which a literature is entirely dependent on the authenticating and legitimating instances of a center. This condition, typically transitory, is usually manifest in the beginnings of an emerging peripheral literature, for example, in the case of Francophone sub-Saharan literatures. In most cases, the question of the superior authority of centralities over peripheral cultures is itself subject to competition and conflicts, even if central literatures are advantaged in terms of infrastructure and universal recognition, for example at a regional or even the global level.

Nevertheless, it is also generally true that literature ranks among the rare cultural institutions that creates its own legitimizing institutions. Peripheries can more or less gradually forge their own instances of critique and value recognition, creating autonomy and new values detached from the authenticating and legitimating conditions of the center. Whether established or emerging, sets of institutional frameworks include publishing houses, editorial activities, as well as critical journals which determine the tenor, themes and approaches to criticism and other evaluative systems. Supporting institutions are formed such as libraries, educational institutions at all levels, theatres, museums, etc. creat-

ing systems for the interpretation, legitimization and dissemination of cultural artifacts. The quality and number of readers directly or indirectly influences the market for books, magazines, and other literary materials, with readership communities developing either organically or through cultural (including economic) incentives. If the goal is to establish centrality (which of course is not the only possible goal), autonomization and deperipheralization are obviously not merely a matter of literary or aesthetic influence. The economy and culture are closely linked, as we cannot climb Maslow's pyramid on an empty stomach.

As far as axiology is concerned, one specific factor linked to literary production must be emphasized: the strong impact of linguistic issues, including (academic or other types of) authority over language norms. These normative influences have been clearly evident in the vast Hispanophone area, and the issue has also been determinative in the deperipheralization of Brazilian literature. The linguistic question was (and to an extent remains) particularly sensitive in African and American Francophone areas, as evidenced by the long history of the dominance of Paris and Parisian publishing houses over emergent communities. Especially in the African context, because of the debilitating economic conditions, once local or regional publishing concerns become successful they often quickly come under the influence of European corporate conglomerates, who sometimes buy the owners out entirely and continue putting out works under the old name. Language and literary norms enforced, for example, through notions of style have long played a role in the selection of peripheral authors who have sought to assert themselves with the goal of achieving financial or artistic recognition—or, simply, respect—from the center. The processes of deperipheralization that we will present in the following section generally include an important linguistic component, as can be seen in the introduction of *joual* in Quebec literature, creoles in Caribbean literature as well as Indianisms and Africanisms in works by Native American and African authors.

6 Axiological Structuring of the Literary Field—A Case Study

The last two binaries to be dealt with here—superiority/ subordination and legitimating authority/ absence of legitimating authority—should be taken as long-term factors reflected in the axiological structuring of the literary field, not as essential categories themselves. The distinction between center and periphery can then be considered merely as the starting point with regard to the representation of two historical situations and two distinct sets of dynam-

ics. While notable exceptions can be found in various movements and with even individual authors, the peripheral appears to represent a significant basis for a certain generalized postmodern axiology widely accepted at present. By contrast, the center remained for a long time more closely associated with modernist and avant-garde origins. The hypothesis that we will try to illustrate and substantiate with the following case study concerns the influence on the contemporary situation of processes of peripheral axiological structuring which are historically constituted. In framing the explorations in this way, the very concept of “central literature” in terms of received hierarchies can be problematized.

We can begin by introducing Pascale Casanova’s definition of central axiological structuring as being characterized by an intense concentration of values that results from the long-term accumulation of literary capital (Casanova, 2004: 12 ff.). The implications of this view are twofold: a high saturation of the literary field, with the resultant creation of mechanisms of exclusion and rupture with previous aesthetic stages; and a “vertical” hierarchical structuring of values in which new putatively higher values displace and marginalize lower ones. The situation of value overload and the mechanisms of exclusion are illustrated by Pierre Bourdieu in his book *Les Règles de l’Art* (*The Rules of Art*). The French sociologist analyses the structuring and dynamics of the literary field of a fully constituted modern literature and society. Bourdieu begins by listing a series of avant-garde poetic revolutions which occurred between 1900 and 1910—Synthetism, Integralism, Unanimism, Syncretism, Druidism, Futurism, Simultaneism, Floralism, Intesism, Dynamism, Effreneism, among other movements—to demonstrate the accelerated dynamics of literary life in the formulation in rapid sequence of some thirty sets of poetics within the span of one decade in a competitive environment of heightened tensions, strict functional demarcation as well as ruptures with the *status quo ante* (Bourdieu, 1995: 123–124).

Throughout the course of French literature, this processuality—the category generally framed as most central—during the rise of the avant-gardes can be contrasted with a view of peripherality during the same period as presented by Michel Biron (1992, 2000) in his analysis of the rise of Quebec Modernism, a movement dominated by the *École littéraire de Montréal* which can be placed within the first phase of the deperipheralization of Québécois literature (see below Part 1, Chapter 3).

The starting point of Michel Biron’s argument is the distinction between society and community as delineated by noted anthropologist Victor Turner in his thesis “communitas emerges where social structure is not” (Turner, 1991: 135). Biron’s mapping of Turner’s definition onto literature is valuable for sev-

eral reasons. Turner's long term work in ritual began with indigenous peoples in the 1960s, but by the 1970s he had come to apply his concepts more broadly to sociology and culture (e.g. in hippie and other countercultural movements), contrasting the openness, permanence and absence of the fixed frameworks of *communitas* with the more tightly structured frameworks and conventions of modern society. Michel Biron applies the same distinction, but shifts the focus towards literature and literary life. Augmenting this move is Bourdieu's contention that osmosis, substitution and the exchange of values are necessary components in the relationship between the social and cultural field (Bourdieu, 1995: 113–127). In terms of literature and the integrative effect of the aesthetic function, a facile correlation would be to Jankovič's conception of the aesthetic function (Jankovič, 2005: 141–149; chapter Aesthetic Function and Meaning Unification).

As an instance of *communitas*, Biron describes literary developments in Quebec at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries as taking place within an environment in which the heterarchy of social and cultural values projected in works of this period cause them to “lag behind” those of so-called modern societies and their systems of distinct hierarchization. Biron emphasizes certain sociological and literary features of Quebec culture: the absence of a robust literary market, a weak tendency towards the autonomization of the literary field, the lack of a structuring force of polarization between tradition and modernity (a temporal factor), the absence of a structuring force of rupture, the weak axiological saturation of the literary field, the tendency towards a non-differentiation of function both in the literary scene and in its actors as well as axiological inclusion prevailing over exclusion. Analyzed this way, the situation is radically different from the way it might be represented in, for example, Pierre Bourdieu's *The Rules of Art*.

The difference between two situations—France and Quebec—can be generalized and linked to the contrasting characteristics of the center and the periphery, including other nascent peripheral national literatures of that period. The structuring of central cultures fully saturated with authors and works can be by its very nature characterized by an intense concentration and hierarchization of values. As a consequence, the tendency is towards generic, discursive and functional differentiation along with concomitant mechanisms of exclusion; in contrast, peripheries show a low axiological saturation of a literary field dominated instead by the juxtaposition of sets of values. This heterarchy promotes states of non-differentiation and axiological inclusion which prevail over exclusion in processes that facilitate the discursive hybridization of expressive forms and genres. Following from this premise, it is possible to hypothesize the differences between long-term literary processes and Bour-

dieu's center and periphery habitus. The canon of French literature, the synecdoche of Europe, was shaped with an emphasis on the specificity of the aesthetic function to, first, institute and, then, secure the autonomy of the literary field. As a result, after the 18th century French literature gravitated towards the creation of "pure" fiction genres, notably the novel, in which literariness represents a constitutive aesthetic factor consciously distinguishing the "literary" from scientific, political, journalistic and other discourses. The situation was obviously different for the newly emerging French-Canadian and Quebec literature, as the configuration of the literary field, with its axiological non-saturation, lack of structure and its openness, allowed for the incorporation of "impure" non-literary forms and expressive practices into literary discourse as well as admixtures of forms in innumerable combinations. Since the 19th century, this hybridization and interdiscursivity (Kwaterko, 1996) have formed a referential thread of culture which gradually emerged into a bountiful French-Canadian literary tradition. These tendencies prefigured postmodern axiological theories, which would only become established in European literatures in the second half of the 20th century due in part the influence of originally peripheral literatures (Faulkner, Hispanic Magical Realism, Salman Rushdie, etc.).

Now let us return to Turner's *communitas* and Biron's exemplification of the rhizoming of literary values, the status of texts, and literary activities, including the position of writers and the functioning of literary movements. The forty-year existence of the *École littéraire de Montréal* (1895–1935), including gradual, incremental changes from the aesthetic dominance of the poetry of Symbolism and Decadence to early-20th century Regionalism, are unusual (to say the least) compared to Europe during the same period. Michel Biron also describes the heterogeneous composition of the Montreal group and its distinctive public events, such as a soirée of May 26, 1899 which opened with a lecture on education in the United States called *Success in Life* given by Wilfrid Larose, the president of the *École littéraire de Montréal*. The lecturer, a journalist and business academy graduate, was at the time of his presentation authoring the reportage series *Variétés canadiennes* (*Varieties of Canada*); Larose's address was followed by the recitation of a poem by the Quebec poet laureate Émile Nelligan. Michel Biron shows the extent to which the paths of these two successful writers—one promulgating a pragmatic narrative of the "American" way of life, the other an avant-garde poet—are both complementary and intertwined:

The conflation of the *success story* and the “Romance of Wine” is so pronounced that the two discourses contaminate each other. [...] The figure of the poet appears as a double of the self-made man, but it is an inverted double.

BIRON, 1992: 159⁶

Michel Biron's argument reveals a lack of differentiation and even a discursive fusion of the literary and the non-literary. This tendency characterizes the biographies and works of many Quebecan authors and can be considered a universal and abiding feature of the emerging literature. Let us limit ourselves to two examples, one from the 19th century, the other from the 20th. *Charles Guérin, roman de mœurs canadiennes* (*Charles Guérin, Novel of Canadian Manners*, 1846–1847) by Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau is as the title suggests inspired by Balzac and the French novel of manners. The work's central theme deals with the sociological problem of the future of elites in French-Canada, with the author imparting his own views through factual remarks on the development of French-Canadian demography. The eclectic information presented in the novel includes folkloric songs, a discussion on linguistic differences between Quebec and France, selections of newspaper articles from 1832, along with comments on the fires of 1846, the modernization of the cities of Quebec and Montreal, the culture of cemeteries, and the cholera epidemics in Quebec, all of which supported by comprehensive statistics. *Charles Guérin* is a mixture of fiction and fact, a work in which the pervasive literary, sociological and political discourses in the text flow together seamlessly. Józef Kwaterko (1996) has referred to this amalgamation of modes as *interdiscours* (interdiscourse). While Kwaterko applies this term to modern Québécois prose since the 1960s, we can see that such a tendency emerged much earlier in the past.

This tradition of merging styles, genres and modes progressed throughout the 20th century, continuing even to the present. One example is the notable oeuvre of Jacques Ferron (1921–1985), a doctor who maintained his medical practice as he published a large part of his oeuvre of more than five hundred texts, including essays and other nonfiction as well as fiction such as the novel *Le Salut de l'Irlande* (*Ireland's Salvation*, 1966–1967) which was serialized in the medical journal *L'Information médicale et paramédicale*. Ferron was also a co-founder of the *Parti Rhinocéros* (*Rhinocéros Party*, 1963), the slogan of which was “never keep your election promises.” The activities of this parody political

6 “La cointelligibilité de la *success story* et de la ‘Romance du vin’ est telle que les deux discours se contaminent l'un l'autre. [...] La figure du poète se présente comme le double de la figure du *self-made man*, mais le double inversé.”

party served as the Dadaist counterpart to his serious political involvement, which culminated in his role as a negotiator between the police and the terrorists of the *Front de Libération du Québec* during so-called October Crisis in 1970. The various elements and implications of Ferron's pursuits are closely interconnected, defying any clear separation. He became a writer precisely because he was a physician and a public figure. This hybridization of activities is reflected throughout his production, which synthesizes genres in highly innovative ways. Such inventiveness can be seen in the title of the novel *Les roses sauvages, petit roman suivi d'une lettre d'amour soigneusement présentée* (*The Wild Roses. A Short Novel Followed by a Carefully Prefaced Love Letter*, 1971). This genre-bending work combines a fictional-mythopoetic narrative featuring an incestuous relationship that inverts the *Sleeping Beauty* hypotext, portraying the little girl as an incestuous seductress and the murderer of her mother. The bit of fiction is then followed by a critical essay on the drastic treatment methods used in psychiatric institutions in the 1950s and 1960s, with this Introduction completed by a patient's testimony in the form of her Love Letter. These three parts form a compositional unity, thematically reinforcing and clarifying each other. The fiction provides the medical and polemical discourse of the Introduction with an impact and authority it would not have on its own, while the patient's letter adds credibility and authenticity to the fiction. The essayistic Introduction, on the other hand, elucidates the operational details of psychiatric hospitals much more clearly than could be depicted in a novel. Here the complexity of the factors that influence the psyche are introduced and explicated, creating a move that in turn links the psychology of the characters in the fiction to the specific, factual case of the patient Aline Dupire, creating a lucid context which gives her letter greater authority and complexity. Taken holistically, the literariness of the novel form tempers the austerity of the medical findings; further, both the essayist's diatribe against the medical establishment as well as the patient's testimony are more clearly illuminated through the inversion of fairy tale. Through the mirage of fiction, the unconscious motives of the archetypes that transform personal destiny into predetermined fate are revealed; with this removal from contingency, the polysemic story of one particular life takes on a universal significance.

In this modest analysis of Ferron's *Les roses sauvages* we have sought to illustrate the aesthetic implications of a tradition, albeit one organized with no clear hierarchy. The origins of such a tradition can be linked to the axiological structuring of the periphery, through which juxtaposition and hybridization of values in an unsaturated literary field are valorized. Let us consider such specificity in terms similar to those which characterize the aforementioned concentration and functioning of the peripheral temporality. The literariness

originally constituted in the peripheral situation may be seen in certain ways as categorically different to the literariness of the center. In contrast to the distinct processes of autonomization (Bourdieu, 1995; Casanova, 2004), the autonomy/heteronomy dichotomy in originally peripheral literatures shifts towards a specific integration of discursive heteronomy into literary discourse. Nevertheless, as described by Jankovič (2005: 141–149), the dominance of the aesthetic function through its transcendent and integrating effect is also valid here. The aesthetic function ensures the axiological integration of heteronomy within the autonomy of the literary field, and thus the emergence of innovative aesthetic strategies, individually and in combination. This constellation formulated for and by Quebec literature is not unique; other cases may illustrate the potential of the axiology of peripheral origin. Other case studies will exemplify and clarify this in various ways in the following chapters of this book.

7 From Simplicity to Complexity

In the previous section, we have focused on the fundamental dichotomies of the center/periphery relationship and attempted to explain through examples certain distinctions and basic identifying features defining both the extreme spaces of periphery and center as well as how positions among various sites can be recognized. While it has been necessary in such a short text to describe the situation from a bird's eye view, we must always keep in mind that intercultural situations and interliterary relations are always of great complexity, in this case much more so than can be depicted here.

More intricate explorations of a number of the issues, perspectives and approaches mentioned here can be found in a recent set of essays published under the direction of Amaury Dehoux, *Centres et périphéries de la littérature mondiale: Une pensée connectée de la diversité* (*Centers and Peripheries of World Literature: A Connected Thinking of Diversity*, 2018). In this volume and other works, recent insights have put forward into non-European spaces, e.g. the various regions of Asia, notably China, India and the Indian Ocean region, that suggest how what is (often still) referred to as *Weltliteratur* or the *World Republic of Letters* has been primarily defined by the expansion of European languages and literatures. Outside this space, research and other examinations are often based on slightly or even strikingly different perceptual and ideological presuppositions. Considering our theme, sometimes the only commonality to be found is the use of terms *centrality* and *peripherality*, and even this terminology can be problematized in various contexts. It seems that the very concept of *what is literature* is undergoing a fundamental transformation, i.e. in terms

of what is valorized within this category according to particular hierarchical, heterarchical and liminal codes. These kinds of issues are explored in Bénédicte Letellier's contribution entitled *Centres et périphéries: le cas des littératures arabes contemporaines dans l'océan Indien* (Dehoux, 2018: 149–166), in which Arabic-language writing in the Asian Indian Ocean region is addressed. The close association of Arabic-written literature with religion valorizes religious poetry, here of Sufi inspiration, changing the values of what is considered “purely” literary values in European or European-initiated literatures. In the polycentric circulation of values in this area, the relations between oral and printed literature, between reading and public performance, are also configured differently.

A similar shift, albeit of a different, perhaps more materialist nature, can be observed in the Chinese author Shi Zhongyi's essay *Le Coeur des lettres et la sculpture du dragon dans la perspective d'une poétique universelle* (Dehoux, 2018: 71–87). Shi's view of European culture and literature from antiquity to the present day largely escapes received European criteria, essentially pushing Europe to the edge the world, perhaps as a periphery to China's centrality. In another context, similar moves have been made regarding writers whom European culture has appropriated from other cultural areas. In an analysis of the integration of Salman Rushdie's work into world discourse, Amaury Dehoux—citing mainly Indian sources—notes that Indian literary criticism generally does not consider Rushdie an Indian author, but a British one (Dehoux, 2018: 56). The assertion of the centrality of India as compared to Europe is clear.

In other words, both the categories *Weltliteratur* and the *World Republic of Letters* reify definite boundaries, despite the homogenizing effects of globalization on the written word and the melding of markets. Explorations and problemizations of these parameters track throughout this monograph, although the focus is on the center/ periphery relationships of European Romance literatures in various dialogues with literatures in the Americas and Africa. Among the concerns to be examined are the emancipatory processes that have taken place in originally peripheral literatures as they move/d toward cultural autonomy, and vice versa the reverberating impacts of these emergent literatures on European central cultural spaces.

Views from elsewhere can certainly serve to relativize what Said and Spivak call the worldliness of literature (Said, 1975; Spivak, 1985) as such as well as the worldliness of the European conception of literature. Nevertheless, here we can permit ourselves to expand a bit on our initially restricted considerations. If we have simplified the center-periphery relationship in the previous part of this chapter to circumscribe broad basic concepts, now we can point out a few complexities involved in the interactions that occur within specific situations.

The first observation is a facile but vital one: interactions in literature and culture take place not only between a center and a periphery or peripheries, but mutually between centers themselves. Here again, relationality, and thus relativity, applies: like peripheries, centers are not equal, with hierarchical relationships prevailing among them; these associations can be characterized by means of similar features as those which can describe relationships between centers and peripheries. These hierarchies can be observed in the cultural gradients of various influences, including number of translations, international prestige and prizes, rivalries between systems, etc. These sets of relationships are constantly evolving. The prestige of Paris today is certainly different, perhaps diminished, for example in relation to English-language literature than it was a hundred or even fifty years ago.

Another necessary consideration is that some centralities operate in several directions at once, again with varying degrees of intensity. A system can simultaneously function as a center in relation to a particular periphery, while at the same time itself be peripherally related to another center or centers. The status of such a semiperiphery can be attributed, for example, to Portuguese literature, for which French culture is an essential reference point; semiperipheries can also be seen both within and in relation to the British and Anglo-Saxon space in general as well as in the negotiations of identity in what Gloria Anzaldúa refers to as the Borderlands which lie within both the United States and Mexico (see further Part 1, Chapter 5). These types of conditions are then reflected in the emancipating literatures originally dependent on semiperipheries, for example those of Angola and Mozambique. Brazil can also be examined to some extent in this context, i.e. the ties to the original center are less intense, with impulses coming from other putatively superior centers sought directly, not through the immediate semi-center which Portugal would seem to represent (see further Part 1, Chapter 11, Part 3, Chapter 21).

Finally, peripheries are not tied exclusive to their centralities, but are osmotic with each other as well. Referring to David Damrosch (2003) and Dionýz Ďurišin (1992) and his interliterary communities in the Central European space between Slavic, Mediterranean and Balkan literatures, Marko Juvan draws attention to the complexity of interperipheral exchanges (Dehoux, 2018: 100–101). Juvan uses the example of Slovenian literature to illustrate the interconnectedness of the peripheries, mutual cultural flows among them as well as their links to centers. In this context, let us recall Itamar Even-Zohar's cultural overlaps and polysystem theory (Even-Zohar 1978, 1979, 1990, 2010). What Juvan states for Slovene literature in the Central European context can be observed for the literatures in the Caribbean space as well as for the relations of Mozambican literature to South Africa. At the same time, like centers, intercentral

peripheral areas can develop a multidirectional strategy, taking advantage of several centers, even pitting one centrality against another, as we will see in several cases such as that of Quebec literature.

Of a different nature are the situations that have been created in recent decades by the globalization of book sales, through which concentrations of capital have created transnational monopolies that take advantage of multi-billion-dollar markets made possible by linguistic unities. In the absence of one distinct strong center, the territorialized link between a publisher and consecratory authority may weaken or even disappear entirely. Consecratory institutions can be then located elsewhere, polycentrically, or even cleaved entirely from the site of creation, production and publication. Such a situation, or a tendency towards such conditions, has developed in Spanish- and, to some extent, Portuguese-language literature. In contrast, the state of affairs is different in literatures written in French; in this case the solid Parisian center can be countered in any meaningful way only by Montreal, with both centers endowed (unequally) with consecratory authority. In general, then, the strength of a particular publishing center or a concentration of corporate publishing houses also serves to encourage fragmentation and the creation of local publishing houses as a counterweight to cultural globalization. The chapters in the Deperipheralization section offer examples of these phenomena. In general, this situation occurs when global wholesale production ceases to meet local needs, as is the case in the Hispanic and Brazilian (Part 1, Chapter 4, Part 3, Chapter 22, Part 3, Chapter 23) situation or the African book market (Part 1, Chapter 10).

Let us add one last important point: relationships among centers and peripheries are bi- or multidirectional, rhizomal and dynamic. The periphery can evolve in several different directions (sometimes at once) to constitute its own modes of autonomy and centrality. A center can lose, regain or transform the nature of its centrality through the influence of the periphery. The gravitational model formulated by Benoît Denis and Jean-Marie Klinkenberg (Denis, Klinkenberg, 2005; Klinkenberg, 2008) which shows the dialectics of centrifugal/ assimilative and centripetal/ dissimilative forces can be applied with advantage in this domain. These forces create dynamics through which a periphery need not remain patiently resigned to its status, as indicated above, but instead may create autonomous values, as only a set of autonomous and distinct values will receive the recognition of the center as universal. On the other hand, by its very existence the center creates its periphery and needs it as an affirmation of its extension. The spatial factor of the gravity model can also be considered, although in this case the transfer is from the field of demography and economics (Grimmeau, 1994). Indeed, in addition to the center's gravitational-cultural power, distance, both cultural and geographical, must

be taken into account. Even if this metaphorical transfer of cultural gravity is difficult to quantify, at least it may serve us well in terms of pondering the relationship among geography, demographic and economic factors along with the reach and accessibility of the book market. Barriers as well as accelerating factors must be considered, for example certain factors may explain the successful deperipheralization of the literature of Quebec compared to that of, say, Belgium or Switzerland. Similarly, the tendency towards fragmentation and the emergence of local initiatives and cultural sub-centers come to fore as a centrality loses strength. This may be the case when a territory is vast and unconnected by a transport system and / or when a periphery is too distant from the center, as in the case of Brazilian Amazonian literature as well as the Hispano-American area in the 19th century.

We may conclude our overview of some of the complications involved in tracing the dynamics of relations between centers and peripheries with a hopeful remark. The authors of this book believe that the advantage of studying Romance literatures (as opposed, for example, with Anglophone literatures) is that this allows us to capture both the generalities and diversity of the variety of the processes we describe. We hope that in this volume we have drawn meaningful comparisons and made relevant contrasts. It must not be forgotten, however, that the tracing of these processualities takes place not only within the former context of shaping national literatures, colonization and decolonization, but that this work is being undertaken in the current period of globalization. It seems that in many ways a transnational cultural awareness is emerging as the concept of national literature is being reshaped and in some areas is even disappearing altogether. This awareness of our unique situation in the present moment can create new essential conditions for future explorations of the very definition of what is center and what is periphery.

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PART 1

Processes of Deperipheralization



What Does Deperipheralization Refer to?

Petr Kyloušek

This section provides an overview of deperipheralization in selected Romance literatures in the Americas and Africa. The processes that have taken place and are still taking place in these territories once colonized by Europe move from the same points of departure, namely the detachment from European centrality, the transformation of a formerly peripheral position and dependence, and the construction of an autonomous cultural and literary space (in some cases) completely independent from European centers. The course and outcome of these deperipheralization processes are diverse, although even among these multifarious developments the interplay of several general factors can be traced through several categories. In order to draw attention to similarities and parallels, let us underline those factors that can be considered decisive: the linguistic issues that divide cultural zones; the structuring of the cultural and literary fields of the European metropolises and the relations of domination and subordination among them; the nature of the environments into which European colonial influence entered; and the historical periods in which influence was exercised and when it clashed with the emancipatory tendencies of the periphery. The relationships among the various emancipating peripheries and their mutual interactions are also significant, since many of the phenomena were / are often synergistic, simultaneous and analogous. Finally, the overall tendency of the cultural shift between Europe, which dominated until the mid-20th century, and the American space, whose influence became dominant in the half-century that followed, cannot be overlooked. This shift can be seen as both a cause and a symptom of the emergence of deperipheralized literatures, for instance as a vital component of the internationalization of the book market, a process which began to gain momentum at the beginning of the 20th century and which has exploded in the digital age. In many ways these processes work against the principle of centrality to create new configurations, as can be seen in the opening up of Hispanophone and Lusophone cultural spaces.

1 The Language Factor

The importance of language is manifested in several ways. First of all, it represents a fundamental division in the field of literature and, more broadly, culture, separating in our case Francophone, Hispanophone and Lusophone spaces. Languages also determine the primary line of cultural flows, with wider interlingual literary exchanges established only in a second-order sequence, mainly through translation. Received hierarchies among languages must often be taken into account, e.g. French influences have penetrated other language zones more easily than Spanish or Portuguese ones, and Hispanophone authors are more present in Lusophone areas than vice versa. This can be compared to what Said (2003: 40–42) has called the overall “cultural strength” of the fields in question as well as the strength of the particular metropolitan and regional centers along with their interrelationships (see below).

The linguistic factor is also a permanent part of the relationship between the originally European centrality of a given linguistic area and the emancipating and deperipheralizing periphery. This is directly related to axiology, specifically to the control and territorialization of normative authority over language. Wherever European languages spread, they generally constituted a dominant, authoritative tool used to varying degrees against either local languages (Native American and African languages, creoles) or even linguistic distinctiveness among European languages (American varieties of French, Spanish and Portuguese). The identity issue of the ultimate authority over one's own literary language represents a significant part of the emancipatory processes of the periphery, albeit to varying degrees and with different consequences. While American Hispanophone elites have in their emancipatory strategy adhered to the idea of preserving a shared linguistic space and norm, Brazilian culture felt the need to define itself in certain ways through differences from European Portuguese. The sharp ideological clashes around the Quebec *joual* indicate the difficulties that American French felt towards the strict authoritarianism of the French Academy until the Canadians (followed by other language communities) created their own independent regulatory institutions. In French Louisiana, the relative inaccessibility of the periphery to the center, especially after a small section of the territory became one of the United States in 1812, created a unique situation in which varieties of Louisiana French developed in isolation into largely oral language cultures until Cajun French was formally codified in the mid-1960s, followed by the first attempts at the standardization of Louisiana Creole about 10 years later.

The situation of French in Africa is, however, quite different. In the Maghreb, French colonization entered a space into which for centuries Arab societies

had built schools supporting their own religious and literary traditions, while in sub-Saharan Africa, where the French colonial school system was given free rein to pursue its acculturation policy, a sharp cultural divide developed between French and local, mostly oral cultures. Naturally, the clash of cultures in the two macro-regions played out in divergent ways. In the Maghreb, French literature came to represent a cultural alternative, today perhaps a minority. In contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa, French remains the unifying medium of communication, administration and education at the expense of local languages, a situation which also facilitates a stronger literary link to Europe and the Parisian center. The relative dominance of the French language and traditions in the former colonies contrasts with the more pronounced cultural blending between the metropolis and Portugal's African colonies of Angola and Mozambique.

A common feature of linguistic clashes is a period of multilingualism, through which diglossia or polyglossia can flourish through bilingual literatures, as is partly the case in Haiti, Martinique as well as in the literatures written in local languages of Africa which began to emerge in the 1960s. In many cases, diglossic or polyglot configurations lead to feedback loops of penetration of peripheral linguistic phenomena into European centralities to create linguistically and aesthetically hybrid forms. This key feature of Postmodernism represents just one of the many interaction phenomena between centers and peripheries through which the axiology of the periphery transforms that of the center.

Situations in which autonomizing tendencies occur at the linguistic and cultural interface can produce markedly new and unexpected results, especially when the centrality is subject to strong cultural pressure in its surroundings. A notable example is the literature of Aztlán, the ancient ancestral home of the Aztecs which has been claimed to lie everywhere from present-day Southern California to central Mexico (see below Part 1, Chapter 5). In this space, the legacy of which has been claimed by the Chicano and other movements, the bilingualism and biculturalism accentuate shifts from one language to another, two-way translating, and liminal spaces between languages. Similar phenomena can be found in the peripheral regions of Canada in the case of new Native American literature as well as in Martinican and Haitian literatures.

Argumentations regarding interspace, including heated debates and manipulations, appear to varying degrees in Brazilian and Angolan literature, as do positioning strategies between several centers in disputes pitting one centrality against another (Santiago, 2000).¹ The example of Quebec literature and its

1 Silvano Santiago's argumentation is close to Anglo-Saxon concepts as referenced in the work of Homi K. Bhabha. See the terms *in-between space*, *the third space* (Bhabha, 2004).

emphasis on both Frenchness in opposition to the Anglophone United States and Canada as well as Americanness in opposition to France is typical in this respect.

2 The Structuring of Literary Spaces

The linguistic question is also related to the tradition and formation of the various European literatures—here French, Spanish, Portuguese. These centers carry their *modus operandi* regarding the structuring of the literary field to their colonies, with Francophone, Hispanophone and Lusophone spaces each in their own way establishing flows between centrality and periphery. Especially in sub-Saharan Africa the dominant position is occupied by the highly centralized space of European French culture, where France and Paris have always played the leading role in relation to dependent areas. Conversely, in the polycentric Spanish-speaking space, dominant centrality shifts between Europe and America, thus although Mexico, Buenos Aires, Havana and Barcelona always seem to be in different stages of development, Madrid never plays the permanently dominant role as is the case with Paris. This intriguing difference along with concomitant specific characteristics of the lingo-cultural spaces have evidently emerged from the historical circumstances that have impacted cultural flows between Europe, the Americas, and Africa.

To all of this must be added the essential factor of cultural hierarchies within Europe itself. The dominance of French culture in the 19th and 20th centuries conditioned the partial interdependence of Spanish and Hispanic Modernism and Postmodernism with Paris (Casanova, 2004). To an even greater extent this applies to Lusophone literature, since Lisbon, Coimbra and later Rio de Janeiro, despite their central position in their respective spaces, often operated like semiperipheries in relation to French culture.

The strength of particular European centralities seems to have influenced the development of the (more or less) responsive peripheries and their variegating relations to the center. Francophone peripheries (Quebec, Haiti, Martinique, the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa) were the most affected by Parisian centrality; in order to achieve their own independent centrality, continuous and systematic modifications to cultural policy were required. On the other hand, Quebec as well as the Hispanophone and Lusophone peripheries seemed less attached to their European capitals. Brazilian and African Lusophone spaces have devoted a significant share of attention to Anglophone centers, whether in Europe, America or Africa. In the Hispanophone space, the aesthetic initiatives of Hispanic authors can be more closely linked to those

of Spanish authors. The interactions and overlapping influences among these authors and the dominance of tracks between Europe and America imply a different configuration of the axiology of the literary field, as was also the case with the Lusophone space. When contemporary Lusophone writers of Mozambique or Angola were able to enter Portuguese literature, their position within that literary field was different from that of African or Quebec authors in French literature. Even today, the integration of these African authors into the Portuguese centrality (or other centralities) continues to occur in different (perhaps more problematic) ways and with varying results.

3 Historical Factors

In addition to the strength of a European center at any given historical moment, the fact that European colonizations took place in a variety of spaces and historical conditions as well as through various relations between metropolises and colonies contributes to the formation of center/ periphery connections.

The differences among the relationships between centrality and peripheries in French-language literatures can help demonstrate some of these claims. Although the supremacy of the French language and culture was arguably most pronounced in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century both on a European scale as well as vis-à-vis non-Francophone centers and peripheries, political history (among other disciplines) clearly separates the American and African milieus. Except for islands off the coast of Canada and a number of territories in the Caribbean, France lost its American possessions at the turn of the 18th and 19th century; the influence of Paris in the Americas was therefore primarily cultural. On the other hand, Africa became the target of systematic French colonization during the 19th century through a structure centrally conceived in a linguistic unity to be enforced primarily through the colonial school system. The cultural power of France and the idea of a unified Francophone space centrally anchored in Paris brought about a concentration of international Black elites within the various provenances of the Caribbean, the United States, and the African colonies, culminating in the emergence of the inspirational Négritude movement in the 1930s along with its continuing influence and legacy even today in the magazine and publishing house *Présence africaine*. The center itself thus played a significant role in the formulation of arguments that were anti-colonial, decolonizing and, as a result, decentralizing and autonomizing. Nevertheless, a full autonomization of the periphery succeeded only in the case of Haitian literature, since independent Haiti was able to build its own consecratory institutions independent of France. The reverse is true for

Martinican literature as well as sub-Saharan and Maghrebian Francophone literatures, for which the attraction of the Parisian center continues to outweigh the peripheral institutions, with the strength of these Francophone peripheries manifesting itself mainly as a distinct cultural otherness in opposition to the central axiology. The position of Quebec literature is peculiar in that its deperipheralization is similar to the independence of resurgent or emerging European literatures, e.g. those of Czechia, Slovakia, Russia and Hungary. Although Quebec has lived to a greater degree under the shadow of Europe, *la littérature québécoise* has also begun building up autonomy and centrality in a similar way to European national literatures. The similarity also stems from the fact that the former French colony of *Nouvelle-France* was politically separated from France since 1763, and its originally French population was gradually subjected to a minority situation vis-à-vis English. Comparisons can thus readily be made to the situation of the small literatures of Central Europe which were exposed to dominant cultures and languages, especially German.

An analogous situation in terms of the different phases of decolonization may be found in the Lusophone space. While Brazil's independence was achieved in the first half of the 19th century, Portugal retained a presence in its African colonies Angola and Mozambique until after the Carnation Revolution in 1974. Unlike France and, comparatively, Spain, which lost its American possessions at roughly the same time as Portugal, Portuguese literature and culture did not have the strength to attach itself to and connect with the Brazilian space in a significant way after Brazil's political independence. Portugal's own semi-peripherality and its cultural orientation towards European dominants, especially Paris, is therefore also reflected in Brazilian culture, which in turn sought models and its modernist tendencies in European centers other than Lisbon or Coimbra. Hence, the deperipheralization of Brazil had not only Portuguese, but also European and North American components. In contrast, Angola and Mozambique have remained longer within the sphere of Portuguese culture, not only as a result of belated decolonization after the Carnation Revolution, but also due to the intermingling of Portuguese settlers in the colonies with colonial elites educated in Coimbra and Lisbon. Although Portuguese educational policies for African elites were similar to those of the French, the outcome was comparably dissimilar. The integration of the Portuguese-African elites into the central space was less pronounced, and therefore less "Portuguese," as Portugal's semi-peripheral position drew these elites more towards Paris and the creation of movements analogous to the Francophone Négritude.

One peculiarity of the Hispanophone area stems from the historical fact that compared to Portugal, France and Great Britain, Spain's colonial presence in Africa was marginal. Even in Latin America, Spain lost influence over its former

American colonies at the beginning of the 19th century, then after the Spanish-American War of 1898 relinquished its last territories of Cuba and the Philippines. Thus for Hispano-American intellectuals the United States became the primary ideological opponent (see below José Enrique Rodó's *Arielism*, Part 1, Chapter 4), with perhaps the colonial weakness of European Spain facilitating a greater degree of dialogue between the elites of the Spanish metropolis and those of the former colonies. These intellectual exchanges continued in the period following the Spanish Civil War, when Hispano-American countries, especially Mexico and Argentina, became a refuge for numerous Spanish writers and artists. The Franco regime, the trauma of the Spanish Civil War, and the leftist discourses of Hispanophone elites, whether of Spanish or Hispano-American origin, also enabled this "shared centrality" between America and Europe, which was, moreover, accentuated by several eminent figures who chose Paris as their place of emigration. These manifestations of semi-peripherality were balanced by the relative successes of Hispano-American generations at the turn of the 20th century, and perhaps to a degree peripherality was completely overcome (at least for a time) by the emergence of the worldwide literary influence of the Boom generation of the 1960s.

4 Identitarian Discourses

Deperipheralization is inseparable from state and national affirmation, a process and a position which is accompanied by the shaping of collective and individual representations of self and others. Naturally, historical factors are also strongly involved in these processes. Along with the fundamental differences between African and American colonization, notable variations can be traced among the diverse areas within the American space, not only in terms of language, but geopolitics, economics and anthropology. Significant dissimilarities existed among the numerous sites of Euro-American colonization: the temperate climatic zones (the north of the United States, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, the south of Brazil), the Indo-American zone (Mexico and the Central American states, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru), as well as that part of the continent where the plantation economy led to the mass importation of slave labor from Africa (the northeast of Brazil, Guyana, the Caribbean, and the south of the United States) (see below Part 1, Chapter 3; Wagley, 1975: 31–45). The variegations of history, geography and economy created fractures within American cultural and linguistic areas, distinguishing for example Quebec and Caribbean Francophony. Frictions were also cultivated between the Brazilian north and south as well as among indigenous Amerindians, European colonists,

descendants of the original Black slaves and immigrants, whether from Europe or other parts of the world (see below Part 1, Chapter 6, Part 1, Chapter 7). These factors are variously inscribed in the formation of national identities, creating conflict situations and co-creating culture through processes which have led to the establishment of dominant or attendant identity discourses.

French-Canadian and Quebec literature is undoubtedly closest to the European, Herderian model of linking the autonomization of literature to the project of national emancipation and the formation of the modern nation-state. Here we can find significant parallels with the formation of national identity, especially as was developed in the Central European context; clear similarities to the situations of Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Polish culture, and even to that of Herder's Germany can be delineated. Other paradigms can also be identified. The confluences among literature, language, history and ethnic roots in constituting a modern industrial state along with the requisite education system corresponds in part to Gellner's model of European nationalisms of the so-called Habsburg type (Gellner, 1983). The development of Quebec identity follows Bouchard's typology of dominant and recessive patterns from the Enlightenment model, ranging from nationally emancipatory and nationally defensive patterns to postmodern multicultural configurations (Bouchard, 2001). We also encounter hints of such modeling in Brazil and Haiti, particularly in the creation of national histories and the mythicization of pre-colonial narratives associated with indigenous Indian populations. In most cases, however, identity narratives in the Americas and Africa, both for the first phase of decolonization in the 19th century as well as the second phase in the second half of the 20th century, have been shaped according to the model of Benedict Anderson (1991), i.e. the linguistic factor is not fundamental in separating the periphery from the metropolis in the first stage of emancipation, only emerging as an identity feature in the later stages of autonomization.

Anderson also shows the importance of certain principles applicable to Africa, particularly colonial cartography and other divisions of the territory of the former colonies. The absence or disappearance of local languages and cultures, at least initially, accentuated the importance of philosophical, psychological, social and political arguments in several decolonization and post-colonial theories, from those of Frantz Fanon (1952) to Edward Said (2003) to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988); these models offer not only explanations of partial identity phenomena, but can also be used to displace overly ideological identity arguments. It is pertinent to note at this point that to a large extent even in this respect decolonization and postcolonial arguments involve the transmission and extension of ideas that can be identified in the early stages of the thought of certain eminent intellectuals of Parisian centrality, notably

Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault. Moreover, strands of argumentation can also be traced in predecessors of these thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci, Karl Marx, and even further back in history in the ideas of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. This filiation, through which above all the problem of alterity comes to be theorized, continues in contemporary American and African Hegelians and Marxists, including Charles Taylor (1998), Glen Sean Coulthard (2021), Alfred Adler (2017), Jean Gobert Tanoh (2020), and Benoît Okol Okonda (2010).

Despite the ultimate divergence of aspects of these models, an interesting correlation can in fact be made between the earlier American and the later African phases of decolonization in which a number of arguments may be seen to overlap. The case of Quebec is symptomatic in this respect: both the minority language factor and the struggle of elites for sovereignty can be explained through the efforts to found a modern nation-state, which *de facto* the province of Quebec partly became after the *Révolution tranquille* of the 1960s and the passing of a series of language laws culminating in Act 101 of 1977. However, the arguments of the Quiet Revolution elites also presupposes the arguments of “African” and “Afro-American” decolonization in the 20th century, for example the essay by Pierre Vallières *Nègres blancs d’Amérique* (*White Niggers of America*, 1968) describes the intertwining of sundry identitarian legacies that emerge in varying degrees and combinations throughout deperipheralization processes in different cultures.

The question of identitarian narratives is particularly pressing in cases when the periphery lacks its own written historiography and when it is unable or refuses to identify with the historiography of the colonizer. Basic difficulties, often insurmountable ones, must be overcome if a population attempts to base consciousness of its own territorialized history on oral tradition alone, especially when such consciousness has been violently interrupted, as in the case of slave transfers from Africa to the American plantations as well as the active suppression of African, Native American and other indigenous oral traditions after colonization. Identitarian discourses then tend toward mythologizing imagery, for example the metonymical image of a common Mother Africa as suggested by the Négritude movement and those influenced by it such as Jean Price-Mars (1928; see below Part 1, Chapter 3, Part 2, Chapter 12). Another strategy is to incorporate the oral tradition and associated imagery directly into literary and cultural discourse. Keeping all of this in mind, it is not surprising that the contribution of oral literature is generally more pronounced in originally peripheral literatures than in European ones, in which such traditions faded away centuries earlier with the popular dissemination of the printed word. A third approach which some literatures of the Americas and Africa continue to employ is the conscious creation of collective memory through works of fic-

tion which actively seek to reconstruct lost oral memory, an art and craft often based on material traces that remain. Significantly, in most cases, conceptions of *space*, not *time*, provide the crucial underpinning of collective memory and identity narrative (see above Chapter 1).

5 Similarities and Differences

An awareness of similar cultural situations, often along with the geographical proximity of peripheries, lead to mutual communication and exchanges, i.e. peripheries can also relate to each other, not only to “their” metropolitan centers. Communities make use of inter-peripheral links, and even relations to other centralities. In the Americas, Caribbean Francophony communicates with Quebec, with both of these peripheries linking to Anglophone North America and to the Brazilian space, although connections are also forged in various ways to Africa. We find similar patterns of communication in the Lusophone literatures of Africa, Brazil and Portugal, while the literary patterns of the Hispanophone area, especially Magical Realism, are heavily reflected in Francophony and Lusophony.

Many movements and artistic discourses share common or similar bases. Francophone Négritude and Lusophone Negritude are the most obvious examples, but such movements as Indigenismo, Indigénisme, and Noirisme are also representative derivatives. The anthropophagy of the Brazilian Oswald de Andrade (1928) can also be found in the attitudes of the Quebecer Robert Charbonneau (1993). We must hasten to add that these similarities are evident not only in the designating labels, but represent an integral part of the logic of development and structural analogies of these movements. Every deperipheralization moves between two poles: on the one hand the emphasis on local specificity and authenticity, and on the other the necessity of universalism and syncretism as a necessary component of recognition by the other, that is, by the center and / or the international community. Of utmost importance among structural factors we must rank the axiological structuring of the peripheral literary field, its non-saturation, non-hierarchy and hybridity. In identifying the signs of otherness, we can also map the layering and overlapping of developmental stages, which in central cultures are separated by ruptures in the timeline, with the subsequent dominant stage negating the previous one. In the habitus of the emancipating peripheries, a new and exciting conception of temporality and its relation to spatiality has evolved. Different developmental conditions within the former peripheries have led not only to aesthetic innovations, but also to remarkable theoretical achievements

and impulses. If we may provide a glimpse at some of the concepts elaborated upon in the following subsections of this chapter, they include the theory of interspace of the Brazilian Silviano Santiago (2000), the Martinican Édouard Glissant's poetics of Relation (Glissant, 1981, 1997), and the "errant rootedness" (*enracinerrance*) of the Haitian Jean-Claude Charles (2001).

It will not escape the reader that the emancipatory journeys of indigenous peripheries towards autonomy are dissimilar in terms of origin, length of time, quality and ultimate results. In some spaces, a complete deperipheralization culminating in the constitution of a new centrality can be traced (Brazil, Quebec); elsewhere, deperipheralization is brought to autonomy (Haiti) or to the constitution of an influential aesthetic component within European centrality (Martinique, Francophone Africa, Lusophone Africa). In the case of the Hispanophone space and to a lesser degree the Lusophone, a specific polycentricity can be detected, especially in connection with the globalizing book market.

In today's incredibly rapidly changing context, a number of positions can be delineated, from which one looming question may be posed. The emancipation of peripheries has so far taken place in the margins of European national literatures as a domiciliation and territorialization of aesthetic values within the constitution of the newly forming states of the Americas and Africa. Yet, like the globalization of other products, the globalizing book market creates wholly novel conditions for literature than those created with the framework of the nation state. The example of the transformations of the massive Spanish-language space shows that a new relationship and a new tension has developed between the universally Hispanophone and the local. In the present situation, language and linguistic communication remain the only limiting factor shaping a protective frontier. The question is when and how these boundaries will be broken by new technologies and what further boundaries will be fixed (and transgressed).

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American Francophone Literature: Quebec, Martinique, Haiti

Petr Kyloušek

Throughout the American continent, anthropologists distinguish three cultural regions: Euro-America (the north of the United States, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and the south of Brazil), Indo-America (Mexico and the Central American states, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru), and Plantation America (the northeast of Brazil, Guyana, the Caribbean, and the south of the United States) (Wagley, 1975: 31–45). Euro-America occupies the two extreme northern and southern ends of the continent, in which the temperate and subarctic climatic zones favored European agricultural colonization and later industrialization and urbanization. During this process, the demographic predominance of European colonists in these areas pushed the influence of the indigenous population into the background in a relatively short time period. Due to all of these factors, the transmission of European culture to these areas also became dominant. These conditions, however, did not prevail in the Indo-American areas, where European colonizers and settlers encountered advanced Native American civilizations and large indigenous populations. Although the newcomers established the dominance of European languages—Spanish and Portuguese—European culture in these areas did not penetrate deep into the majority population. Moreover, acculturation was often (and continues to be) hampered by the isolation and inaccessibility of mountainous areas. Plantation America was not only affected demographically by the massive importation of Black slaves from Africa, but also socially and economically by the plantation monoculture system of sugar, coffee, tobacco, and cotton. The consequence is a distinct social stratigraphy, often reified in putatively strict racialized divisions. This also corresponds to a linguistic stratification in which the dominant cultural languages of the colonizers—Dutch, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese—are confronted with the various varieties of Creole spread extensively throughout certain regions. The broader culture is distinctly diglossic: while Creole is associated with orality and linked to animistic religious ideas and voodoo customs, the written literature adheres to European models. The cultural identity of Plantation America continues to be marked by the trauma of uprooted African populations, separated from their indigenous cultural ties

and deprived of cultural memory and historical consciousness, which would later come to be more widely thematized and conceptualized in the 20th century.

1 The Deperipheralization of Francophone Canada

The autonomization efforts of French-Canadian culture have historically stemmed from a linguistic minority position in relation to the Anglophone culture of Canada and the United States as well as from a peripheral linguistic and cultural position vis-à-vis France. For some commentators this complex peripheralization has led to an interesting argumentative game featuring the valorization of this periphery, which lies at the intersection of several least three centers in France, Canada and the United States: the distinctiveness of Frenchness is pitted against Anglophony, while the specificity of Canadianness and Frenchness is set against the Americanness of the United States (Charbonneau, 1993; Godbout, 1974: 33; Gauvin, 2000: 38–39) as well as Americanness against France. Further, arguments concerning the rebellion of the colonized French-Canadians can be made against all of these binaries (Vallières, 1968).

Among critical historical moments, let us recall the Patriot Revolution (1837–1838), which along with the memory of the American Revolution, rode upon the wave of revolutions and conspiracies of the 1830s in Europe. In North America, the primary demand was to break free from British colonial rule. After the suppression of the Patriot Revolution, the London government sent the liberal diplomat John George Lambton Durham to analyze the situation. Durham's *Report on the Affairs of British North America* (1839) outlined not only the need for gradual decolonization, but the document also described the path to the creation of a modern nation-state with a single language and a single administration. In other words, Durham proposed the gradual assimilation of the French-Canadians, seeing them as a people without an authentic culture and history. His argument is essentially Herderian, only seen through a different lens:

There can hardly be conceived a nationality more destitute of all that can invigorate and elevate a people, than that which is exhibited by the descendants of the French in Lower Canada, owing to their retaining their peculiar language and manners. They are a people with no history, and no literature.

Sentiments such as Durham's instigated efforts by French-Canadians at emancipation, further motivating them to begin writing their history from their own perspective in such a way as to create a historical identity and memory for the times and for the future. The French-Canadian people conceptualized their identity as a fusion of language, Catholicism and a historical mission in the colonization of *le nouveau Monde*. As these endeavors progressed, what remained was to cultivate literature. The publication of François-Xavier Garneau's *Histoire du Canada* (*History of Canada*, 1845–1852) and Abbé Jean-Baptiste Ferland's *Cours d'histoire du Canada* (*Lectures on the History of Canada*, 1861, 1865) accompanied the writing of the first novels, short stories and poetry, nearly all of which James Huston collected in the canonical anthology *Répertoire national* (1848–1850). The *École patriotique de Québec*, a literary school, and the literary journals *Les Soirées canadiennes* (1861–1865) and *Le Foyer canadien* (1862–1866) were founded around the poet Octave Crémazie along with the critic and historian Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain. Thus, in social discourse and collective identity, three identity patterns were simultaneously formed that according to Gérard Bouchard would alternate in a dominant or recessive position of identity and cultural expression throughout the 19th and almost the entire 20th century: the national emancipatory pattern, the defensive pattern in the liberal position, and the traditionalist pattern in the conservative position (Bouchard, 2001).

This cultural emancipation was carried out against the backdrop of still-forming and therefore culturally undefined centralities—Anglophone Canada and the United States. However, the main thrust of the effort was directed against the dominance of Anglophone Canada and against France itself. In response to their English-speaking compatriots, emancipation was primarily a question of language. The dispute over majority English and minority French status would finally be settled by federal and provincial legislation in the 1960s and 1970s after much litigation and reversals of position. These efforts culminated in the aforementioned Bill 101 of 1977, which elevated French to the status of a majority language within the province of Quebec, with English relegated to the role of a protected minority language. The record of the past four decades clearly shows the successful Francization of education, industry, services and the public space in Quebec and other smaller areas of Francophone Canada.

The relationship with France is much more complex, as it touches on two identity pillars—language and culture. By pitting the French language against Anglophone Canadians, French-Canadians have had to deal with the complex and long-standing question of the legitimacy of their own variety of French and the question of authority over their own linguistic norm. In literature, of

course, this entails the self-legitimacy of the literary discourse by its own practitioners. The crucial question emerged regarding the relationship between the center, which has consecrating axiological authority, and the periphery.

An inferiority complex accompanied linguistic emancipation for almost a century, since 1865, when the journalist Arthur Buies wrote a column for *Le Pays* entitled *Barbarismes canadiens*. As many as 64 similar newspaper columns deprecating Canadian French were published, some as late as the 1960s. The headings of the editorials, which were often phrased as a challenge, eloquently characterized the relationship to the mother tongue: Let's Correct Ourselves (Corrigeons-nous), Let's Amend Our Language (Épurons notre langue), Say it Right in French (Dites en bon français), Let's Speak Better (Parlons mieux), Let's Preserve Our Language (Sauvegardons notre langue), The Language of Our Fathers (La langue de nos pères), The Native Land (Le terroir), etc. Some of these condemnations of this putatively inferior speech bordered on national masochism, with the Canadian way of speaking considered "ungainly, dislocated, lame, anemic, spoiled, bastardized, and gangrenous" ("informe, désarticulé, boiteux, anémique, corrompu, abâtardi, gangrené"; Plourde, 2003: 200). This inferiority complex was reinforced by the contempt of Anglophone elites for French-Canadian patois. (An even stronger animus against French was legally enforced in Louisiana at the beginning of the 20th century, when the state government banned French from all school education in 1921. Children whose only language was French were not allowed to speak their mother tongue on school grounds. See Part 3, Chapter 15. below.)

The assertion of a more positive self-perception of French-Canadians regarding their language emerged as romanticizing folklorists and linguists collected the native expressions, artifacts and extracts from the region. An interesting early discussion of arguments in favor of the language spoken and written in French Canada can be found in Oscar Dunn's *Glossaire franco-canadien, et vocabulaire de locutions vicieuses usitées au Canada* (*French-Canadian Glossary and Vocabulary of Vicious Expressions Used in Canada*, 1880):

We use several words which the [French] Academy rejects, but which have come to us from France [...]. All these expressions prove our origin; each of them is a certificate of nationality.

DUNN, 1880: XIX–XX¹

1 "Nous employons un bon nombre de mots qui, rejetés par l'Académie, nous sont venus toutefois de France [...]. Toutes ces expressions prouvent notre origine; elles sont autant de certificats de nationalité."

The archaic features of Canadian French, which still retains elements of eighteenth-century pronunciation, were thus valorized by the ideologically conservative argument of origin and indigeneity.

At the next stage, Sylva Clapin (1853–1928), author of the *Dictionnaire canadien-français* (1894), should be mentioned as well as the collective efforts of the *Société du parler français au Canada* (*French Language Society of Canada*, from 1902) which resulted in the *Glossaire du parler français au Canada* (*Glossary of French in Canada*, 1930) containing approximately 10,000 entries. Finally comes the syncretic work of Louis-Alexandre Bélisle (1902–1985) *Dictionnaire général de la langue française au Canada* (*General Dictionary of the French Language in Canada*, 1957).

The emancipation of Canadian French from Continental French entered its final phase with the so-called Quiet Revolution (*Révolution tranquille*) of the 1960s. Here we can observe two seemingly contradictory but ultimately complementary tendencies. The first is linked to the decolonizing ideology of the leftist intellectuals of the journal *Parti pris* (1963–1968), who contended that French-Canadians could not break out of colonial-cultural dependence on France as long as they accepted the dictates of its language and its authority over language. It was, therefore, necessary for French-Canadians to develop a culture in their own language, that is, the language of the putatively colonized and humiliated. This language came to be referred to as *joual*, the sociolect of the working-class periphery of Montreal, a tongue which alone could properly express the position of Vallières' *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* (*White Niggers of America*, 1968). The main features of this movement were similar to the Martinique *créolité* movement of Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant (see below) and to the promotion of Creole in Haitian literature. Thus, in Quebec the Canadian Creole language—*joual*—entered literature through the main gateway and became elevated to the pedestal of a sophisticated language of high literature, especially in the theatrical and later novel works of Michel Tremblay (along with other writers).

In addition to the radical and essentially socially minoritarian demand of the *Parti pris*, which would have meant a complete linguistic separation from French, the Quebec government took action in 1961 when it established the *Office de la langue française* (1961) as well as four years later the rather peculiar *Norme du français écrit et parlé au Québec* (*Canadian Standard of Written and Spoken French in Quebec*, 1965). Above all, the autonomization argument was essential: French was declared an international language with several variants as spoken in France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Quebec. This proclamation implied a rejection of the Parisian authority of the French Academy over the linguistic norm. This linguistic deperipheralization and the move towards lin-

guistic centrality were taking place in parallel with the deperipheralization of culture and literature. It is no coincidence that in a special issue *Pour une littérature québécoise* (*For a Quebec Literature; Parti pris*, 1965, 2) the magazine *Parti pris* actively opposed the label “French-Canadian” and deliberately omitted references to France, Frenchness, and Canadianness.

The legitimization of consecrating authority in the linguistic and literary spheres represents the axiological inevitability of deperipheralization and autonomization on the pathway to the constitution of a separate centrality. For Francophone Canada, this process can be divided into three phases. The first was based mainly on conservative positions corresponding to Bouchard’s defensive identity pattern, which valorizes local specificity, pitting it against universality. Here relationships regarding exclusion dominated. Temporally, this phase was situated at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The literature in this period followed in the wake of the Quebec linguists defending the distinctiveness of Canadian French. The speech of the literary critic and historian Camille Roy at the annual meeting of the *Société du parler français au Canada* (*French Language Society of Canada*) held at Laval University on December 5, 1904 can be taken as a reference. The title of the lecture sets out the program’s objectives: The Nationalization of Canadian Literature (*La Nationalisation de la littérature canadienne*). Camille Roy projected a fundamental threat to the distinctive Canadianness in contemporary French literature (“notre plus grande ennemie c’est la littérature française contemporaine”). He declared that literature must be cultivated in the national spirit (“génie national”), and above all feature Canadian topics (“traiter des sujets canadiens, et les traiter d’une façon canadienne”). Only in this way could French-Canadian literature escape the status of a colonial literature (“littérature coloniale”) (Roy, 1904, 1905, in: Marcotte, 1995: 64–78).

The path to distinctiveness, however, was hindered by a fundamental contradiction that accompanies the processes of deperipheralization: the contradiction between the emphasis of a people on their own specificity and the necessity of cultural openness, which is the only way to be recognized by others, including centers. In this case, the situation was all the more difficult, as the language of Parisian center was (seen as) the consecrating example. The need to come to terms with this center of the cultural world (as well as the source of modern and avant-garde art) which dictated the trajectory of the language seemed unsurmountable. The sense that Canadian French always seemed to be catching up with the continent led to contradictory attitudes. One example of this ambivalent position can be found in the nationalist Jules-Paul Tardivel (1989: 25) in the preface to his novel *Pour la Patrie* (*For the Fatherland*, 1895), in which the author both follows and reprobates the model of the French novel.

The position of Tardivel is similar to that of Oscar Dunn, mentioned above. Tardivel's French references also turn to conservative literary-critical examples, albeit under the pressure of modernity. A similar tension was concurrently being manifested within the Montreal Literature School (*École littéraire de Montréal*) in the alternation between the avant-garde tendencies of the Symbolists, Decadents, so-called Parisianists and Exotists on the one hand, and then the Regionalists and Intimists on the other. Literary practice usually moved between these two poles (on the ideological fluctuation of Quebec elites, see Bouchard, 2004). The fluidity and license entailed in these negotiations would come to be valorized in the next stage of deperipheralization.

It is worth recalling that the aforementioned phase of deperipheralization would have been unthinkable without institutional security. One crucial factor was the Catholic Church, which at the end of the 18th century was able to negotiate a compromise with the British colonial administration in exchange for social stability to obtain a guarantee of religious freedom, which also brought linguistic and ethnic guarantees. This in turn gave the Catholic Church a decisive influence in Francophone education and the ability to influence intellectual elites in the long term, preventing the wide penetration of liberal trends. The conflict between liberal and conservative attitudes carried over into the struggle for control over various institutions. The high school system, the *collèges*, was built under the supervision of the Catholic Church in the first half of the 19th century, and completed by Laval University, founded in 1852, and the University of Montreal in 1878. It should be recalled that by this time Anglo-Canadians already had five universities, with McGill founded in 1828. Francophone public libraries were also established to a lesser extent and later than Anglophone libraries. Some libraries were founded by learned societies (*Institut national*, 1852; *Union catholique*, 1854; *Institut canadien-français d'Ottawa*, 1852), while others were collected in a network of parish libraries: in 1869, the province of Quebec had 284 libraries, with a total collection of 196,704 items (Lemire, Saint-Jacques, 1999: 236). The most important collection was in Montreal's Saint Sulpicius Library, which in 1967 would be transformed into the *Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec* (National Library of Quebec). The publishing houses of Augustin Côté, John Lovell, George-Édouard Débarats, Charles-Odilon Beauchemin, and Eusèbe Senécal were established, although their output depended mainly on religious and school publications. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, imported books accounted for 95% of all sales. The local literary market was relatively embryonic, as Continental French production predominated. Local culture developed mainly in the pages of successful literary journals: the *Recueil littéraire* (1888–1891), the *Recueil littéraire des jeunes* (1892–1893), *L'Écho des jeunes*. *Revue éclectique* (1891–1895), *Le Terroir*

(1909), *Le Nigog* (1918), *Les Cahiers de Turc* (1921–1927). New theaters where the bourgeois public flocked were also being built: the *Monument-National* (1893), the *Théâtre des Variétés* (1898), the *Théâtre National* (1900), the *Théâtre des Nouveautés* (1902), the *Théâtre Canadien* (1911). These institutional foundations of the first phase of deperipheralization would expand in later periods, with their development an essential factor in the process of autonomization and the constitution of Quebec centrality.

The second stage of deperipheralization would be dominated by the liberal elites of the 1940s, with their avant-garde openness and linkage of identitarian performance with Canadianness and Americanness. Another difference is that this phase no longer entailed a one-sided proclamation of specificity, but a polemic between Quebec and France, specifically between the representative of the *La Relève* generation (1934–1948) and French intellectuals such as Jean Cassou, Louis Aragon, Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, and Stanislas Fumet. A series of polemical essays were organized into the collection *La France et nous. Journal d'une querelle (France and Us. Journal of a Controversy, 1947)*. The importance of the controversy for Quebec literature is evidenced by the fact that the book could only be republished almost 40 years later, in 1993 (which we cite here) with an important foreword by Elisabeth-Nardout Lafarge, professor of the University of Montreal. The plural “Us” in the title should be understood as a manifestation of Bouchard’s emancipatory identity pattern (Kyloušek, 2009: 31–38), as European France represents here an obstacle to be overcome. Cultural and literary references as well as individual arguments illuminate the reconfiguration of the French-Canadian and French literary fields, revealing a dialectic of continuity and discontinuity in literary development.

What is surprising is the self-assuredness of the French-Canadian position at the time. No trace can be found of the former inferiority and subordination complex. How can this transformation from submission to self-determination be explained? Certainly, two factors are at work here, the first literary, the second economic and political, with definitions of the role of cultural institutions lying at the intersection of these positions. First, Robert Charbonneau was acting on behalf of a powerful new generation of avant-garde poets and novelists such as Anne Hébert, Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau, Gabrielle Roy, Alain Grandbois, Yves Thériault and others. These writers were quite aware of the moment in time as well as of their own position and the fact that their work would form the core of the new literary canon.

Equally important is the second factor: the economic development of Canada, which became an industrial power during World War Two. In addition to the secondary effect of economic growth on the development of the book market, the processes of autonomization were directly affected by the impos-

sibility of importing books from occupied France as well as the measures taken by the Canadian government to suspend international publishing and copyright restrictions. This gave Quebec publishers the advantage of being able to export French-language books throughout the free world, which they took full advantage of by increasing and enhancing domestic production. Publishing houses, which until then had to rely heavily on school books and religious literature, could now shift their focus to fiction. While in 1939, 269 titles had been published, by 1943 that number had doubled to 516. In addition to the established publishers Beauchemin, Granger, Garneau, Éditions du Lévrier, Éditions du Totem (1933), Éditions du Zodiaque (1935) and Fides (1937), new publishing houses emerged such as Éditions de l'Arbre (1941), Variétés (1940), Parizeau (1943) and Pascal (1944), and with them the new literary magazines *Les Idées* and *La Relève*. A later version of *La Relève* called *La Nouvelle Relève* was associated with Charbonneau's publishing house Éditions de l'Arbre (Michon, 2004).

Related to this transformation is the institutional question of legitimating authority, that is, who was to affirm the symbolic value of literary goods. Here, the influence of extra-literary factors becomes apparent. Economic growth stimulated the growth of the reading public, governmental measures strengthened the position of publishers and the book market, and the magazine market created new conditions for legitimizing autonomy. Gabrielle Roy's urban Realism novel *Bonheur d'occasion* (*The Tin Flute*, 1945), published by Éditions Pascal in Montreal, may serve as an example. The putative hierarchy of international recognition this work received is also symptomatic, as the being made "featured book of the month" by the Literary Guild of America (1947) was now seen as more significant (and lucrative) than winning the Prix Femina (1947) awarded in Paris.

It should be pointed out, however, that Charbonneau's polemics came in the post-war situation, when the legislative position was normalizing, French publishers were reasserting their rights, and Quebec publishers were now losing a significant share of the book market they had acquired. In 1945, imports from France took back the Quebec market, making up 85% of sales. As a result, many Quebec publishers disappeared, including Charbonneau's Éditions de l'Arbre (1948). Therefore, his attacks also served as a source of resistance to preserve the authorial and publishing achievements of the previous period. Charbonneau's arguments can also be seen as a prime example of the close interdependence among factors regarding the localization of publication, possibilities for achieving legitimization, and cultural autonomy.

Let us summarize the circumstances of the Quebec-French polemical exchanges. At the outset, the polemic is French-French, for example in an article

on French-Canadian literature in *Figaro littéraire* (1 January 1946) by Georges Duhamel, who had recently briefly visited Quebec. Duhamel writes of Quebec as “a branch of the French tree, a mighty branch which, although it seems separated from the parent trunk by a mighty wall, does honor to the life of the tree.” This metaphor provoked the indignation of Étienne Gilson, a well-respected expert on French-Canadian culture, in *Le Monde* (7 January 1946): “[...] it is not a branch, but a tree of the same kind [...], another tree.”² This assertion of independence, however, was followed by an attack by *Les Lettres françaises* (8.3. 1946) (Nardout-Lafarge, in: Charbonneau, 1993: 14–15) in an anonymous article, attributed, however, to Louis Aragon. The piece accuses French-Canadian publishers of publishing French authors suspected of collaborationism in France and whose books were forbidden to be published in post-war France. Robert Charbonneau’s response to this text also signifies the beginning of the clashes of the Quebec author with such French writers as Jean Cassou, Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, André Billy, and Stanislas Fumet.

With the passing of the years, it is clear that these political questions represent a deeper conflict between the center and the periphery (as fully independent or striving for independence) that touches on the question of legitimizing authority. *Les Lettres françaises* and in a milder form other French institutions of legitimization were seeking to impose the image and configuration of their literary field (and the values they accepted or rejected) on the area they considered *their* periphery. At the same time, literature written in French was experiencing the incursion of politics, with the French literary field itself undergoing a reconfiguration under the strong influence of extra-aesthetic, i.e. political criteria. It should be recalled that the Blacklists first published in 1944 by the Comité National des Écrivains in *Les Lettres Françaises* increased the number of banned authors from 20 to 94, finally to 158, and that this list was also approved worldwide at the Stockholm meeting of the PEN Club in 1946. However, as the controversy shows, Francophone Canada did not follow this authoritative statement and thus escaped (de)legitimizing French references. This is also how the situation was interpreted by Charbonneau—as a dispute over legitimizing authority.

Charbonneau’s arguments begin with the legitimacy and authority of the author as personified in his own experience and acknowledged achievements. His Preface to the 1947 edition of *La France et nous* is eloquent in this regard. Charbonneau cites several facts in support: he knows the whole of French

2 “[...] branche de l’arbre français, une branche robuste et qui semble séparée du tronc original par une épaisse muraille, mais une branche quand même et qui fait honneur à la vitalité de l’arbre”; “ce n’est pas une branche, mais un arbre de même espèce [...], un autre arbre.”

literature well, which cannot be said of his opponents; he himself has been described as a distinguished author, as the Anglo-Canadian (not French-Canadian) trade journal *Toronto Quarterly* attests; he is well acquainted with publishing as director of Éditions de l'Arbre, in previous years also having published French resistance authors; he is a member of the *Académie canadienne-française*; he is president of the *Société des éditeurs*; he has won several literary prizes.

The positions of Charbonneau fit categorically into the ontological and axiological features of the relationship between center and periphery (see above Chapter 1). Let us begin with the features that seem most pressing—legitimation and authority. In many places, Charbonneau opposes Paris's claim to impose the axiology of the center on literature, which Paris regards as *its* periphery and part of its own literary field. At the core of the argument, as it were, is the politicized value system that the Comité National des Écrivains (National Committee of Writers) imposes as a criterion of literary legitimacy. Even if Charbonneau cannot entirely ignore the political aspect of the problem, his response expresses his rejection of French criteria. His main argument, presented as universal, is the autonomy of art and the necessity of the independence of literature from politics:

We are blamed for giving more importance to worthy writers than to the documents of the Resistance. In Canada, the resistance card does not have the same significance as in France [...].

Mr. Aragon, like Jean Cassou, takes the opportunity to grimly declaim his creed, which is more political than literary. [...] Let us not mix politics and literature.

CHARBONNEAU, 1993: 40 and 60³

The affirmation of one's own authority and the very legitimacy of authorization itself goes hand in hand with the denial of the control of the other. This affirmation of legitimacy is an expression of, in Bourdieu's words, "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, Wacquant, 1992: 110–143). Note that this concerns not only French-

3 "On nous reproche d'accorder plus d'importance aux écrivains de valeurs qu'à certains documents de la Résistance. Au Canada, un brevet de résistance n'a pas la même importance qu'en France [...]." "Il va sans dire que M. Aragon, comme M. Jean Cassou d'ailleurs, [...] profite de l'occasion pour déclamer, avec accompagnement de musique attristée, des professions de foi politiques plutôt que littéraires. [...] Ne confondons pas la politique et la littérature."

Canadian literature but the entire French literary field. It is tempting to see this feature as characteristic of the separation situation: while the periphery continues to share literary and cultural goods with the center, it refuses henceforth to apply the value standards that the center intends to assert as universally legitimate. By depriving the center of its legitimizing authority, the autonomizing periphery is free to appropriate the center's achievements, but through this process it is already incorporating these markers, discourses and accomplishments into its own value system. A parallel line of reasoning regarding arguments for autonomy, including the autonomy of the literary field, is autonomy claimed as resistance to heteronomy.

The above quotations suggest another aspect of the autonomization process: the valorization of the self at the expense of the devalorization of the state of Continental French literature. Thus, Charbonneau's view of the post-war situation in France is highly critical:

Even before the war, it seemed that one or two distinguished works arrived with every mail delivery: Bernanos, Claudel, Mauriac, Valéry, Duhamel, Maritain, Berdiaeff, Lacretelle, Giraudoux [...]. This was a French literature that represented the creative Avant-garde, an extraordinary world literature. And now, after five years of separation, we have the "books of France" again. But what is France sending us? It is sending us the sign of a divided and inward-looking nation, a literature stuck in place, with no innovation, only repeating itself. I must point out here that not all writers are the subject of my criticism in this regard. But these do not compensate for the overall mediocrity.

CHARBONNEAU, 1993: 37–38⁴

This judgment fits perfectly with the "North American" view of Europe as a declining, exhausted, powerless continent, which America will replace as the new center of culture:

4 "Avant la guerre, chaque courrier nous apportait un ou deux livres marquants. Bernanos, Claudel, Mauriac, Valéry, Duhamel, Maritain, Berdiaeff, Lacretelle, Giraudoux [...]. Il existait une littérature française qui était à l'avant-garde de la création, une littérature éminemment universelle. Et voici qu'après cinq ans de séparation, on nous annonce des livres de France. Que nous apporte la France? Elle nous apporte les signes d'un peuple divisé, replié sur lui-même, d'une littérature qui ne continue pas, qui n'innove pas, mais qui se recommence. Je me hâte de dire que plusieurs écrivains échappent à ce reproche. Mais ils ne peuvent compenser la médiocrité de l'ensemble."

Literary production is a sign of a nation's vitality. The crisis Europe is experiencing seems to stem from exhaustion. [...] for those of us who have ceased to believe that Europe is the center from which artistic impulses emanate, the crisis of the French novel in no way implies a weakening of the creative potential in the world.

CHARBONNEAU, 1993: 57⁵

In his Herderian argument, Charbonneau emphasizes the influence of writers from the United States ("Paris is publishing more editions of John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, and even James Cain, Henry Miller, and Dashiell Hammett."). His rhetorical strategy, however, is to parallel and highlight the rise of French-Canadian works: "Our literature has entered the last phase that precedes its entry into a universal world literature." ("Notre littérature a franchi la dernière étape, celle qui précède son entrée dans la littérature universelle [...]." [Charbonneau 1993: 61]). Charbonneau is aware that emancipation, a process which he is both enacting and commenting on, consists of a deperipheralization in relation to the center. He adopts an argument by Camille Roy: "The first step of any literature on the road to autonomy consists in the rejection of any colonial conception of culture." ("Le premier pas d'une littérature vers l'autonomie consiste à répudier toute conception coloniale de la culture." [Charbonneau 1993: 34]). He is aware that decolonization, in this case deperipheralization, is a historical process, and he looks to the past for support. His European outlook beyond France is indicative, beginning with his reference to Russian literature in his 1947 Preface of *La France et nous*. He mentions the Russian dispute between Westerners and Slavophiles, the latter of whose victory he sees as the beginning of the growth and entry of Russian literature into world literature. Charbonneau quotes extensively from Dostoyevsky's letter to Tsarevich Alexander, in which certain keywords are stressed concerning the axiological transformation—"self-humiliation," "pride," "worldliness" / "humiliation," "fierté," "signification mondiale"—and agreeing with Dostoyevsky throughout: "[...] it is necessary to stop thinking like the people of the provinces" ("il faut cesser de penser en provinciaux" [Charbonneau 1993: 45]). Alongside Russian literature, he also refers to the rise of the literatures of the United States and Latin America:

5 "La création littéraire est le signe de vitalité d'un peuple. La crise que traverse l'Europe paraît malheureusement une crise d'épuisement. [...] pour nous, qui avons cessé de croire que l'Europe est le centre d'où partent les impulsions artistiques, la crise du roman en France ne présage pas un affaiblissement de création dans le monde."

The Russians broke out of the German and French influence, the United States out of the English influence, the South American countries out of the Spanish influence, gaining an autonomy that no one now questions.

CHARBONNEAU, 1993: 51⁶

Charbonneau's argument rethinks axiological scales from an American perspective:

We are not French. Our life in America, our cordial relations with our English-speaking fellow citizens and Americans, as well as our political independence have made us different. We are proud to be Canadians.

CHARBONNEAU, 1993: 65⁷

The political and historical contexts are thus maneuvered to support a reassessment of the literary situation:

Whatever the attitude of the Aragons, the Duhamels and the Sartres towards us, let us specify above all that this in no way affects our desire to cultivate a literature that finds its methods, its inspiration and its criteria in Montreal rather than in Paris, and since all literary practices live by mutual exchange, it reserves the right to choose as much from Mr. Steinbeck's California vineyard as from Mr. Racine's, and it will not disparage the occasional opportunity to join the Californian vineyard.

CHARBONNEAU, 1993: 50⁸

Charbonneau continues with an argument related to a putative shift of the center of world culture, and therefore a change in the center of authorial con-

6 "Et si les Russes sont sortis de la zone d'influence allemande et française, les États-Unis de la zone anglaise, les pays d'Amérique du Sud de la zone espagnole, c'était pour acquérir [...] une autonomie que personne aujourd'hui ne songe mettre en doute."

7 "Nous ne sommes pas des Français; notre vie en Amérique, nos relations cordiales avec nos compatriotes de langue anglaise et les Américains, notre indépendance politique, nous ont faits différents. Nous sommes fiers d'être canadiens."

8 "Tout d'abord précisons que, quelle qu'ait été à notre égard l'attitude des Aragon, des Duhamel et des Sartre, elle n'est pour rien dans notre désir de promouvoir une littérature qui cherche ses techniques, son inspiration et ses critères à Montréal plutôt qu'à Paris et qui se réserve, dans la mesure où toutes les techniques vivent d'échanges, de choisir aussi bien dans le vignoble californien de M. Steinbeck que dans le vignoble racinien, qui ne dédaigne pas à l'occasion de s'allier au vignoble californien."

secration and legitimation of values from Europe to America. He places the natural domiciliation of French-Canadian literature within this framework:

Today, a European author considers it a consecration if he is published in New York. Why, then, would Canadians, given the opportunity, refuse the world fame that only publication in America can ensure? [...] If literature aspires to universality, it seems that at present it will do so through the English language and American publication.

CHARBONNEAU, 1993: 53⁹

American translations into English of novels by Roger Lemelin and especially Gabrielle Roy since the 1950s have proven Charbonneau correct in this regard (Charbonneau, 1993: 42). A significant shift should be noted in value criteria in favor of the autonomy of the literary field and aesthetic value as the dominant, universal reference. It is from this perspective that Charbonneau reassesses the French-Canadian literary canon. He selects only those titles from the earlier period that transcend local significance, and adds contemporary works that he believes “form a solid core” ensuring an “autonomous literature,” at once local and global (“[...] forment un noyau solide. À propos on peut dès maintenant parler d’une littérature autonome.” [Charbonneau, 1993: 43]).

The affirmation of literary autonomy concerns not only axiology, but also qualities that we have classified as ontological and mixed axiological-ontological criteria: production/ reception and originality/ imitation. In Charbonneau’s reflections, the paradigmatic change of the peripheral perspective into a central one clearly emerges. In contrast to the passive reception of influences, he shows in numerous examples that centrality manifests itself in the active absorption of cultural goods considered universal and of the very highest quality. This is also the case, for instance, with the influences of Dostoevsky, who draws on Balzac, George Sand, Victor Hugo, Eugène Sue; other examples include Balzac imitating Walter Scott, Sartre’s inspiration from by John Dos Passos, etc. (Charbonneau, 1993: 34 and 50).

This presentation of Charbonneau’s polemics seeks to illuminate the general features of the process of deperipheralization and the main argumentative strategies: the domiciliation of legitimizing and consecrating authority,

9 “Aujourd’hui, un écrivain européen se juge consacré quand il est publié à New York. Pourquoi les Canadiens, à la condition qu’ils en aient la chance, refuseraient-ils de la gloire mondiale que peut seule donner l’édition américaine? [...] Si la littérature a une tendance à devenir universelle, il semble que ce soit actuellement par le truchement de la langue anglaise et par l’édition américaine qu’elle le deviendra.”

the conflation of legitimizing authority with territorialization, the use of support in other centralities—here American and Russian—as agents relativizing the centrality from which the periphery detaches itself, the combination of an autonomous aesthetic discourse (and a desired literary universality) with a heteronomous political discourse. Charbonneau's argument also reveals another important feature of the relationship between the (former) center and the (former) periphery striving for its own centrality. This concerns the perception of relevant values within the appropriation process: most of the French authors Charbonneau cites are Catholic, whether conservative or modernist and leftist leaning, while a number of essential movements and authors remain out of the picture, among them Surrealism, Malraux and Camus. Indeed, even the (ex)periphery chooses what corresponds to its axiology. In Charbonneau's case, it is above all the values close to Quebec Catholic Modernism and personalism that are valorized as the main currents of the avant-garde transformation of Quebec literature.

The importance of the axiological criteria that prevail in the controversy seems to stem from the nature of the process of autonomization itself, since these developments presuppose not only a reassessment of the external as opposed to the former center, but also the internal, towards a reconfiguration of literary tradition and canon. French-Canadian and Quebec literature would undergo this process in the next stages of its development beyond the Quiet Revolution (*Révolution tranquille*) of the 1960s as well as later in the integration of migrant literature into the newly constituted centrality. This dialectic of continuity/ discontinuity must be understood not only as an extended legacy of peripherality, but also as an important feature of a new dynamic centrality renewed and redefined on the basis of ex-peripheral axiological structuring features of the literary field, namely juxtaposition and hybridization.

The historical context of the polemical articles collected in *La France et nous* reveals the asymmetrical situation of the contentious parties, which could be considered a typical relationship between an emancipating periphery and a center that is (temporarily) weakened by the intrusion of politically motivated heteronomy. In France, the polemics in question represented a relatively marginal part of the much broader controversies that preoccupied post-war French literature. Still, these polemics were central for French-Canadian literature, as evidenced by a collected book edition duly equipped with a preface. Historical circumstances, however, seem to be decisive in both cases. In both literatures, a transformation of the literary field was taking place. In France, the cause was the post-war destabilization of literary elites as a continuation of the (civil) war between the Vichy regime and de Gaulle's resistance move-

ment. Apart from the fact that the incursion of heteronomous political criteria weakened the Continental French literary field, there is also the factor of the rethinking of the relationship between the center and the periphery, in this case especially the French colonies, which had been emphasized by the pre-war intellectual interest in the “overseas” and whose ultimate importance for the self-identity of France was tested by the Second World War. The beginning of the French-French controversy over the status of French-Canadian literature must be placed into this context. It should be emphasized above all that Étienne Gilson’s aforementioned “another tree” stance on French-Canadian autonomy stems not only from his knowledge of the Canadian situation but also from similar views in his homeland of France itself. From a French perspective, the controversies summarized in *La France et nous* formed the backdrop for the support of leftist elites for cultural decolonization (see below Part 2, Chapter 12), particularly the *Négritude* movement. Jean-Paul Sartre wrote the preface *Orphée noir* (Black Orpheus) for the *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (*Anthology of New Negro and Malagasy Poetry in French*, 1948), edited by the Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor, and later the preface to Albert Memmi’s *Portrait du colonisé précédé du Portrait du colonisateur* (published in English in 1957 as *The Colonizer and the Colonized*). In addition to Sartre’s existentialist journal *Les Temps modernes*, it is worth noting the importance of personalism as central to the literary review *Esprit* in the 1930s and the lasting influence of the movement on the French-Canadian and Quebec journals *La Relève*, *La Nouvelle Relève*, *Cité libre*, *Possibles*, and *Parti pris* (Angers, Fabre, 2004). The continuing dominant position of *Les Lettres françaises* in French cultural life at the time should also be highlighted, for example as expressed in Louis Aragon’s political platform which defended the centralist notion of the French literary field against (what he saw as) a rebellious, even prodigal periphery gratuitously seeking unwarranted autonomy.

The next stage of French-Canadian deperipheralization is related to Quebec neo-nationalism and the Quiet Revolution (*Révolution tranquille*) of the 1960s. The decolonization argument of neo-nationalism has already been mentioned. Simultaneously to the emergence of this perspective the identity patterns of Bouchard were also being revived and actualized in various positions and combinations: from the defensive, conservative affirmation of difference and exclusion vis-à-vis Anglophone Canada to the openness of the national integrationist pattern. Numerous works of this period instrumentalize national traumas of the past such as the deportation of Acadians by the British (1755–1763), the conquest of New France and its transformation into British Canada

(1759–1763), the suppressed Patriot Revolution (1837–1838), the rebellion and execution of the mixed-race Louis-David Riel (1885), and compulsory conscription (1917, 1940).

The dialectical twists and turns of the emancipation process during this period are also interesting. While Charbonneau's argumentation adheres to liberalism and the openness to competition between national cultures (Charbonneau, 1993: 43), the predominantly left-wing elites of the Quiet Revolution adopted a similar position to the conservative elites of the first period of the late 19th and early 20th century, although the emphasis on the singularity of language and culture was now based on a revolutionary ideology of decolonization. This movement included the aforementioned efforts of the review *Parti pris* to promote *joual*, Quebecness and themes related to Quebec. The electoral slogan of Prime Minister Pierre Lesage's victorious Liberal Party "Masters in our own land" ("Maîtres chez nous") was reflected in economic, social, educational and cultural reforms enacted beyond the electoral mandate (1960–1966). This context dominated the social ethos of the 1960s and 1970s.

It is this series of substantial reforms which provided literature with a firm basis for autonomy and centrality. The post-franchising of the Quebec provincial and federal administration through federal (1969) and provincial legislation (1969, 1974, 1977) was accompanied by educational reforms and the systematic promotion of university education. Investments in education represented 20% to 30% of the Quebec provincial budget. The Universities of Montreal, Sherbrooke and Laval were expanded, and in 1968 a network of ten higher education institutions was created called Université du Québec. By 1983 the 26,000 graduates of these universities represented twice the number of graduates of Anglophone universities within the province (Linteau et al. 11, 1989: 666). The strength of the French-speaking elites was also growing due to their bilingualism, which gave them a great advantage in the new provincial and federal conditions.

The Quebec Ministry of Culture created in 1961 immediately launched a support policy for Quebec publishers, libraries, museums, galleries and theatres. The decline and lean years of Quebec publishers which began shortly after 1945 when they were exposed again to stiff French competition were now over and the market share of books from Quebec once again began to increase. While post-war competition from France had not ceased completely, the best the continental publishing houses could do now was to slow down the development of the French-Canadian sector. In 1953, the publishing house Hexagone was founded, and some smaller publishing houses specializing in poetry appeared such as Les Éditions Orphée and Les Éditions Erta. The principal development did not take place, however, until the 1960s and 1970s. The 1960s brought

diversification, which can be seen as a sign of prosperity: Éditions Atys, Déom, Arc, Éditions-de-l'Aile were devoted to poetry, while Éditions Estérel (with the journal *La Barre du Jour*), Éditions de l'Aurore, Éditions du Noroît, Écrits des Forges, Parti pris (again with an eponymous periodical) and Éditions du Jour were oriented towards engaged or protest culture, Leméac was established as a publisher of theatre texts. Hurtubise and Boréal were newcomers to the major publishers of the previous periods Beauchemin, Granger, Garneau, and Fides.

In 1967, the National Library of Quebec was established, with a mandatory submission of copies of all works required of publishers. The number of compulsory non-periodical copies increased from 653 titles submitted in 1968, 2,446 in 1976, to 4,336 in 1982 (Linteau et al. II, 1989: 771–772 and 785). The public library network expanded from 70 branches in 1960, to 114 in 1967, reaching 138 by 1983.¹⁰

Another sector of cultural development is the theatre. Shortly after the establishment of the educational facility École Nationale de Théâtre in 1960, the experimental workshop and theatre Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatiques was created five years later. The ministry also subsidizes the major Montreal professional theatres Compagnie Jean Duceppe, the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, the Théâtre du Rideau Vert, and the Théâtre de Quat'Sous, alongside which numerous medium- and small-sized theatres have been established.

The growth in self-confidence of French-Canadian theatre artists and playwrights can be summarized by the practitioner Robert Gurik: "There are now twenty-five young playwrights in Montreal. Even if only five of them fulfil the promise of their talent, this city will become one of theatre capitals of the world." (Gurik, 1967, in: *Dictionnaire* IV, 1984: XIV) Between 1965 and 1972, 110 new dramas were produced and published, 50 were published only, with 225 produced but not published; 135 of these were radio plays and 20 television plays (*Dictionnaire* V, 1987: XXXIX).¹¹ Official statistics list 2,770 performers (1,800 in Montreal), with a thousand of these actors (Linteau et al. II, 1989: 774). Two professional journals devoted to theatre production are *Canadian Drama/Art dramatique canadien*, founded 1975, and *Cahiers de théâtre Jeu*, established in 1976.

The expansion of literature and culture is also related to the development of critical and cultural periodicals—another essential consecratory platform. Among the outstanding journals of the 1950s were *Cité libre* (1950–1968) and

10 Hamel (1997: 699) provides slightly different numbers: 815 titles for 1968 and 4,020 for 1978.

11 "Il y a à Montréal présentement vingt-cinq jeunes auteurs dramatiques. Qu'il y ait seulement cinq qui aient du talent, et cette ville devient une des capitales mondiales du théâtre."

Liberté (1959), managed by Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier; the already mentioned revolutionary review *Parti pris* (1963–1968) founded by Pierre Maheu, André Major and Paul Chamberland; as well as a plethora of periodicals of various orientations: rock and protest culture in *Mainmise* (1970–1978), *Hobo-Québec* (1970–1981), *Presqu'Amérique* (1971–1973) and *Cul-Q* (1973–1977); postmodern criticism with a mix of poetry, semiotics and psychoanalysis in *Les Herbes Rouges* (1968), *Quoi!* (1965), *La Barre du Jour* (1965), *Champ libre* (1971–1973) and *Stratégie* (1972–1977); feminist criticism in *Les Têtes de pioche* (1976) and *La Vie en rose* (1980). To this list can be added the university reference journal *Voix et Images* (1975), which features thematic issues focusing on individual authors, literary critics, and historians.

The above enumerations illustrate the importance of legitimating and consecrating institutions as well as practices on which an independent centrality necessarily relies. At the center of a literary culture is often a consolidated book market that appeals to an educated public capable of absorbing, sufficiently diversified local literature production which is itself vetted by various genres of criticism. All this must be provided by either public, private or public-private institutions such as universities, libraries, bookstores, theatres, museums, galleries as well as clubs, appreciation societies and informal organizations.

In the case of Quebec, we can rightly speak of successful deperipheralization. In this context, it is worth pointing out the consequences of such developments within the literary field itself. The newly formed centrality, which in Quebec was also accompanied by a significant territorialization and transformation of the identity pattern, creates its own periphery: the initially dispersed French-Canadian literary field is now newly structured into a center in Quebec, concentrated in Montreal, with other relatively new peripheral literatures such as those of Acadia, Franco-Ontario, Manitoba dependent on it. The strength of the new center not only resides in Canada and in the Francophone minorities in other Canadian provinces, but exerts its appeal on a broader radius, reaching out to Haiti, Chile, the Maghreb, China, Brazil, and Africa, as will be seen below in the section on migration literature. *Mutatis mutandis* and to varying degrees, the same centripetal and centrifugal gravitational forces are at work in these spaces as has been the case with the relationship between Paris and the French Canada.

The process of deperipheralization is not internally conflict-free. One site of tension, as Pascale Casanova points out in *The World Republic of Letters*, is the contradiction between autonomy and heteronomy. While this opposition can be a source of aesthetic innovation, as we have tried to suggest in the case of Jacques Ferron, it can also be felt as an obstacle to creative freedom.

An example of this is Jacques Godbout, whose work from the 1960s and 1970s can be considered nationally engaged. Yet, in the end, he too rebels against the “Quebec writing on the wailing wall” and against “the patriotic blackmail of the Quebec country that makes us sing,” emphasizing the ambiguity of the French verb *chanter* (to sing and to blackmail; Godbout, 1975 in Europe 1990: 115 ff.).¹² Another manifestation of the same tension is a sharpened sense of linguistic responsibility and linguistic sensitivity in literary expression, which Lise Gauvin calls “linguistic over-consciousness” (*surconscience linguistique*) and “*langagement*,” the latter term a *hapax legomenon* syncretizing the consciousness of social and political commitment (*engagement*) with language practice (*langage*) (Gauvin, 2000). This sense of self-awareness at the beginning of their formation cannot only be applied to minority languages and literatures, which are considered as such merely in relation to dominant languages and literatures, but also describes a process of intersecting “positive” and “negative” phases of autonomization, in this case related to France.

It is never entirely easy to burn bridges completely, and was not so even during the turbulent 1960s. After two centuries of disinterest, French policy—while still remaining respectful of Canada as a sphere of British and American interests—began to strengthen diplomatic, cultural and scientific contacts with an autonomized Quebec. French President de Gaulle’s “Long Live Free Quebec” proclamation from the balcony of Montreal City Hall in 1967 and the subsequent diplomatic moves that accompanied it represented but one episode that illustrates the intense cultural, scientific and economic contacts established in the 1960s and the decades that followed. For many Quebec writers, Paris represented and even today continues to represent a higher and more refined site of consecration. For Gérard Bessette and Réjean Ducharme, Parisian publication opened the way to recognition in Quebec. For others, such as the late Anne Hébert, the conquest of Paris would remain a desire never quite fulfilled.¹³ Editorial collaborations also develop, as evidenced by the Hurtubise publishing house, founded by Claude Hurtubise and which has collaborated with French publishers on joint editions (Doré, in: Sapiro, 2009: 201–226). These partnerships have also at times been extended, as demonstrated

12 “le texte national [...] sur le mur québécois des lamentations”; “chantage du pays”; “[le] pays québécois nous fait chanter.”

13 Gérard Bessette’s *Le Libraire* was published first in 1960 by René Julliard in Paris, then by Cercle du livre de France in Montreal in 1968. Réjean Ducharme’s manuscript *L’Avalée des avalés* was rejected in Quebec, but published in 1966 by Gallimard in Paris and finally nominated for the Goncourt Prize. Anne Hébert won Canada’s Governor General’s Award twice for her poetry and once for her fiction, but never achieved widespread formal recognition in France.

by the tandem of Leméac—Actes du Sud and Boréal—Seuil. What is at stake is not a complete detachment from French culture, but the affirmation of a different, alternative Frenchness as a guarantee of independent identity vis-à-vis Anglophone America. The 1960 Quebec Writers' Conference chose as its theme "how to reconcile our American civilization with our French culture" (*Dictionnaire* IV, 1984: XL). In the following decade, the critic André Belleau refined the question into the formulation "to say America in French" (Belleau, 1972: 17; in *Dictionnaire* IV, 1984: xvii).¹⁴ The question of Americanness is not only reflected in literary works (Voldřichová Beránková, 2009: 95–111), but has also been discussed by sociologist Marcel Rioux as well as philosophers Claude Bertrand and Michel Morin (Rioux, 1974; Morin, Bertrand, 1979). The search for an American-French track inscribes itself in the notion of literary production in general—language, spatiality, temporality, narrative, as is summarized by the writer Jacques Godbout:

And all that Quebec writers are trying to say, more or less deftly, to European French writers is that literary language is too slick, too cultivated, too worn, too worn out, too learned, too codified, too much private property, too correct for what we want to use it for. To enter history and violate American space-time, we need a language more flexible and crazy than theirs, we need a French that is savage, a Quebec language to civilize us.

GODBOUT, 1974: 33; Gauvin, 2000: 38–39¹⁵

A new language was meant to be a gateway to another civilizational dimension and to a different grasp of reality. In this case, this was not about the aforementioned *joual*, nor about orality or creolization, but about linguistic freedom, linguistic "savagery." The rejection of French normativity is at the same time a rejection of literary normativity, since literature is often taken as a space for the exploration of creative possibilities, as Claude Gauvreau's "langue exploréenne" (exploratory language) in his poetry and play *Charge de l'original épomyable* (*The Charge of the Expormidable Moose*, 1956) shows. God-

14 "[...] dire l'Amérique en français."

15 "Et tout ce que les écrivains québécois tentent, avec plus ou moins d'habileté, de dire aux écrivains français d'Europe, c'est que la langue littéraire est trop polie, trop cultivée, trop usée, trop étiolée, trop instruite, trop codifiée, trop propriété privée, trop correcte pour l'usage que nous voulons en faire. Nous avons besoin, pour entrer dans l'histoire et violer l'espace/temps américain, d'un français plus souple et plus fou et plus utile que le leur, nous avons besoin d'un français sauvage, le québécois, pour nous civiliser."

bout conceived the concept of “vécrire” (a made-up verb from *vivre* + *écrire*, i.e. “live-writing” or “life-writing”) as employed in his novel *Salut, Galarneau!* (*Hail, Galarneau!*, 1967), the experimental language and narrative of Réjean Ducharme in the novels *L’Avalée des avalés* (*The Swallower Swallowed*, 1966), *L’Océantume* (*Oceancorous*, 1968), *Les Enfantômes* (*Childghosts*, 1976), and in the drama *Ines Pérée et Inat Tendu* (*Unex Pected and Unev Entful*, 1976). Let us also recall Gérard Bessette’s “body language” in *Anthropoïdes* (1977) (Kyloušek, 2019: 145–154) as well as the male-female language of Gaétan Soucy’s story *La petite fille qui aimait trop les allumettes* (*The Little Girl Who Was Too Fond of Matches*, 1988).

The persistence of the experimental and subversive normativity that Quebec writers have demanded and practiced links to a constituted, originally peripheral axiology of the literary field, one in which practices of juxtaposition and inclusion prevail, supporting multilevel hybridity—linguistic, narrative, genre, discursive (Kwaterko, 2003a; Kwaterko, 2003b: 43–60). One can see in this a predisposition in Quebec literature towards multilingual openness, genre mixing and blending, as well as the absorption of the works of immigrant and indigenous authors.

The literary and cultural processes initiated by the Quiet Revolution culminated two decades later in the consolidation of a new centrality, one not only in relation to France but also to Canadian and American Anglophony. As with Charbonneau’s rethinking of literary tradition, this stage was also accompanied by a reconfiguration of the literary canon. This transformation was also undertaken partly because the newly constituted centrality was attracting many non-Quebec authors. These writers could benefit not only from the publishing possibilities of and absorption into the Quebec book market, but also from a reimagined literary field open to processes of juxtaposition and hybridization.

Daniel Chartier’s *Dictionnaire des écrivains émigrés au Québec 1800–1999* (*Dictionary of emigrant writers in Quebec 1800–1999*) brings together 628 names of writers who immigrated to and established themselves in Quebec over the years. Of these, 400 entries consist of authors from the second half of the 20th century. Some of these such the Russian Jean Bazile and the Iraqi Naïm Kattan have been active in Quebec since the 1960s, although the main wave of immigrant authors came in the 1980s. The Brazilian Sergio Kokis, the Chinese Ying Chen, the Serb Négovan Rajic, the Haitians Émile Ollivier, Gérard Étienne and Dany Laferrière, the Lebanese Wajdi Mouawad and Abla Farhoud, the French Régine Robin and Elisabeth Vonaburg, the Chileans Miguel Retamal and Alberto Kurapel, the Italians Fulvio Caccia and Antonio d’Alfonso, and many others all eventually made their way to Quebec. The mass entry of these

authors into the Quebec literary field has generated tensions and controversies, notably the contemporary distinction between Quebec and “Neo-Quebec” writers and the acrimonious debate over Monique LaRue’s university lecture and essay *L’Arpenteur et le navigateur* (*The Surveyor and the Navigator*, LaRue, 1996). In her reflection on Quebec literature, LaRue, an author herself, revived Quebec an archetypal settler/traveler identity dichotomy to highlight the tension between the settled, conservative inwardness associated with a tradition dating back to the 19th century, and the new openness coming with the migratory wave and other phenomena. While this has drawn to Monique LaRue erroneous accusations of xenophobia, in fact her views are parallel to those of Haitian migrant Émile Ollivier (2001; see below)

These debates themselves illustrate the course of the transformation of the identity paradigm and the shift from Bouchard’s national-integrative pattern, which was anchored in notions of collective territory, language and origin to a post-national pattern that has asserted itself in a dominant position since the 1980s. This paradigm is manifested through an emphasis on the putative existential dimension of individuality liberated from national collectivism (Bouchard, 2001). One cannot avoid seeing in this a response to the transformation of the political situation after the two failed referendums on Quebec independence (1980 and 1995) which marked the failure of the Parti québécois (Quebec Party) program and the end of the vision of creating a territorially, economically, linguistically and culturally independent nation-state. Yet the referendums also mark a shift towards the increasing recognition of the need to deal with globalization, precisely by developing and emphasizing local and regional cultures, from which a true exchange of cultural values can take place. Thus, not closedness but openness becomes the strategy of Quebec culture and literature. The various stages of development are aptly illustrated in Clément Moisan and Renate Hildebrand’s monograph *Ces étrangers du dedans. Une histoire de l’écriture migrante au Québec, 1937–1997* (*Those Interior Strangers. A History of Migrant Literature in Quebec, 1937–1997*, Moisan, Hildebrand, 2001). The authors distinguish four stages of this alterity: the monocultural phase (étape uniculturelle, 1939–1959), the pluricultural phase (pluriculturelle, 1960–1975), the intercultural phase (interculturelle, 1976–1985), and the transcultural phase (transculturelle, after 1985). While details may undoubtedly be disputed with regard to this strict segmentation of a complex identity process which was far from unidirectional and took place with numerous twists and turns, the overall identity dynamic is adequately captured in this model: the essentialist conception based on the idea of steady collective (national) and individual traits has given way to a non-essentialist concept *in actu*, temporal and post-national.

It is no less interesting to observe the transformation in the denomination of migration literature and the transformation in interpreting the meaning of the denomination itself. These processes were initially associated with ethnicity in the spirit of essentialism, only then gradually morphing into a post-phenomenological conception relating to existential destiny and existentially conceived identity. This transformation took place simultaneously in both critical reflection on both “Quebec” and “migration.” Regarding the latter, it is necessary to highlight the role of Italo-Québécois and Haitian immigration, with both of these foci initially emerging outside the hegemonic current of Quebec literary criticism. A decentering change of perspective was formulated, however, with the journals *Dérives* (1975–1987; Jean Jonassaint), *Quaderni culturali* (1980–1982; Lamberto Tassinari) and *Vice Versa* (1983–1996; Lamberto Tassinari, Fulvio Caccia) (Nareau, 2011: 165–184; Davaille, 2007: 109–122). These developments are tracked, for example, in the article Effet d'exil (Exile Effect) by the Haitian Robert Berrouët-Oriol in the Italo-Quebec trilingual journal *Vice Versa* (Berrouët-Oriol, 1986–1987: 20–21).

In this respect, the fundamental analysis of Pierre Nepveu in his essay *Écritures migrantes* (Migratory Writing) is worth highlighting. The writer and scholar points out that at least since the 1960s there have been affinities between Quebec and migrant writers in the perception of space, territorialization and deterritorialization. Nepveu recalls that in Hubert Aquin, Jacques Godbout, Réjean Ducharme and Jacques Ferron, “the Quebec space appears at once extra-central and eccentric, but also implusive and inclusive” (Nepveu, 1999: 201).¹⁶ Along these lines, let us recall Jacques Ferron’s thematization of the “pays incertain” (“uncertain land/country”) (Kyloušek, 2005: 249–258). We may supplement these sentiments with the words of another eminent literary critic from the 1960s, Laurent Mailhot, for whom Quebec is “a land yet to come, as in creation, but in a different way. Quebec is not a given, it is not here. It is not the objective givenness of History, but a goal to be directed towards, to be displaced” (Mailhot, 1980: 147).¹⁷ It is precisely the identitarian unanchoredness and instability, a territorialization without territory, that creates the ground for the entry of migratory literature into the Quebec literary field. This is also what Nepveu has in mind when he quotes Fulvio Caccia from Caccia’s review *Vice versa*: “The uncompleted Frenchness still exacerbates that primordial wound

16 “[...] l’espace québécois se découvre à la fois excentré et excentrique, mais aussi comme implusif et inclusif.”

17 “[...] un pays à venir, comme l’écriture, mais ailleurs. Le Québec n’est pas donné, il n’est pas là. Il n’est pas une donnée objective de l’Histoire, mais un objectif à viser, à déplacer.”

which makes it possible to recognize the other, to be the other [...] and allows one to make oneself present as the other in every culture” (Caccia, 1986: 45, in: Nepveu, 1999: 202).¹⁸

The importance of the axiological configuration of the receptive field becomes apparent in comparing the integration of writers of Italian origin into Québécois and Anglo-Canadian literature. A thematic and expressive Italian-ness remains evident in both. Still, as Alessandra Ferraro shows with reference to Linda Hutcheon, Anglo-Canadian criticism places Italo-Canadians into a literary context not as a specific group, but as individuals and according to particular genres, blurring the authors’ commonalities. On the contrary, the Quebec milieu, which carries the memory of deperipheralization, treats Italo-Quebecers as a specific group, seeking points of contact, exchanges of values and the possibility of transcendence in a shared universality, as previous interpretations have tried to suggest (Ferraro, 2014: 59–68; Hutcheon, 1986: 31–37).

The “hypermodern” axiological structuring of the literary field that we have attempted to present as a consequence of the transformation of an initially peripheral axiology into a centrality is underpinned by a solid institutional provisioning in Quebec. Beginning in the 1980s, the production of published titles has levelled out at 4,000 per year, with an average print run of 2,500 copies per title, creating a stabilizing element within a potential market of ten million Francophone Americans. The core production of the large publishing houses is complemented by the work of smaller publishers: Naaman (1973, Sherbrooke), France-Amérique (1975), VLB (1976), XYZ (1985), with other firms emerging outside Quebec: in New Brunswick, Éditions d’Acadie (1972) and Éditions Perce-neige (1980); in Ontario, *Prise de parole* (1973), *Asticou* (1975), *Guernica* (1978), *Éditions du Vermillon* (1982), *Éditions du Nordir* (1988), *Center Fora* (1989); in Manitoba, *Éditions des Plaines* (1979); in Saskatchewan, *Coopérative Louis-Riel* (1985) (Hamel, 1997: 700–702). Editorial specialization continues: Leméac profiles itself as a publisher of dramatic texts, while poetry rests on four pillars—*Hexagone*, which concentrates on Quebec classics; *Éditions du Noroît*, which issues works with a fusion of words and graphics; *Les Herbes Rouges*, which along with the eponymous journal promotes experimental poetry; and *Écrits des Forges*, based in Trois-Rivières and which offers a space for debut poets.

Founded in 1981, the *États généraux du théâtre* (General Theater Assembly) set up the *Conseil québécois du théâtre* (Quebec Theater Council) to defend

18 “L’inachèvement de la francité garde ouverte la blessure originelle qui permet de reconnaître l’autre, d’être l’autre [...] et rend possible ce devenir autre présent dans toute culture.”

their interests. A new system of allocating public resources allowed the founding of medium-sized venues, which created performance spaces with seating capacities between the large and experimental theatres such as Théâtre Parminou (1973), Carbone 14 (1976), Théâtre Expérimental des Femmes (1979, renamed Espace Go in 1991), and Théâtre Repère (1980).

The disappearance of a number of important periodicals established during the Quiet Revolution period—*Stratégie* (1977), *Cul-Q* (1977), *Brèches* (1977), *Chroniques* (1978), *Mainmise* (1978), *Hobo-Québec* (1981)—was partly the result of the success of the linguistic laws and the realization of many of the cultural and political agendas espoused by these periodicals. The heteronomy of ideological and political commitment thus gave way to cultural autonomy and literariness. Among the new journals, *Moebius* (1977), *XYZ* (1985) and *Stop* (1987) are devoted to short prose genres; *Estuaire* (1976) to poetry; *Requiem* (1974), *Solaris* (1979) and *Imagine* (1979) to science fiction. Founded in 1975, the university periodical *Voix et Images* is now complemented by *Lettres québécoises* (1976) and *Spirale* (1979), with the new journals aiming at a wider public. Oversight of the status of the cultural press was entrusted to the *Société de développement des périodiques culturels québécois* (1980), an association of 47 cultural periodicals.¹⁹ According to a statistical overview of the support provided by the *Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec* in 2018–2019, the publication of the cultural press is self-funded at about 30%, private donations amount to about 12%, and the remainder of the financial support is guaranteed by subsidies from the Quebec provincial government and the federal Canadian government.²⁰ It must be noted that cultural magazines are also published outside Quebec, with the most important of these the Franco-Ontarian journal *Liaison*, established in 1978.

The geographic distribution of literary and cultural publishing centers is an indication of a consistent feature concerning changes in relations between the center and the periphery. As we have already suggested, the affirmation of the center—in this case Quebec and Montreal—provoked a disintegration, followed by a reconfiguration of the literary field. This was manifested as much by the force of the centripetal center as by the centrifugal affirmation of a new periphery of Acadian, Franco-Ontarian and Manitoban literature. This dissemination can also take symbolic form in the nomenclature of institutions. For example, in 1991 the *Fédération des Francophones en dehors du Québec* (Feder-

19 <https://www.sodep.qc.ca/mandats-et-services/#>

20 <https://statistique.quebec.ca/fr/document/statistiques-principales-des-editeurs-de-periodiques-culturels/tableau/statistiques-principales-des-editeurs-de-periodiques-culturels-soutenus-par-le-conseil-des-arts-et-des-lettres-du-quebec-quebec>

ation of Francophones outside Quebec) was renamed the *Fédération des communautés Francophones et acadiennes du Canada* (Federation of Francophone and Acadian Communities in Canada). The mention of Quebec may disappear, but not its authenticating and consecrating centrality and overall appeal to Ontarian (Jean-Marc Dalpé, Patrice Desbiens) as well as Acadian (Antonine Maillet, France Daigle, Jocelyne Saucier) authors.

2 The Caribbean²¹

The identities of the varied Caribbean cultures are all influenced by their shared past: the genocide of the indigenous Indian population, a slavery economy linked to sugar cane, coffee and cotton plantations, European colonization dictating the hierarchy of social relations, the abolition of slavery and subsequent importation of Indian, Chinese and Latin American labor at the end of the 19th century, as well as the ubiquitous establishment of a merchant and moneyed middle-east class—the so-called “Syrians.” The process and consequences of decolonization are factors inscribed in the collective memory of individual communities and in the thematic construction of literary texts, whether they belong to Anglophone, Hispanophone, Netherlandophone or Francophone literatures of the region.

For this reason, even a perfunctory look at the peripherality of the French-language literatures of the Caribbean shows the intersection of influences emanating from multiple centers.²² It is precisely the shared geographical and historical awareness of “interliterary communities” (Đurišin, 1992) however, that leads to the formulation of autonomist tendencies. The crossroads nature of

21 An important source for this section, including the reflections on the relations between the Parisian center and the Caribbean periphery, is the monograph by Michał Obszyński *Manifestes et programmes littéraires aux Caraïbes*. Leiden/Boston: Brill/ Rodopi, 2015.

22 In this context, recognition must be given to Kathleen Gyssels' brilliant analysis. Gyssels shows how the centrifugal force of the various metropolitan colonial centers and the imposed dominant languages isolates Caribbean literatures from one another. She points to a cultural paradox: on the one hand, similar features can be found in all Caribbean literatures, e.g. Négritude, Creoleness, hybridization, interlanguage (interlangue), subversion (marronnage), etc. On the other, the isolation of Dutch writers resulting from their linguistic choices is evident. This can be seen as a result of the way the putative European hierarchy of languages privileges English, French and Spanish, including in terms of translation, while the choice to write in Dutch creates a blind spot and prevents these works from embracing the cultural unity as described in Édouard Glissant's Caribbeaness. The power of metropolitan centers and the consecratory instances along with their linguistic domination thus serve to fragment the entire cultural space. See Gyssels, 2000: 179–201.

Caribbean identity is succinctly summarized in Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant's essay-manifesto, *Éloge de la créolité/ In Praise of Creoleness* (1993), in which the authors distinguish among Americanness, Creoleness and Caribbeanness.

The first of these concepts, Americanness, is the result of Europeanism and the European colonizers that had to adapt to the living conditions of *Mundus Novus*. According to the authors of *In Praise of Creoleness*, Americanness represents "in many respects, a migrant culture" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 92). From a Caribbean perspective, then, Americanness belongs simultaneously to the Europe-America relational axis as well as the North-South axis. The situation here is analogous to the Hispanic culture of the surrounding areas, for which the United States has traditionally represented the aggressive face of Europe.

Creoleness results from creolization, which may be defined as that "which refers to the brutal interaction [...] of culturally different populations" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 92). The result is a hybrid language and culture with globalizing relational affinities. In the case of the Caribbean, this characteristic applies to the emergent creoles, who exhibit oral linguistic similarities within a given geographical space independently of the dominant European language, which is then similarly influenced retrospectively by linguistically and regionally shared collective mentalities and imaginations. In the case of Francophone creoleness and creolization, these influences also create globalizing features among the former French colonies in the Indian Ocean, namely Reunion.²³

Antillanité (Caribbeanness), a framework within which *Éloge de la créolité/ In Praise of Creoleness* also operates, is a concept coined by Édouard Glissant originally in reference to the regional Caribbean-Guyanese community. In the case of Caribbean Francophony / *antillanité*, we must add the notion of Négritude, a concept which links the Caribbean identity consciousness of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana and Haiti to the image of the lost land of Mother Africa.

The idea of a common African origin has permeated Caribbean cultures at least since the 19th century. From an originally ethnic and social feature, Africanism was first transformed into a feature of the literary thematization of identity, following which it was scientifically described by ethnologists, and was finally accepted as an essential identity element in literary Négritude thanks to

23 See the term "Creole continuum," coined within Anglophone postcolonial studies. See D'Costa, 1983; Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, and Helen, 1989: 43–46.

the wide thematization and conceptualization in these works. What is remarkable is that this discursive development takes place centripetally, through a set of convergences towards the Parisian center as impulses gradually arrived from the periphery to mature and be concentrated (see below Part 2, Chapter 12). As a Haitian example, let us trace the transformation of identitarian difference with a comparison of the poetry of Oswald Durand (1840–1906) with that of Léon Laleau (1892–1979). While in the former, the sense of identity exclusion remains linked to romantic exoticism, in Laleau we encounter the expression of identity alienation along with the betrayal of self and community as experienced in Paris by a Europeanized Black poet fascinated by Europe.²⁴ Laleau's collection *Musique nègre* (*Negro Music*, 1931) followed shortly after *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (*So Spoke the Uncle*, 1928), the seminal work of the Haitian diplomat, physician and ethnologist Jean Price-Mars. This scholarly study presents the Africanism of his native Haiti from several angles: it discusses acculturation, Creoleness, miscegenation, but also the African roots of voodoo, animism, family and community structure. The scientific commitment of Price-Mars would lead to the founding of the *Institut d'Ethnologie* in Port-au-Prince in 1941. While still in Paris, Jean Price-Mars collaborated with the Martinique-born Paulette Nardal (1886–1985), the first Black woman ever to study at the Sorbonne, together with her sister Jane. Paulette Nardal's work incorporates intersections of science, literature, literary criticism, and ideology in creating identity consciousness. Her salon in Clamart, a suburb of Paris, served as a meeting place for the Black diaspora from Africa, the Caribbean, and North America. The Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor, the Martinicans René Maran and Aimé Césaire, the Guyanese Léon-Gontran Damas, and Harlem Renaissance representative Claude McKay debated here. Paulette Nardal contributed to *La Dépêche africaine* (1928–1936) and, together with René Maran, founded the bilingual *Revue du Monde Noir/ The Review of the Black World* (1931–1932). In a similar vein, the Caribbeans René Ménéil, Jules-Marcel Monnerot and Étienne Léro published a single issue of *Légitime défense* (1932). Referring to André Breton's 1926 manifesto vindicating Surrealism *Légitime défense* (*Legitimate Defence*), the magazine's title highlights the connection between political emancipation and the liberating role of art. *Légitime défense* is more radical in its formulations than *La Revue du Monde Noir* in the former's denunciation of "the assimilationism of the Caribbean elites and their adaptation to European

24 "Ce cœur obsédant qui ne correspond/ Pas avec mon langage et mes costumes/ Et sur lequel mordent, comme un crampon,/ Des sentiments d'emprunt et des coutumes / D'Europe. Sentez-vous cette souffrance /Et ce désespoir à nul autre égal /D'apprivoiser, avec des mots de France,/ Ce cœur qui m'est venu du Sénégal?" ("Trahison").

norms,” and its rejection of “the ideal of a consensus of Negro culture and Western culture” (Obszyński, 2015: 108).²⁵ The breach created was then attacked by Aimé Césaire, Léon-Gontran Damas and Léopold Sédar Senghor’s journal *L’Étudiant noir* (1934–1940). In the third issue of this journal, the term Négritude appears as a proud reclamation of a depreciative designation of Black ethnicity. This signals the beginning of an identitarian cultural movement that would develop further in the post-World War Two decolonization period (Kwaterko, 2017: 125–135).

The reference to Africa as a linking point for Black intellectuals of the Parisian diaspora from the 1930s onwards thus possessed a range of interconnected arguments in which ethnographic discourse is intertwined with literary-themed imaginaries and mythologizing notions of a common African Mother Earth, which constitutes a kind of etiological narrative, perhaps in compensation for the absence of a historiographical tradition and to fill the lacunae of collective historical memory.

It is precisely the feeling and reality of Africanness that the Caribbean space would share for several decades with sub-Saharan Francophone and Lusophone literatures, with evidence of this compatibility found not only in the texts but also in the biographies of many authors. Haitians such as Jean-François Brierre, Max Charlier and Félix-Morisseau-Leroy found refuge and employment in Senegal thanks to Léopold Sédar Senghor. Similar links are also evident when the narrower Caribbean context is considered. The Martinican Édouard Glissant and the authors of the *Éloge de la créolité/ In Praise of Creoleness* do not neglect to mention the Haitians Frankétienne, René Depestre and Félix Morisseau-Leroy in their theoretical and emancipatory essays. Let us also recall the role of Aimé Césaire in Haitian literature in terms of the influence of his lectures on the Haitian post-war avant-garde and, later, on authors such as Dany Laferrière, who in his novel *L’Énigme du retour* (*The Enigma of the Return*, 2009), develops an entire motif around Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, 1939).

In the 1930s and 1940s, Négritude provided a common basis for various other centrifugal autonomizing movements. Its strength and importance lie above all in its radical negation of centrality, a strategy all the more radical and effective because it was carried out in the Parisian center and first resonated there. Nevertheless, such ecumenism was also a disadvantage: Négritude was a deterritorialized, “general” movement, defined above all in opposition and

25 “l’assimilationnisme des élites antillaises aux valeurs et aux normes européennes”; “l’idéal d’un consensus entre la culture des Noirs et le monde occidental.”

resistance to European culture. What remains important is the way that the program opened up a space for differentiation. Still, this multiplicity, based on the experience of the periphery, needed to assert itself not only in the center, but above all in the periphery itself and to take root there. On this point, Martinican and Haitian literature diverge, since Négritude entered a dissimilar context and situation in each of them. While Haitian literature tends towards autonomy, in the Martinican setting the development appears more complex in its twists and turns and its lack of comprehensiveness. After initial steps towards autonomy, in Martinique the process of independence came to a halt, only to be reinitiated in the 1980s with the publication of Glissant's *Discours antillais* (*Caribbean Discourse*, 1981), followed a decade later by the aforementioned *Éloge de la créolité/ In Praise of Creoleness* (1993). It is only logical that both of these autonomizing manifestos present themselves as dialectical negations and attempts to transcend the commutuality represented in the Négritude movement. Nevertheless, even for Édouard Glissant and the writers of the *Éloge de la créolité/ In Praise of Creoleness*, the determined aims of identifying Americanness, Caribbeanness and Creoleness (Américanité, Antillanité, Créolité) represented, for the time being, only an intended direction, a kind of "state of preliterature" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 76). For these authors, in these various movements there was no unified literature in its own right, for example as compared with Haitian literature, which had already incorporated many of these components. Martinique's incomplete deperipheralization can thus be contrasted with Haiti's literary and cultural autonomy.

3 Martinique's Attempts at Autonomy

The emergence of the Négritude movement, as we have noted, demonstrates the importance of the center and its ability not only to concentrate peripheral values but also to bring them to general recognition through its authenticating and legitimating institutions, which include a constituted group representing the movement, meeting places, journals, and eventually publishing and literary criticism. The literary achievements of the Martinique review *Tropiques* (1941–1945) with its founders Aimé Césaire, his wife Suzanne Césaire and René Ménil, the latter also a co-author of *Légitime défense*, can be considered in a similar vein. The favorable conditions of this autonomization were concomitant with the Second World War, during which the contact between the Caribbean and Pétain's France was disrupted. Indeed, in the pages of all fourteen issues of the journal, one can read a tendency towards *Caribbeanness* and *Creoleness* as later defined by Édouard Glissant, Jean Bernabé, Raphaël Confiant and Patrick

Chamoiseau: A departure from the mythical notion of an African Mother Earth, a receptivity to Afro-American poetry, references to Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance, a desire to align with Brazilian avant-gardes, namely the Cannibalism and Anthropophagy of Oswald de Andrade (Obszyński, 2015: 126–127), and above all the determination for Martinique to develop a literature of its own were key.

The historical interlude that temporarily separated the Caribbean space from the French metropolis ended in 1946, when the French West Indies were administratively transformed into overseas departments and immediately incorporated into the centralized administration of France. In several places in his *Discours antillais*, Édouard Glissant considers the events in the previous period as a missed historical opportunity for Caribbean society and the loss of the possibility of independence:

Departmentalization in 1946. It is the most perfect materialization of fear and self-denial, the extreme limit of alienation and also the limits of its expression. At the same time, other former colonies, even if they would have had the difficulty of dealing with the Other, were embarking on the hard path towards their own identity and independence.

GLISSANT, 1981: 154²⁶

Clearly for Édouard Glissant the key to understanding the difference between the French West Indies and Haiti lies in the possibility of each culture to appropriate and manage its own history. He is aware that politics, in particular the axiological settings, are crucial to identity as well as cultural and literary distinctiveness. Historical argumentation forms the backbone of *Le discours antillais*. At the very outset of his complex, layered treatise, the Martinican patriot notes the absence of a founding narrative analogous to that from which Haitian history unfolds (Glissant 1981: 16–17). Martinique lacks what might be called a national history:

Our chronology can be simplified into an arbitrary list of “facts.” For example, the 1502 “Discovery” of Martinique by Columbus; [...] 1635 The beginning of the slave trade; 1685 The establishment of the Black Code by Colbert; [...] 1848 The abolition of slavery; [...] 1946 Departmental-

26 “La départementalisation de 1946. Concrétisation la plus achevée de la peur et du déni de soi, elle marque la limite extrême de l’aliénation, la limite aussi de son expression. Dans le même temps, d’autres anciennes colonies, qui ne sont pas confortables dans l’Autre, prennent le dur chemin de l’identité, de l’indépendance.”

ization; 1975 *The Doctrine of Economic Assimilation*. Once such a list is drawn up and completed, still nothing of Martinique's history is clarified. Everything remains to be discovered in the Caribbean history of Martinique.

GLISSANT, 1981: 27²⁷

In other words, Martinique has only the history of France to identify with, possessing nothing of its own. This deprivation derives from the instances of power. Everything came from the outside, from the center to the periphery, including democratization efforts such as the 1946 departmentalization, which has only resulted in the former colony being even more closely tied to the metropolis. In terms of history, culture, language and literature, the peripheral axiology was subject to the pressure of the center and the need to adopt its values.

Édouard Glissant sees a way to disrupt and oppose this external pressure in a phenomenological conception that valorizes the existential dimension of agency in opposition to an essentialist concept of being:

It is precisely in this transformation that we must try to capture one of the best kept secrets of the Relationship. Through this we will understand the course of the intersecting histories that create existential agency as they offer themselves up to our knowledge. We renounce Being. The most terrifying effect that ethnographic reasoning engenders is the desire to enclose the object of knowledge within a temporal enclosure within which the entanglements of lived experience are erased in favor of some pure state of being.

GLISSANT, 1981: 28²⁸

27 "Il est possible de réduire notre chronologie à un squelette de "faits," n'importe lequel. Par exemple 1502 "Découverte" de la Martinique par Colomb; [...] 1635 Début de la Traite des Africains; 1685 Établissement du Code noir par Colbert; [...] 1848 Abolition de l'esclavage; [...] 1946 Départementalisation; 1975 Doctrine de l'Assimilation économique. Une fois ce tableau chronologique dressé, complété, tout reste à débrouiller de l'histoire martiniquaise. Tout reste à découvrir de l'histoire antillaise de la Martinique."

28 "C'est en ce changement qu'il faut essayer de surprendre un des secrets les mieux gardés de la Relation. Par lui nous comprenons que des histoires entrecroisées sont à l'œuvre, proposées à notre connaissance et qui produisent de l'étant. Nous renonçons à l'Être. Ce que la pensée ethnographique engendre de plus terrifiant, c'est la volonté d'inclure l'objet de son étude dans un clos de temps où les enchevêtrements du vécu s'effacent, au profit d'un pur demeurer."

The notions of relation and trace, thematized a decade later by Patrick Chamoiseau especially in his novel *L'Empreinte à Crusoe* (*Crusoe's Footprint*, 2012), not only reject the European model of history and historiography, but also set one significant task for literature, namely to interrogate individual and collective memory and to fill up the empty space of historical memory through literary prospection. This is the mission Glissant sets out for himself in all his novels from *La Lézarde* (*La Lézarde River*, 1958) to *Tout-Monde* (*All-World*, 1995). Glissant's polyphonic rendering of the twists and turns of the lives of Caribbean characters portrays the history of the second half of the 20th century from their point of view. And so it is also in Patrick Chamoiseau's Martinican novels *Texaco* (1992), *L'Esclave vieil homme et le Molosse* (1997; *Slave Old Man*, 2018) and *Un dimanche au cachot* (*A Sunday in Jail*, 2008).

Glissant's extensive 1981 treatise *Le discours antillais* (*Caribbean Discourse*, 1989) represents an axiological break and an attempt to establish an independent projection of identity. This rupture would be followed up on in the next decade by a new generation represented by Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant. The joint manifesto of these three writers in *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* (1988, English/French version published 1993) summarizes the previous stages of Caribbean and Martinican literature. The text critically exposes manifestations of peripherality, whether real or imagined: epigonism and imitation of literary movements and currents in Paris, exoticism in harmony with the center's view of peripheral exoticism (*Doudouïsme*) as well as folklorism, albeit well-intentioned, which distances literature and culture away from modernity toward universality. Their evaluation of the first axiological break which came in the movement of Négritude is also crucial:

A violent and paradoxical therapy, Negritude replaced the illusion of Europe by an African illusion. Initially motivated by the wish of embedding us into the actuality of our being, Negritude manifested itself in many kinds of exteriority: *the exteriority of aspirations* (to Mother Africa, mythical Africa, impossible Africa) and *the exteriority of self-assertion* (we are Africans).

BERNABÉ, CHAMOISEAU, CONFIANT, 1993: 82; emphasis in original

In other words, what seemed at the beginning of this stage of development an axiological negation of the values of the European center had in fact become an obstacle to Caribbean and Martinican territorialization as well as a barrier to the domiciliation of negation itself in the creation of an autonomous axiology.

Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness also maintains a critical distance from Édouard Glissant's Caribbeaness, "which was more a matter of vision than a concept" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 83). The manifesto in this way stresses necessary aspects of the autonomy of literature: denomination and the question of a language with which to distinguish it. Indeed, the authors point directly to the multiplicity, vagueness, and dispersion of the terms that have been applied to Caribbean literature to date. They reject "the denominative instability of the denomination of the written production of [their] countries: *Afro-Caribbean, Negro-Caribbean, Franco-Caribbean, French Speaking Caribbean Francophone Caribbean Literature*, etc., all qualifiers which from now on are, in our eyes, ineffective." (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 96–97) It should be emphasized here that denominational dispersion is typically a feature of a peripheral situation, as in the case of Belgian, Swiss and French-Canadian literature.

Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness diagnoses the situation in anticipation of the creation of something new:

Caribbean literature does not yet exist. We are in a state of preliterate: that of a written production without a home audience, ignorant of the authors/readers interaction which is the primary condition of the development of a literature. This situation is not imputable to the mere political domination [...]. We are fundamentally stricken with exteriority. [...] We have seen the world through the filter of western values, and our foundation was "exoticized" by the French vision we had to adopt.

BERNABÉ, CHAMOISEAU, CONFIANT, 1993: 76

The change in the axiological center and the domiciliation of Caribbean and Martinican culture requires, as we have said, the emergence of an independent and self-sufficient book market. Another necessity is addressing questions of language, in this case, the importance of oral literature and the position of Creole as the basis of written literature and Creole identity. The dialectic of the universal and the specific, the worldly and the local, undoubtedly applies to all literatures in the state of birth and becoming independent. In the case of Martinique, however, this issue cannot be resolved without a reflection on the extent of the institutionalization of Creole—it has not been widely supported by educational institutionalization, without which a true literary tradition cannot be established. At the same time, the *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* expresses the desire to maintain the high status of its literary production—its autonomy and self-referentiality in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu and Pascale Casanova as well as the rejection of heteronomous admixtures of "anticolo-

nialist literary militantism” and ideological slavery (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant, 1993: 100). In taking such a stance, this defense and valorization of Creoleness refers to its main predecessors: the Creole imagination of Saint-John Perse and the literary work of Aimé Césaire and Édouard Glissant:

His instinctive fear of illegitimacy often dictated to Césaire the use of the most pure and measured French idiom, enhanced by an impossible Creole, impossible because its literary status demanded yet to be invented. Glissant, for his part, never compromised with the cliché interlect.

BERNABÉ, CHAMOISEAU, CONFIENT, 1993: 109–110

The way out of the linguistic dilemma between the isolation of Creole and the acculturation of French is seen by the authors of *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* within a creative approach to the literary language of French which would absorb the matrix of the mother Creole:

But our histories, for once generous, gave us a second language. At first, it was not yet shared by everyone. It was for a long time the language of the oppressors—founders. We did conquer it, this French language. If Creole is out legitimate language, we gradually (or at once) were given and captured, legitimated and adopted the French language (the language of the Creole white class).

BERNABÉ, CHAMOISEAU, CONFIENT, 1993: 106–107

This means that the language initially imposed on Martinicans is now deliberately appropriated by integrating elements of Creole and oral literature from outside of European linguistic norms. This approach to literary language then inscribes itself not only in a distinctive literary expression, but also in the very conception and position of the writer. In this context, Patrick Chamoiseau in his novels *Solibo Magnifique (Solibo Magnificent)*, *Texaco*, etc. considers himself a “marker of speech” (“marqueur de paroles”) (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 96).

Nevertheless, the autonomist intention of the *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* in integrating Creole into an institutionalized literary language also demonstrates the attractive power of Parisian centrality. This also represents a primary difference between the diglossic situation in Martinique and that of Haitian literature, in which the power of Creole would eventually assert itself by promoting its large corpus of Creole texts in parallel to and separately from the corpus in French, creating a situation approaching a contumacious bilingualism and a wholly bilingual literature.

The power of the center is finally manifested at its very origin, as the center becomes the addressee of the autonomizing manifestations of the periphery. It is significant that all three important axiological autonomizing ventures—Aimé Césaire's *Négritude*, Édouard Glissant's *Caribbeanness*, and the *Creoleness* of Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant—emerge and take place within Parisian centrality and are also part of it, including the publishing houses that put out the works—*Présence africaine*, Seuil, Gallimard. Indeed the most radical expression of autonomization, the manifesto *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness*, is based on a lecture given at the Caribbean Festival, held in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis in May 1988. The situation itself seems symptomatic: the periphery of Paris as a tribune of the literary autonomy of the periphery. The manifesto's publication and its distribution would then be taken on by the prominent Parisian publishing house Gallimard.

From this perspective, the position of Caribbean and Martinican literature is similar to that of the Francophone literatures of sub-Saharan Africa. The inadequacy (or complete absence) of a local literary market, including literary criticism and proper literary institutions, works in favor of French and Parisian centrality. Hence, even the great figures and classics of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Guyanese literature—Léon-Gontran Damas, Joseph Zobel, Simone Schwartz-Bart, Maryse Condé, Gisèle Pineau—are institutionally fully integrated into French literature. The question remains as to what degree this amalgamation is the result of the pursuit of diversity within the framework of Francophone cultural policy of the 1980s. (Provenzano, 2009: 365–378). The situation corresponds to the gravitational model already mentioned (Denis, Klinkenberg, 2005; Klinkenberg, 2008), a paradigm which can also be applied to the situation in sub-Saharan Africa: the center needs and creates its periphery as a source of emanation and affirmation of itself as a center. Within the framework it establishes, it absorbs the periphery and tolerates partial autonomy within it. The periphery, of course, seizes the opportunity to insert its own values into the axiology of the center and to participate in its innovation. This type of framework has been described by Itamar Even-Zohar as a polysystem (Even-Zohar, 1978), one in which a minority literature engages in a dialogue with a majority literature.

This constellation of influencers and the influenced does not (or should not) in any way affect the literary quality of the works produced by authors within it. On the contrary, the texts of Caribbean authors bring imaginative thematic and expressive innovations based on the peripheral axiological structuring of the literary field, in this case, the prevalence of hybridity and juxtapositions of values as well as thematizing concepts such as relation, trace, and anti-historical memory. Thus, not only do lexical or syntactic traces of Creole in

French emerge, but also new themes and narrative practices combining narrative, essay and commentary, especially in Patrick Chamoiseau's and Édouard Glissant's works. It is no coincidence that Glissant's ideas have found resonance outside Martinique in Paris and Quebec.

Autonomist tendencies create a polysystemic situation in the peripheral region in the form of the emergence of Creole production in local publishing houses and its spread among the local readership. Here we might mention authors such as Raphaël Confiant, who "undertook the tricky task of writing a Martinican novel" in Creole (Kundera, 2006: 112–113).²⁹ His efforts include *Bitako-a* (1985, Éditions du Groupe d'Études et de Recherches en espace créolophone GÉREC; translated into French by J.-P. Arsay under the title *Chimères d'En-Ville*. Paris: Ramsay, 1996, *The City's Delusions*), *Kòd Yanm* (K.D.P., 1986; translated into French by G. L'Etang, *Le Gouverneur des dés*. Paris: Stock, 1995; *The Ruler of Dice*), and *Marisosé* (Presses Universitaires Créoles, 1987; translated into French as *Mamzelle Libellule*. Paris: Le Serpent à Plumes, 1997; *Miss Dragonfly*). Raphaël Confiant has realized one of the objectives of *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* in that he has developed and expressed "this written language" to confirm its legitimacy (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 106). Nevertheless, it has not escaped the attention of commentators that Creole novels are translated into French and published by Parisian publishers, while titles in Creole and (other) works by local publishers are most readily accessed by the interested reader through the Haitian-Montreal website Potomitan.³⁰ Confiant's work is bilingual, and an inventory of his novels shows that French titles published by the Parisian publishers Grasset, Gallimard, Stock, and Mercure de France predominate. This illustrates the economic limitations of Creole-language literature as well as the difference between the Martinican situation and that of Haiti, where Creole works have earned a more significant share of the Haitian literary market, whether locally or in the diaspora.

4 Haiti's Deperipheralization

As we have already suggested, the main difference between Martinique and Haiti stems from their dissimilar histories. The independence that Haiti, formerly the most prosperous and profitable French colony, gained at the cost of the bloody struggles of 1791–1804 created suitable conditions for the emergence

29 "[...] tâche délicate d'écrire un roman martiniquais."

30 <https://www.potomitan.info/index.php>

of an institutional framework and the territorialization of literature. Along with the Anglophone, Hispanophone and Lusophone peripheries of the Americas, Haiti shares the advantage of the political independence gained during the first phase of decolonization in the late 18th and first third of the 19th century. We also encounter here a number of features of nation-state formation as elucidated in works by Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Gérard Bouchard (Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1991; Bouchard, 2001): an identity based on a single territory, historical awareness and language. In the case of Haiti, however, this has always been a fragile identity. Since the earliest examinations of such an identity, a number of issues have remained contentious, for example the linguistic ambiguity of the relationship between French and Creole, the initial absence of a history of the indigenous as well as other cultures, and a historical memory which to some extent is still being reconstructed. Nevertheless, during the very first years of independence the Haitian state began creating its own institutions: 1811 saw the founding of both the first printing press, where the *Gazette royale* was printed, as well as the launch of the Opéra du Cap theatre; the *Académie royale* was established in 1815, and the lycée (college) in 1816 in Port-au-Prince. These initial efforts were followed by the creation of institutions of public education beginning in the 1860s: the Law Academy (*École de droit*, 1860s), the School of Applied Sciences (*École des sciences appliquées*, 1905), the Central Agronomic School (*École centrale d'agriculture*, 1924), as well as the Medical and Pharmaceutical School (*École de médecine et de pharmacie*, 1926). Historiographical works were being produced such as *Histoires Caciques d'Haïti* (*Cacique Stories from Haiti*, 1837), in which Émile Nau bases the island's historical identity on the resistance of the Taíno chiefs; Thomas Madiou's *Histoire d'Haïti* (*History of Haiti*, 1847), and Baubrun Ardouin's *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* (*Studies on Haitian history*, 1865). Territorialization and the appropriation of a Haitian view of history took place at roughly the same time as in Francophone Canada (see above) as well as in the emancipation movements of peripheral regions in Europe (for example in the Czech lands, Germany, Hungary, etc.). The main difference between these movements and that of Haiti lies in the issue of race and in the accompanying arguments for and against scientific racism, for instance the "Aryan master race" theory put forth in Arthur de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (*The Inequality of Human Races*, 1855). The idea of biological and cultural European superiority was criticized by two Haitians in particular, Pierre Faubert in *Ogé ou le préjugé de couleur* (*Ogé or the Color Prejudice*, 1859) and Joseph-Anthéonor Firmin in *De l'égalité des races humaines. Anthropologie positive* (*On the Equality of Human Races. Positive Anthropology*, 1885). Both of these polemics were published in Paris.

Haiti proudly presents itself as the first free, unconquered Black state in the world. This identity as inscribed in the national memory permeates the attitudes of certain Haitian writers to this day, as is suggested in Louis-Philippe Dalembert's testimony regarding the avant-garde poet René Philoctète. The poet rejected the minor manuscript changes demanded by a Parisian publisher, preferring to publish the text "many years later in Haiti, at his own expense" (Dalembert, 2010: 35).³¹ In his presentation of Haitian literature, Dalembert cites this detail as a synecdoche for Haiti's attitude towards the Parisian center. Even if we take this one example *cum grano salis*, it is essential not to lose sight of the spirit of obstinacy expressed by it.

The two centuries of Haitian history following independence were filled with traumatic events: economic blockades, government instability, dictatorships, uprisings, invasions, as well as occupations, the longest of which by the United States (1915–1934). Waves of exiles and recurrent natural disasters have contributed to the misery of the island. In spite of this, Haitian society has created national heroes (Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines), political (Alexandre Pétion) and cultural elites (Jean Price-Mars, Jacques Stephen Alexis, Jacques Roumain), institutions such as the Bibliothèque Nationale (1939), the Institut d'Ethnologie (1941), a system of public, private and religious educational institutes as well as two universities (Université d'État d'Haïti, 1960; Université Caraïbe, 1988).

Compared to the French West Indies, throughout its history Haiti has been much more broadly exposed to the pressures of Euro-Atlantic powers—France, Great Britain, Spain, Germany, the United States—as well as to the cultures of neighboring countries. Thus Haitian Caribbeanness and Americanness manifest themselves in more diverse ways than in Martinique, being more open to Hispanophone (Dominican Republic, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico), Anglophone (United States, Canada) and Francophone (Quebec) regions.

Historical circumstances have also influenced the linguistic situation and the relationship between Creole, a language which is widespread and shared by all levels of society, and the French of the educated bourgeois elites. The economic, social, and cultural intersection between the majority of the Black rural population and the urban mixed middle and upper classes has created the cultural binarism of the oral culture in Creole and written literature in French. The question of language thus permeates the entire culture as an economic, social, even spiritual marker. In the case of Haiti, this includes the preservation of oral genres, folk customs, along with religious ideas associated with animistic voodoo practices.

31 "[...] bien des années plus tard, en Haïti, à compte d'auteur."

While the cultural integration of the countryside into the urban environment was concomitant with urbanization, this migration is also the result of the search for identity and self of the elites, who have referenced their folk roots in literature and culture since the 19th century. Paradoxically, the penetration of Creole would intensify under François Duvalier's dictatorship (1957–1971), with the voluntary or forced emigration of Francophone mixed-race elites and professional professions accentuating the need for Creole.³² As a result, Creole received recognition as an official language in the post-Duvalier Constitution of 1987 alongside French. In the late 1970s, Creole was introduced into the school curriculum and other educational programs, with the orthography also standardized independently of French spelling rules.

Official bilingualism does not always entail true equality. Nevertheless, the oral tradition and Creole entered into French written literature both thematically (Jacques Roumain, René Depestre, Gérard Étienne, Dany Laferrière and others) and in terms of genre, primarily as written literature adopted features from oral forms such as the *cont* and *lodyans* (see Anglade, 1999, 2000, 2002).³³

Gradually, written Creole as literature was also taking shape. Of numerous examples, we might mention the poetry collection *Diacoute* (Pouch, 1953) and the tragedy *Antigòn* (1953) by Félix Morisseau-Leroy (Felix Morisseau-Lewa), Michel-Rolph Trouillot's historiographical essay on the Haitian slave revolt *Ti difé boulé sou istoua Ayiti* (*A Short Talk on Haitian History*, 1977), or the novel *Dézafi* (*Throes of a Challenge*, 1975) by Frankétienne (Jean-Pierre Basile Dantor Franck Étienne d'Argent), which also was translated into French under the title *Les Affres d'un défi* (1979). Haitian expatriates in Quebec continue to publish literature and cultural information on the bilingual Creole-French website Potomitan, which takes its name from the central supporting "post" of a voodoo shrine. In contrast to the creolized French proposed by Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant in *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness*, Haitian literature follows more closely the concept of two languages and two interrelated literatures in terms of themes and genres, as the number of publications in Creole suggests. According to Louis-Philippe Dalembert, the separation and bipolarity which currently characterizes a significant number of Haitian authors writing simultaneously in both languages, "lightens" ("allège") and "makes ordinary" ("banalise") the relationship with French, allowing writers to treat language with complete freedom (Dalembert, 2010: 52). Dalem-

32 An estimated 80% of professionals emigrated during the 1960s. See Křížová, 2009: 76.

33 *Cont* (from the French conte) can be roughly translated as fairy tale or story, while the *lodyans* form (from the French l'audience) corresponds to storytelling drawn from real life situations performed for an audience.

bert's opinion on this is contained in his critical response to an encomium once offered by André Breton with regard to Aimé Césaire's excellent French language skills. Breton's encomium can also be seen as an instance of a representative of the center assuming the power to bestow the right of language appropriation upon a member of the periphery:

Believing it to be a compliment, André Breton said of Aimé Césaire: "A Black man who writes French like few Whites"; history will no longer tell us how the person in question perceived this, or whether Breton was even aware that he was uttering a racist compliment.

DALEMBERT, 2010: 50³⁴

With regard to Haitian literature written in French, the path to autonomy has been facilitated and deperipheralization supported by institutions that were established by Haitian elites—printing houses, schools, theatres, libraries, academic organizations, appreciation societies and clubs, etc. Literary journals remain of considerable importance to literary life. Although some of these publications were short-lived, they form an almost continuous series from the end of the 19th century to the present day. *L'Abeille haïtienne* was established in 1817, while at the end of the century the Parnassian, Decadent, and Symbolist review *Jeune Haïti* (1895–1898) came into operation, followed by *La Ronde* (1896–1901) and *La Nouvelle Ronde* (1925) in the first decades of the 20th century. The modernist *La Revue indigène* (1927–1928) supported the nationalist program, followed by the radical and later more explicitly nationalist *Les Griots* (1938–1940) as part of the Noirism movement. The avant-garde *La Ruche* (1945–1946) and later *Semences* (1961) published by the Haïti Littéraire movement would open up Haitian journals to an international readership. *Petit Samedi* (1973–1992) and later *Chemins critiques* (1989–2004, 2017) would be active in Haiti during and after Duvalier's dictatorship, while *Nouvelle optique* (1971–1973), *Collectif paroles* (1979–1987) and *Dérives* (1975–1987) became organs of Haitian exiles in Montreal. This overview is merely illustrative to clarify the link between literary currents and periodicals, even the titles of which suggest a gradual detachment from European movements and aesthetic values.

The specificity of Haiti's deperipheralization stems from the intersection of influences emanating from several centers. The French influence is counterbalanced by the attraction of Anglophone and Francophone American cul-

34 "Croyant formuler un compliment, André Breton a dit d'Aimé Césaire: "un Noir qui écrit le français comme il y a peu de Blancs"; l'histoire ne nous révèle pas comment l'a perçu l'intéressé, ni si Breton était conscient de formuler un compliment raciste."

tures as well as the impact of the Caribbean environment. Overall, the points of reference were gradually shifting from Europe to America, a track which can be traced in the studies, formative sojourns, careers, and connections of Haitian intellectuals. Until the late 1950s, Europe and Paris predominated, while from the 1960s onwards Haitian attention turned to the United States, Canada and, above all, Francophone Quebec. The poet Oswald Durand (1840–1906) was honored to be received in Paris by the poet François Coppée. The academic studies as well as the various phases of the careers of Jean Price-Mars (1876–1969), and later Jacques Roumain (1901–1944), Émile Roumer (1903–1988), Jacques Stephen Alexis (1922–1961) along with many others are linked to Paris and Europe. Among the last influential intellectuals that can be called Paris-oriented we can find René Depestre (1926–) and Yanick Lahens (1953–). Nevertheless, by the time of Duvalier's dictatorship, most intellectuals were already finding employment either in Africa, especially in Senegal thanks to President Léopold Sédar Senghor, for example Jean-François Brierre, Max Charlier, and Félix Morisseau-Leroy, or in Cuba, for instance Philippe Thoby-Marcelin and René Depestre, with the latter remaining until 1971.³⁵ Others permanently or temporarily settled in the United States, including Jeanie Bogart, Jean-André Constant, Réginal O. Crosley, Fritzberg Daléus, Ruben François, Paul Laraque, Serge Legagneur, Roland Menuau, Jean de Montreux, Max Fresney Pierre, and Évelyne Trouillot. From the U.S., some moved to Montreal, Quebec, where the largest cohort of exiles was organized, including Franz Benjamin, Robert Berrouët-Oriol, Joëlle Constant, Villard Denis, Joël Des Rosiers, Gérard Étienne, Franck Fouché, Eddy Garnier, Fayolle Jean, Saint-John Kauss, Gary Klang, Jean-Richard Laforest, Roland Morisseau, Émile Ollivier, Anthony Phelps, Lenous Suprice, and Dany Laferrière. It is in Montreal that members of the Haitian intellectual diaspora began to develop their most significant cultural and literary activities.

The shift in the network of relations and ties from Europe to America is also evident within the Haitian literary field, within which the attraction of the Parisian center prevailed throughout the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Haitian writers at this stage not only imitated French models, but their attempts at catching up to wider discourses of peripherality was becoming evident, as shown by many authors' hasty efforts toward the amalgamation and hybridization of Romantic, Parnassian, Decadent, and Symbolist practices. Some writers felt themselves part of French culture, for example Etzer Vilaire

35 See below the section "The Deperipheralization of Spanish Latin America" (Part 1, Chapter 4) on the relocation of Hispanic centrality to Havana in the 1960s.

(1872–1951), who dreamed of “the entry of the Haitian elite into the literary history of France” (Laroche, 1981: 30).³⁶ As late as the 1950s, Haitian culture is assigned the role of torchbearer of French culture on the far periphery in this diplomatic statement by Jean Price-Mars:

We are [...] on this side of the Atlantic the heirs of the traditions and civilization of a great country and a great nation which on the world scale represents one of the six or seven powers [...] not so much in territorial size and population, but in the glow of institutions, in the glory of ages of history, and in the sweep and influence of a culture of many centuries. We feel indebted to France [...] and to the world for the stewardship of this spiritual heritage.

PRICE-MARS, 1959: 102³⁷

Three decades earlier, it was Jean Price-Mars's ethnological work *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (*So Spoke the Uncle*, 1928) that first marked a significant turning point in rethinking the relationship between center and periphery. Not only did this collection of “ethnographic essays” represent an essential impetus for the Négritude movement (see above, and below Part 2, Chapter 12), but it also led, especially within Haitian culture, to a new perspective and appreciation of the Creole and African heritage, for example to the rehabilitation of voodoo and the associated religious ideas, customs and rituals, and to a turning of attention to the Haitian countryside. On the American continent, this work parallels the efforts of French-Canadian folklorists and linguists (see above) and, finally, the earlier activities of European folklorists of the Romantic period. In the Haitian context, Price-Mars's work represents a break with the Parisian center, making a statement that aims to affirm local values that would subsequently be developed thematically and literarily by the Haitian avant-gardes. Even before the emergence of the Négritude movement, Haitian poets and novelists had founded a review dedicated to Indigenism, *La Revue indigène* (1927–1928). The indigenists, including Carl Brouard (1902–1965), Émile Roumer (1903–1988),

36 “[...] l'avènement d'une élite haïtienne dans l'histoire littéraire de la France.”

37 “Nous sommes [...] de ce côté-ci de l'Atlantique, les héritiers des traditions et de la civilisation d'un grand pays et d'un grand peuple qui figurent dans le calendrier mondial comme l'une des cinq ou six grandes puissances parmi les plus grandes [...] moins par l'étendue de son territoire et par le nombre de ses habitants que par la splendeur de ses institutions, la gloire d'un long passé historique et le dynamisme d'une culture rayonnante et multi-séculaire. Nous nous croyons redevables envers la France [...] et envers le monde de notre gestion de ce patrimoine spirituel.”

and Jacques Roumain (1901–1944), were not preoccupied with a backward-looking conception of folklore, but were set on integrating local themes into current global avant-garde movements. Jacques Roumain, a friend of Harlem Renaissance representatives Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes, infused his free verse with jazzy rhythmicity. Roumain's novel *Gouverneurs de la rosée* (1944, *Masters of the Dew*, translated by Langston Hughes and Mercer Cook in 1971) combines rural themes and voodoo imagery with a realistic depiction of the Caribbean and Haitian countryside. The work represents a pillar of the modernist canon of Haitian literature as well as proof that the indigenists were moving as early as mid-20th century beyond the local towards the worldly.

The next stage is marked by the magazine *Les Griots* (1938–1940), associated with the Noirism, a movement that represents a crossroads of future contradictory tendencies (Famin, 2017). On the one hand, Noirism radicalized the autonomizing search for an essentialist “national spirit,” while on the other, it accentuated the avant-garde. These contradictions stemmed from the nature and focus of the founders of the review, who sought to retain continuity with the previous *La Revue indigène* founded by poet Carl Brouard (along with Jacques Roumain and Émile Roumer). Other Noirists included the ethnologist Lorimer Denis (1905–1957), who was interested in the cult and culture of voodoo; the physician, poet and future dictator François Duvalier (1907–1971); and finally the Surrealist Clément Magloire-Saint-Aude (1912–1971). The contradiction between right-wing nationalism and left-wing avant-gardism would spill over in the following periods into the persecution of the cultural and liberal left during Duvalier's dictatorship.

It is not our intention, however, to discuss the history of Haitian literature, but simply to delineate here the decisive turning point of the 1930s and 1940s in the process of the deperipheralization of Haiti. The Haitian initiatives occurred in parallel to the Négritude movement in Paris, but remained independent of it. Haiti came to absorb both European and North American impulses: Clément Magloire-Saint-Aude and René Bélance (1915–2004) translated Breton's Surrealism into a technique of the Conceptualism of juxtaposed images, while the Harlem Renaissance inspired both the subject matter as well as the poetic technique of rhythmic free verse, as seen especially in the poetry of Jacques Roumain.

The transformation in this phase can be illustrated by André Breton's visit to Haiti in December 1945. This visit, which took place at the invitation of the Cuban painter Wilfred Lam and the director of the French Institute René Mabilille, was preceded by Aimé Césaire's lectures at the French Institute in Port-au-Prince in December 1944. Both of these events testify to the quality of the reception environment, the large and knowledgeable audience as well as

the exceptional organization of the time period. Breton's visit included a radio interview, the responses to which concerned both the indigenist generation and the newly forming avant-garde around the magazine *La Ruche* (1945–1946). The interview also featured René Depestre (1926–) and Jacques Stephen Alexis (1922–1961). Thus, while Haiti indeed absorbed new impulses, it did so in its own way, avoiding direct imitation (Obszyński, 2015: 88 ff.).

Haiti's deperipheralization is characterized by a decisive although not sharply formulated break with previous stages. Finding its own ways, Haitian literature makes use of its peripheral capacities of absorption, juxtaposition and integrative blending. An early example of these tracks can be seen in Jacques Stephen Alexis's program of Haitian Miraculous Realism (*réalisme merveilleux haïtien*) presented in 1956 at the Sorbonne in Paris as part of the First Congress of Black Writers and Artists. The meetings were presided over by Jean Price-Mars. Alexis's lecture *Du réalisme merveilleux des Haïtiens* (The Miraculous Realism of the Haitians) was organized by the Paris publishing house *Présence africaine*, after which the text was issued by the aforementioned publisher in a journal of the same name which is still in existence today. In the lecture, Alexis addresses a global Black community with an aesthetic that transcends *Négritude*:

Everything shows that Haitians have adopted a distinctive approach to art, that there is at present a school of new Realism created by Haitians, a school in search of itself that is taking form bit by bit, a school that we are beginning to call the school of Miraculous Realism, a contribution that we are presenting to the intellectuals of the fraternized Black peoples and that with the contribution of all could hasten the establishment of this Haitian school on a clear foundation.

ALEXIS, 1956: 248³⁸

According to Charles W. Scheel and others (Scheel, 2005: 18; Obszyński, 2015: 151), Alexis's Miraculous Realism was partly inspired by Real Maravilloso and by the concepts of the Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier as formulated in his novel *El Reino de este mundo* (*The Kingdom of this World*, 1949), which was translated

38 "Puisque tout démontre qu'il y a une manière propre aux Haïtiens en art, qu'il y a actuellement une École de Réalisme Nouveau particulier aux Haïtiens, une École qui se cherche et qui se dessine peu à peu, une École qu'on commence à appeler École du Réalisme Merveilleux, cette contribution présentée devant les intellectuels des peuples frères nègres, pourrait, grâce à l'apport de tous, hâter la constitution de cette École haïtienne sur des bases fondamentales claires."

into French in 1954 and in English in 1957 and refers directly to Haiti. From the point of view of deperipheralization, the work of Alexis by its very denomination constitutes an affirmation of autonomy that uses the Parisian center to address the entire Francophone periphery, at that time undergoing a phase of decolonization. According to Michał Obszycyński, although expressed using different terms, Alexis's ideas anticipate Édouard Glissant's archipelagic notions regarding cultural relations and Creoleness (Obszycyński, 2015: 153).

In Haiti, the group *Haïti littéraire* as well as *Groupe de Cinq* (Group of Five)—Davertige (Villard Denis, 1940–2004), Anthony Phelps (1928), Serge Legagneur (1937), René Philoctète (1932–1995) and Roland Morisseau (1933–1995)—mark another path towards autonomy. The movement initiated the magazine *Semence* (1961) and hosted the cultural program *Prisme* by Anthony Phelps on Radio Cacique. As Duvalier's dictatorship was emerging, *Groupe de Cinq* had to limit its involvement to the defense of independent culture, which became one of the areas of civil resistance for a long period of time. From an aesthetic point of view, the action of *Groupe de Cinq* marks a departure from the essentialism of *Négritude*, *Indigenism* and *Noirism*. The collective's activities are directed both towards the broader popularization of culture as well as towards theoretical links to other avant-garde movements, particularly *Spiralism*, introduced in 1965 by René Philoctète, Jean-Claude Figolé (1941–) and Frankétienne (1936–). The spiral metaphor signifies an escape from (literally) dictatorial reality, an upward flight through black humor, formal anarchy and experimental disruption of traditional forms. Among other orientations, *Spiralism* represents an artistic reflection of existentialism and social instability under the despotic regime of François Duvalier (1957–1971), continuing with his son Jean-Claude Duvalier (1971–1986). This period also saw massive emigration, mainly of the elites in the first wave and later of the pauperized population. The Haitian diaspora around the world is currently estimated at two million people.³⁹

The traumatic bifurcation of Haitian literature into domestic and diasporic has demonstrated its overall viability and has in fact led in the long run to literary gains. The affirmative impacts of the disturbance can be traced through several trajectories. Among the long-standing factors, Haitian insularity should perhaps be mentioned, or rather the way in which Haitian elites have become accustomed to overcoming isolation, breaking through the demographically

39 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian_diaspora (assessed 24.11.2020). Sources often vary widely, with numbers ranging from one to four million depending on the data and the way each country's census is conducted.

and socially narrow circle of Haitian society (including communities of readership) and forging numerous contacts with the American, European, and African milieu. The effectiveness of this habitus would be seen precisely during the period of great intellectual exile of the 1960s and 1970s. It is also during this period that the organizational skills of the members of the Groupe de Cinq would be put to use after they had transferred their activities to Montreal and become the organizing core of the Haitian exile community. The leading figures and positions—especially in Quebec—would be guided by “the main postulates of Jacques Stephen Alexis, of Haiti littéraire and of the Spiralists” (Obszyński, 2015: 162).⁴⁰

The list of exiles is surprisingly long (see above). Equally unanticipated was the organizational capacity of Haitian elites to preserve their identity and to create a network of cultural relations and interdependent activities wherever a convenient space to do so can be found. Regarding the relationship between the center and the periphery, it is interesting to observe the determining influence of the environment in which these activities occur. It is clear that the centrality of Paris and New York has acted as a decidedly integrative, even assimilative, factor, whether it is the incorporation into the Francophone diversity of the Parisian center (René Depestre [see below Part 3, Chapter 16], Yanick Lahens), or the necessity to change languages in favor of English (Edwidge Danticat). By contrast, in the Montreal environment, which in the 1960s was undergoing the final phase of Quebec’s deperipheralization, a mutual exchange of ideas, debate and criticism was fostered. Thus the Haitian intellectual community within the Quebec cultural context was also able to maintain its identity, integrity and distinctiveness for at least the three decades of the 1960s–1990s. The historical serendipity of the Haitian exile, the deperipheralization of Quebec and the social emancipation of the crucial period of the Quiet Revolution should be emphasized in this context. An influx of French-speaking elites to “Frenchify” public administration and institutions was essential during this phase, thus Haitian leaders were welcomed and were able to establish fruitful collaborations with Quebec elites on many levels (Kwaterko, 2011: 213–227). The fact that these elites themselves were not exclusively native-born Quebecers adds even more heterogeneity and complexity to discussions of center and periphery. We have already mentioned the collaboration of Robert Berrouët-Oriol and Émile Ollivier in the review *Vice Versa* (1983–1996) directed by the Italo-Québécois Fulvio Caccia and Lamberto Tassinari. The Haitians themselves set up their own magazines (*Nouvelle Optique*, 1971–1973; *Dérives*,

40 “[...] postulats principaux de Jacques Stephen Alexis, d’Haïti littéraire et des spiralistes.”

1975–1987; *Ruptures*, 1992–1998) and publishing houses linked to cultural centers (Nouvelle Optique, CIDIHCA). Links with the island of origin were never completely interrupted, with the network connecting the diaspora to Haiti also taking on a continental dimension. The diaspora's contacts continued with the aforementioned Spiralists who had remained in Haiti as well as with the Pluralism of Gérard Gugé (1923–2003), who sought to combine Surrealism with Miraculous Realism. Also of notable interest and importance are the connections with the diaspora to the integrative intention of Surpluréalisme as articulated by Saint-John Kauss in a series of manifestos (1992, 1995, 1998, 2001) published on the aforementioned Potomitan website.

The influence of Haitian immigrants on the home culture of the receiving country has been briefly discussed above with regard to the deperipheralization of Quebec literature. Haitians have also used their newly acquired centrality to Quebec to assert themselves outside the rather narrow confines of Haitian literature. Strong foundations for this broader participation were prepared by the huge first wave of migrants—Émile Ollivier, Gérard Étienne, Antony Phelps, Max Dorsinville, Maximilien Laroche, Robert Berrouët-Oriol, Jean Jonassaint. This foundation was then fully exploited by the second generation, represented for example by the award-winning novelist Dany Laferrière, now a member of the French Academy (although he considers himself an American author). A third generation born in Quebec the 1960s and 1970s includes Stanley Péan, Joël Des Rosiers, Marie-Célie Agnant, Henri Saint-Fleur, and Saint-John Kauss.

It is also necessary to mention the contribution of Haitian literary criticism and theory to the identity problem of Postmodernism in conjunction with creative writing. Robert Berrouët-Oriol's article *Effet d'exil* (Exile Effect), published in 1987 in *Vice Versa* (Berrouët-Oriol, 1987: 20–21), contributed polemically to the debate on the integration of migrant writers into the newly formed Quebec canon. The objections that the author directs at Quebec publishing institutions are based on an analysis of the position of Haitian writers in exile. His reflections on the life situation of immigrants mark a radical departure from an essentialist, ethnic conception of the migrant condition to a postphenomenological, existential one.

In his collection of essays *Repérages* (*Detections*, 2001), Émile Ollivier (1940–2002) would follow up on the critique by Berrouët-Oriol. Starting from the dichotomy of Quebec's cultural and social tradition as inscribed in the opposition between the nomad-trapper (*coureur des bois*, “runner of the woods”) and the settler, Ollivier inverts received values in favor of a new conception of nomadism. He argues for the transformations which would take place in a globalized human society:

Notions of exile and unrootedness like those of a homeland or state only make sense in a society of settlers. As a majority, they have succeeded in imposing on nomadic societies laws and borders aimed at encircling and immobilizing them. It is only in this way that these concepts eventually acquired a historical justification that has no natural origin.

OLLIVIER, 2001: 32⁴¹

Nevertheless, the judgment and negative view of nomadism and unrootedness (e.g. the French concept of *errance* can be translated as “wandering”) no longer has a place in a globalizing world in which individuals as well as populations are constantly moving around the planet.

Rootlessness (*déracinement*) also implies the freedom and liberty of a new human destiny marked by “transnationalization”: individual identities are not fixed, but are instead “mutable,” as individuals are “mutants” within a “fragmented society” in which it is necessary to learn to “live in free zones at the margins” (Ollivier, 2001: 37–39).⁴² In such an axiological configuration, any borders—ethnic, cultural, linguistic—lose their justification and meaning, even in situations in which mixing and hybridization are acknowledged. Ollivier’s conclusions are akin to a condition that another Haitian, Jean-Claude Charles, requires for creation—an “errant rootedness” (*enracinerrance*) (Charles, 2001: 37–41).

A reassessment of unrootedness and the resultant existential overlap is addressed by Joël Des Rosiers in *Théories caraïbes* (*Caribbean theories*, 1996). Here, Des Rosiers operates with the concept of a “postexile” human destiny manifested in the status and work of writers, i.e. it is precisely creation that makes it possible to fill the inner sense of emptiness by finding the Other. Further, Joël Des Rosiers definitively dismisses the concept of an essentialist identity along with the notion of national literature:

Undoubtedly we have already reached the end of the coincidences among language, culture and identity. For us, all language is tinged with strangeness; and our poetic art seeks to distance itself from any hint of

41 “Les notions d’exil et d’errance comme celles de patrie ou d’État n’ont de sens que pour les sociétés sédentaires. Majoritaires, elles sont parvenues à imposer aux sociétés nomades des lois et des frontières visant à les cerner et à les immobiliser; ce faisant, elles ont fini par doter d’une épaisseur historique des notions qui n’avaient à l’origine rien de naturel.”

42 “mutants”; “société fragmentée”; “vivre dans les zones franches des marges”.

rootedness. For us, rootlessness is a positive value, a bearer of modernity, because it allows hybridization, heterogeneity, and openness to the Other in oneself.

DES ROSIERS, 1996: 172⁴³

In contrast to the discourse of diaspora, Joël Des Rosiers contrasts *metaspora* (*métaspora*), a view in which the transcendence of communitarian identity is represented within transcultural diversity.

While the theoretical contribution of the Haitian diaspora is unquestionable, such influences also represent an attempt to inscribe the lesson of overcoming the center/periphery dichotomy in the transnational space. Between 1960 and 1990, Haitian literature developed in a split between the “internal” domestic and the “external” exile. Clearly, it was exile that made Haitian literature visible within Montreal, New York and Parisian centrality as well as placing it in opposition to these centers. Nevertheless, the same situation can be seen to have marginalized Haitian writing, which already possessed a long tradition of insularity. In terms of an overall view of Haitian literature, the effect may be one of distortion. Even Duvalier’s dictatorship could not stifle inner-insular production or literary communication with the world. A number of great authors such as René Philoctète, Frankétienne, and Jean-Claude Fignolé (1941–2017) remained in Haiti throughout, while others like René Belance, Raymond Chassagne (1924–2013) returned to the island before the fall of the dictatorship. Alongside these writers, another generation was entering the scene, including Pierre Clitandre (1954–), Gary Victor (1958–), Louis-Philippe Dalember (1962–), and Emmelie Prophète (1971–). In addition to literature written in French, literature in Creole was also developing. After the fall of the dictatorship and following the turbulence of the 1990s, especially under the liberation theology of the presidencies of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the situation did begin to stabilize, with the center of gravity of culture and literature shifting from diasporic networks back to Haiti itself.

The full development of a thriving literary community was hampered by difficulties of the economic situation and limited possibilities of the domestic cultural market, despite the fact that the institutional framework remains solid even today. The Rex Theatre, the hall of the French Institute, along with

43 “Sans doute sommes-nous parvenus à la fin des coïncidences entre langage, culture et identité. Pour nous, toute langue est teintée d'étrangeté; et notre art poétique cherche à se distancier de toute velléité d'enracinement. Pour nous, le déracinement est une valeur positive; porteuse de modernité, parce qu'il autorise l'hybridation, l'hétérogénéité, l'ouverture à l'Autre en soi.”

many small venues have served the development of the performance arts. The National Library as well as the library of the French Institute are linked to a network of public libraries, notably the FOKAL association (Fondation Connaissance et Liberté / Fondasyon Konesans Ak Libète / Foundation for Knowledge and Liberty), founded in 1995, as well as to religious organizations. Outside the capital of Port-au-Prince, the library network of CLACS (Centers de lecture et d'animation / Centers for reading and animation) is available as well as private initiatives such as the Soleil library of the novelist Pierre Clitandre and the library of the poet Georges Castera (1936–2020).

The publishing and literary culture in Haiti remains underdeveloped, as is the infrastructure. Authors who write professionally, even world-renowned writers such as Dany Laferrière, continue to issue works almost exclusively in Montreal or in France. Books published in Haiti are largely financed by the authors themselves. The writer's position thus corresponds to the peripheral communal situation and the weak, non-hierarchical axiological structuring of the literary field of the periphery (see section Chapter 1 above). As in the past, literary production today endures primarily as a kind of parallel activity for writers along with subsistence employment in the sectors such as the military, education, administration, health sectors, magazine editing, and radio. This, however, does not detract from the quality and number of publications, which currently amounts to two hundred titles a year. Publishing houses include Éditions du Soleil and Choucouné, founded in 1970 by the poet Christophe Charles; Deschamps, which Yanick Lahens managed in the 1990s; and Mémoire, eventually brought to Montreal by Rodney Saint-Eloi under the name Mémoire d'encrier. In 2004, Édouard Willems founded the Presses nationales d'Haïti, intending to gradually publish all the classics of Haitian literature, including the integration and domiciliation of authors in exile. In addition to literary publishers, important didactic publishers are in operation such as Éditions de l'Université d'État d'Haïti, Éditions de l'Université Caraïbe, Editha, Zemès, and Arytos. Significantly, university publishers focus on criticism and theory and thus partly fulfill a consecratory function. If domestic Haitian authors and publishers are added to Haitians literarians published abroad, whether in France (Actes Sud, Seuil, Gallimard, Laffont, Grasset, etc.), in Quebec (Mémoire d'encrier, CIDHICA, Triptyque, etc.) or in the United States (Soho Press, Alfred A. Knopf), the wide-ranging network of relations between Europe, America and the Haitian center that has characterized Haitian literature from the beginning, becomes evident. The Haitian culture continues to remain what it has always been—insular, yet open to the world.

5 Conclusion

The three French-language literatures of the American continent that we have discussed represent three distinct types and stages of autonomization of the periphery in relation to Parisian centrality.

For French-Canadian and later more specifically Quebec literature, we can speak of a full deperipheralization that has reached the stage of its own full centrality. Although not to the same extent as the Parisian center, Quebec has been understood since the 1980s as another (even rival) cultural center of gravity, a space attracting authors from other parts of literary Francophony and beyond. Not only Haitian exiles are represented in this broad periphery; authors of many diverse origins are included: Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Brazilian, Chilean, Lebanese, Iraqi, Polish, Serbian, Anglo-Canadian, Indian, just to name a few. The literature of Quebec has absorbed all of these influences to create a truly global literary canon.

The emergence of French-Canadian and Quebec literature has followed similar patterns as those of nation-states and national language-minority literatures in Europe in a track that corresponds to the Herderian model of emancipation as interpreted in both Ernest Gellner's Habsburg model as well as Gérard Bouchard's identity pattern (Gellner, 1983; Bouchard, 2001). The dissimilarities with Europe seem to stem mainly from the belatedness and incompleteness of the process. In the Canadian context, one reason for this difference can be seen in the initial colonial situation and in the minority status of French-Canadians compared to the Anglophone majority. French-Canadian elites were compelled to make moves toward emancipation on two fronts simultaneously: politically, Frenchness was the argument against Anglo-Canadian dominance, while in culture and literature, Canadian and American differences were pitted against French centrality. The decolonization argument and, through it, the appeal to the solidarity of the decolonized peripheries as initiated by the Négritude movement, mainly concerns Quebec in the 1960s, and thus seems rather related to political circumstances (see Vallières, 1968). The Quiet Revolution and the language laws culminating in Law 101 of 1977 sought to offer security and a sense of certainty to all crucial institutions—publishing houses, cultural and literary critical periodicals, the book market, the school system, cultural institutions—and thus to reinforce the independence and centrality of Quebec literature. A particular feature of Quebec's deperipheralization is the influence of a constituted cultural tradition of perpetuating peripheral axiological mechanisms—juxtaposition, non-hierarchization, hybridization, inclusion, openness—that are permanently inscribed in the axiology of the literary field and the shaping of literary life.

One historical advantage for Haiti was undoubtedly its early national independence acquired in 1804. This facilitated the establishment of fundamental institutions for the development of autonomized cultural structures years, decades, and even more than a century before other nations newly emancipated from colonial powers. Despite this earlier establishment, however, the autonomization of literature was hampered by several factors. In the political sphere, repeated periods of instability recurrently destroyed or destabilized the constituted elites. In the cultural sphere, diastatic varieties of Creole and French linked to socio-economic stratification was an obstacle from the beginning, with the reception of French-language literature for a long time limited to the mere one-tenth of the population which was literate, while the vast majority of the Creole-speaking population remained in a subaltern position with its oral culture. Thus this minority status of French as a literary language firmly tied the Haitian periphery to the Parisian center from the beginning. Only the gradual identification of the elites with Creole culture brought about significant change, i.e. the movement away from an “external,” exoticizing attitude to Creole and its eventual adoption as the central axiology, and, finally, the sanctioning of works through an “internal,” autonomous framework. It is pertinent to recall in this context Itamar Even-Zohar’s theory of the polysystem (Even-Zohar, 1978), in this case how the oral Creole culture eventually transformed the dominant literature in French before establishing itself under the influence of Haitian French literature into a self-contained, written literature, parallel to the French-written one.

A major axiological domiciliation occurred around 1930 in a development obviously reinforced by the Négritude movement emerging from the Parisian center. However, the break with the center itself—Haitian Indigenism—had by then already come. The will toward self-creation and uniqueness was also consistently reflected in the distinctive labels of the various subsequent movements such as Noirism, Haitian Miraculous Realism, Haïti littéraire, Spiralism and others. The insularity and limitations of the Haitian literary market oriented Haitian culture from the beginning towards openness and later towards increased transnationality. In the long term, we can observe both a marked appropriation of external influences as well as a distinctive ability to transfer its own specificities to another cultural environment. This capacity was especially evident after the massive exodus of Haitian elites in the 1960s, which split Haitian literature into several diasporic regions, all of which in various ways remained connected to the mother island. Through cultural centers, especially Montreal, the diaspora was able to successfully promote a number of authors such as Dany Laferrière, Émile Ollivier and Gérard Étienne into a global context. Haitian literature can indeed be said to have achieved autonomy, but it is

an autonomy which retains elements of the peripheral. It is still largely diasporic, lacking (or perhaps rejecting) the centrality and attraction of a center of gravity.

Caribbean literature, specifically that of Martinique, has not achieved autonomy as of yet. Although strong identitarian impulses have emanated from the Caribbean milieu, with Négritude, Caribbeanness, Creoleness standing out strongly as negations of centrality and central institutions, these movements nevertheless remain/ed closely linked to the center. Wherever and whenever these concepts were formulated, their institutional consecration and dissemination (eventually) came through a central, European authority. Nevertheless, the prominence of these authors and theorists is considerable. Taken as a whole, their work represents a not only distinct peripheral extension of Parisian centrality, but also set of rhizomes among the French West Indies, Haiti, Quebec, and the United States. The profound global impact of the ideas and works of writers such as Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau stand out as striking examples.

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The Deperipheralization of Spanish Latin America

Daniel Vázquez Touriño

1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze a long-term process.¹ To begin, we will attempt to identify a number of periods or landmarks of particular importance for the relationship between the center and the periphery of the literary field. In addition, this chapter will serve to compare this instance of deperipheralization with similar processes in other fields. In accomplishing these goals, emphasis will be placed on the peculiarities of what has been generally termed the Spanish-American context.

2 The Lack of Coherence in the Field

Any analysis of the processes involved in deperipheralization (autonomization) of the literatures of Hispanic America confronts us with a fundamental methodological problem: the impossibility of identifying with certainty the very object of study. In our case, the subject of deperipheralization, that is, the peripheral literary space, will be identified as a particular space which acquires (or does not acquire) an autonomous status. The premise of the argument begins with a central space that has lost its hegemony in juxtaposition to another space peripheral to that center that acquires autonomy as imagined by Pascale Casanova in the *World Republic of Letters* (2004)—in this case the former colonial hegemon Spain in relation to Hispanic America. Firstly, it is essential to remember that the actors constituting the Hispanic American literary space do not always perceive it as a coherent whole. In Hispanic America, let alone on a pan-Hispanic scale, a number of processes, symbolic tools and institutions work in complicated ways and unlike in other literary spaces. In addition to the struggles for the autonomy of Hispanic American literature—a literature that as we shall see continues to lack a definable center—we can

1 For this version of the chapter, I have benefited from the valuable contributions of José Luis Bellón Aguilera, Athena Alchazidu and Markéta Riebová. My thanks to all three.

also observe the emergence of national and sometimes even entirely regional or local literary fields. The loss of Spain's centrality, therefore, has provoked frictions among several emerging and overlapping areas. In short, the question arises as to whether we should speak of an autonomization of the literary fields of each of the nineteen Spanish-speaking republics of the American continent, or whether we should consider an entire block of "Hispanic literature," which despite its heterogeneity can be seen as having accumulated symbolic capital in comparison to (e.g. in collaboration or competition with) Spain. The process of deperipheralization thus takes place in an oscillation full of differences and contradictions between two extreme tendencies: the autonomy of each national literature and the autonomy of Hispanic American literature as a whole. Although the Hispanic American literary field is no longer a periphery, the putative incoherence that remains shows that its autonomization has not been definitively completed, even more than two centuries after the process of autonomization began. On the contrary, the predominance of the two currents—national and Hispanic—has alternated. It must be added here that the Spanish center itself has also never ceased to exert a particular attractive force. In short, it is impossible to speak of the autonomization of Hispanic literature or the autonomization of the national literatures of Latin America without resorting to oversimplification.²

Indeed, an exclusive choice of either the national or Hispanic conception would prevent us from accurately interpreting the configurations of symbolic power and the processes of accumulation of literary resources that occurred in Hispanophone Latin America from the first manifestations of resistance to Spanish hegemony in the 18th century until today. Due to specific movements, initiatives, or individual authors, during some periods national strategies prevailed, tending to atomize the literary system. In other times, the idea of a shared Hispanic identity enabled the accumulation of significant symbolic capital in the literature of the whole region. Examples supporting one or the other vision of the emancipatory process abound and confirm the image of what has been called "oscillating deperipheralization." Thus, we may examine many phenomena that compel us to consider Hispanic literature as a whole, from the publication of the journals *La Biblioteca Americana* (1823) and *El Repertorio Americano* (1826–1827) by Andrés Bello during his London exile to publications, works and movements of the present day. The concept of a singu-

2 I believe that Casanova falls into this trap of oversimplification when she concludes that "[s]till today the special interest of the Latin American case resides in the concentration of literary capital not only within a national space but within a continental one as well." (Casanova, 2004: 234).

lar Hispanic literature underlies many university programs and much academic research, including Fernández Retamar's attempt (1975) to create a "theory of Hispanic American literature" that would account for aspects of its revolutionary and redemptive specificity. On the other hand, exclusively national (or regional) literary entities are abundant within Hispanic American literature, e.g. institutions dedicated to culture such as governmental ministries, pantheons of patriotic figures, literary prizes, national literature studies programs. In addition to these institutions of consecration, we can also encounter national specificities in the form of particular literary genres typical of certain countries or regions (Argentine gaucho themes, Afro-Caribbean Neo-baroque) as well as political-cultural movements associated with specific areas (Andean Indigenism). The process of shaking off Spanish hegemony has not led to the emergence of one new unified literary field. This observation is fundamental for comparing center-periphery relations in the Hispanic sphere with other more or less similar instances of (attempted) deperipheralization.

One underlying issue here is the problematic constitution of the nation-states of Hispanic America. In studying the birth of national sentiment in Spanish America, Benedict Anderson (1991, chapter 4) details how during the 18th century the malaise of the Creole bourgeoisie was exasperated by their exclusion from the administration of the colonies until the consciousness of an American "us" as opposed to the peninsular "them" arose. The *criollismo* of Spanish Latin America is comparable both in its causes and many of its procedural mechanisms (Anderson highlights the role of nascent journalism) to the then ongoing struggle for independence of the United States. Notably, and this should be emphasized, political emancipation occurred in both the British and Spanish colonies before the spread of nationalist ideologies in Europe that based the right to self-determination on cultural essentialism and presumed historical predestination. Moreover, unlike European peoples' self-determination struggles in the 19th century as well as those of Asian or African peoples in the 20th century, the Creole bourgeoisies resisting Spain were culturally identical to their oppressors.³ The birth of the American states was not, therefore, due to Herderian nationalism. Still, this does not explain why nearly two dozen nations eventually emerged in Latin America, while the North American dominions that became independent from England maintained their unity.

3 At the time of their independence, the new republics shared a language, religion and history with the former metropolis: "All, including the USA, were Creole states, formed and led by people who shared a common language and common descent with those against whom they fought." (Anderson, 1991: 47).

By the mid-18th century there were only two Anglo-American nations (one still under the dominion of the British crown), but numerous Spanish American ones. Anderson attributes this difference to the enormous extension of the Spanish empire, which made communication among the various administrative units difficult.⁴ In the Spanish colonies, “Americanness” as an identity confronting European identity was strong enough to provoke a common and united independence movement from New Spain to Chile. The Creole bourgeoisie was willing to risk their patrimony and even their lives to free themselves from the colonial yoke. However, the consciousness of sharing the struggle against a common oppressor did not produce one shared national identity. Therefore, the newly established independence did not represent the sovereignty of one Spanish-American nation, but of several political entities united by their resistance to the despotism of the metropolis. The independence of the whole of Hispanic America was being fought for in separated regions that later became Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Argentina, etc. When the various pockets of rebellion were called to fight for their homeland, this home was not the whole continent, but only a part of it which in many cases did not yet even have a name. The well-known “Carta de Jamaica,” (“Letter from Jamaica”) written by Simón Bolívar amid the wars of independence (1815), offers numerous examples of these circumstances:

As I understand, Buenos Ayres and Chile have followed this same line of operations; but as we are so far away, the documents are so few, and the news so inaccurate, I will not even dare to sketch the picture of their operations.

BOLÍVAR, 2004: 57⁵

The lack of communication that Anderson points out is evident here. Furthermore, Bolívar clearly saw that, while this was a struggle of brotherly peoples, their efforts would give rise to a series of independent states: “America involves the creation of seventeen nations.” (“la América comporta la crea-

4 “Mexican creoles might learn months later of developments in Buenos Aires, but it would be through Mexican newspapers, not those of the Rio de la Plata; and the events would appear as ‘similar to’ rather than ‘part’ of events in Mexico.” (Anderson, 1991: 63).

5 “Segun entiendo, Buenos Ayres y Chile han seguido esta misma línea de operaciones; pero como nos hallamos á tanta distancia, los documentos son tan raros, y las noticias tan inexactas, no me animaré ni aun á bosquejar el cuadro de sus transacciones.” Buenos Aires is not to be understood here as a synecdoche for Argentina, but as the administrative headquarters and, therefore, the focus of the Creole rebellion in the territories that would eventually constitute the nation states of Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia.

ción de diecisiete naciones”; Bolívar, 2004: 61) Significantly, Bolívar saw that these nations would emerge only after the overall independence of America as opposed to the romantic idea of nationhood, which implies a national cultural essence that aspires to its political freedom.

Thus, the emergence of the different nations in Spanish Latin America corresponded primarily to the administrative divisions of the Spanish colony, not to cultural differences. Only after independence would particular cultural traits become increasingly emphasized as part of each government’s program. The specific identity of each nation was often based on geographical differences and the various cults of the leaders of the independence movements. Glorious pre-Hispanic pasts were also incorporated into several emerging national self-images to lend authority to the legitimizing power by invoking antiquity, including earlier periods of dominance. This, however, contrasted with the complete absence of contemporary indigenous (or African-American) realities within the identitarian discourses of the newly formed republics.⁶ In any case, neither Latin America as a whole nor any of the individual republics had formed a clear national identity at the time of their political independence. It should be no surprise, therefore, that literature was repeatedly called upon to construct and create this identity, sacrificing the autonomy of art in favor of forging a national self-image. This is quite an opposite process to the one Casanova outlines in the first chapters of *The World Republic of Letters* in which she cites King Frederick II of Prussia’s lament that his burgeoning nation did not still have the literary capital to match that of “its neighbors” (Casanova, 2004: 90). In other words, the nation already existed; it just lacked literary output to describe it and justify it. In contrast, in the Latin American case the literary capital generated by the Spanish tradition and its colonial literature was used to create a nation that did not yet exist. Fernández Lizardi in *El Periquillo*

6 Seeking to increase the legitimacy of the emancipation project, some liberation leaders such as Manuel Belgrano in Buenos Aires proposed the coronation of the Inca dynasty and the creation of a new monarchy in South America that would be linked legally to the pre-Hispanic empire. The Congress of Tucumán in 1816 flatly rejected this plan. Natalia Majluf (2005) explains this in a revealing way: “The Buenos Aires vision was defined by a somewhat simplistic and idealized view of the Peruvian reality. Inspired by a reading of the French Enlightenment, [the leaders of the independence movement] had yet to confront the difficulties imposed by the ethnic divisions in the Peruvian Viceroyalty, nor had they directly experienced the violence unleashed by the rebellions in the South Andean region.” / “La visión porteña estuvo definida por una mirada algo simplista e idealizada de la realidad peruana. Inspirados por la lectura de los ilustrados franceses, no habían tenido que confrontar las dificultades que la división étnica imponía en el virreinato peruano, ni habían vivido directamente la violencia desatada por las rebeliones surandinas.” (Majluf, 2005: 267–268).

Sarniento (*The Mangy Parrot*, 1830) and Ricardo Palma in *Tradiciones peruanas* (*Peruvian Traditions*, c. 1860), for example, borrowed forms from the Spanish literary heritage—the picaresque novel and the genre of *costumbristic casticismo*,⁷ respectively—and used the prestige of these classical forms to add to the imagined antiquity of the nascent republics.

Addressing the question of literary language can also help to foster an understanding of the friction between Spanish-American literature and national literatures, a tension which accompanies the whole process of deperipheralization. In European national movements, the forging of a national identity was generally based on the codification and dissemination of literary language. Thus in the scheme of European nationalism, the intellectual elites of oppressed nations “rescue” their own language which has been dominated by a hegemonic power, and endow it with literary dignity.⁸ The case of Latin America is different. Given the vastness of the territory it is true that there was considerable diversity between the various forms of Spanish in different parts of the continent, but neither at the beginning of the 19th century nor today has this difference led to the development of specific national languages.⁹ The “literary emancipation of the Americas” does not consist in recovering oppressed languages, but rather in deciding whether to grant “high literary” value to the various varieties of Spanish or, on the contrary, to use the prestige provided by the unity of the Spanish language to accumulate Hispano-American/national symbolic capital. In this sense, we can observe three moments always in flux between one pole and the other.

From independence until the middle of the 20th century, the literary language used by authors on both sides of the Atlantic was basically the same: a kind of cultivated language common to all enlightened Spanish speakers, the norm of which was more closely linked to European Spanish. Even at the risk of overgeneralizing this point, during these centuries it can be said that locally colored forms of speech were reproduced in literary works merely as examples of quaint local color or folklore. Even in literary movements of a markedly

7 A term exceedingly difficult to render in English, *costumbristic casticismo* may be described as the depiction of everyday life based on the trope of “purity” of the Castilian heritage, which also carries racialist connotations.

8 Casanova exemplifies the case of Ireland, in which these dynamics were at work among the literary field, the vernacular language and the language of the metropolis (Casanova, 2004: 303 ff.).

9 This remains the case at least as far as the variants of Spanish are concerned. A number of the hundreds of indigenous languages spoken in the Americas might well be considered national languages. The relationships of literatures written in native American languages to the hegemonic Spanish-language field could certainly be an impetus for further interesting studies.

national or regional disposition such as Gaucho poetry or the indigenist novel, a clear distinction is established between the language of certain characters (however much they may be extolled as bearers of national values) and the cultured literary language of the projected target community of readers.¹⁰

Only when colloquial language is accepted as a literary vehicle do narrators and poetic voices begin to appear, notably Chilean, Mexican and the Porteño of Argentina. The elevation of the different variants of Spanish to the category of literary language coincides in time with the so-called Latin American Boom in the 1960s and 70s. Among their other goals, many of these writers aspired precisely to a renewal of literary language. In the stories of Cortázar, Vargas Llosa and many others as well as in the poetry of Nicanor Parra, for example, linguistic particularities do not appear merely as picturesque samples of local life, but as literary material of the first rank. During this period, the heterogeneity of literary Spanish became notorious in and of itself. Still, it was assumed that an educated reader would be able to overcome this difficulty, and even appreciate this heterogeneity which brought such richness to Spanish-language literature. It should be kept in mind that in general the literature of the Boom made use of “difficult” structures and techniques, with which the heterogeneity of the literary language harmonized perfectly. This moment in the middle of the 20th century is the point at which Spanish American literature became situated in what Casanova calls “literature of the present” (Casanova 2004: 94), the precise moment at which literary Spanish became a pluricentric norm.

Nevertheless, as Jorge J. Locane has noted (Locane, 2019), this pluricentric linguistic disposition of Boom literature has given way to a deterritorialization of language in the last two decades. Locane compares the diatopically delineated turns and forms in the short stories published by Roberto Bolaño at the end of the 20th century with those of Guadalupe Nettel, who after winning the Herralde Prize in 2014 has enjoyed considerable international success thanks to the numerous translations of her works. The fictions of both authors are characterized by cosmopolitanism, with plots and characters from different parts of Latin America naturally passing through major Western cities. Locane traces the presence of local expressions in the novels of these two writers, concluding

10 I believe that it does not invalidate this argument that many regionalist novels, such as *Doña Bárbara* (*Lady Bárbara*, 1929) by Rómulo Gallegos, are replete with vocabulary referring to the nature and customs of a specific region, even to the point of including glossaries as paratexts. Beyond the lexicon, the style of the omniscient narrator in this and similar novels lacks distinctive regional marks in terms of syntax, prosody, turns of phrase, etc. Even the lexicon, so closely linked to realities of the Venezuelan savannah in the case of *Doña Bárbara*, must be understood more as akin to that of a specialized jargon (comparable, for example, to that of sea navigation) than as distinctive of a specific linguistic norm.

that while Bolaño reflects the “contemporary life experience” of an individual with many roots, Nettel’s characters “inhabit no [language]” (“no habitan ninguna [lengua]”; Locane, 2019: 143). Locane points to the need for Nettel’s narrators to explain specific regional realities as if the phenomena involved were not really a part of their own lives. The Argentine critic concludes that editorial concentration and the imposition of commercial criteria by transnational publishing conglomerates (see below) serves to privilege works that disregard specific cultures or dialects. To use Locane’s term, “World (Hispanic) literature” as exemplified by Guadalupe Nettel’s writing is reviving linguistic pan-Hispanism for the sake of simplicity to facilitate sales. The current linguistic formula seems to be that of the lowest common denominator, which means eliminating local or regional “difficulties” that might hinder understanding. This homogenization produces writing that, having its roots nowhere, can easily be apprehended everywhere.¹¹

To summarize what has been said so far, the process of deperipheralization of Latin American literature is a struggle against the central hegemony of Spain as well as a friction between various national spaces and the “World” Latin American space. This particular phenomenon is also due to the complexity of the Hispanic American identity, characterized by the “anomaly” resulting from the fact that states were born before nations.¹² Moreover, the tendencies towards pan-Spanishness and linguistic pluricentrism has also served to deprive the process of autonomization of a strategy for elevating an “American Spanish” which does not truly exist into a literary language.¹³

11 In discussing literary language and the formation and spread of a such a language non-existent as a hegemonic variant, other processes of deperipheralization in relation to Spanish literature can be more closely linked to the linguistic and national revival understood in the Herderian sense. The study of attempts at the creation of autonomous literary fields around Catalan, Basque and Galician since the 19th century may serve as a hermeneutical complement to understanding the history of deperipheralization in Hispanic America. Phenomena related to our explorations here can be found in even the most tentative aspirations towards the construction of new literary fields during the 20th century—Asturian or Aragonese in Spain; literature in Guaraní, Nahuatl, Quiché, Aymara, or Quechua in the Americas.

12 In the words of Octavio Paz: “We had a state and a church before becoming a nation.” / “Tuvimos un Estado y una Iglesia antes de ser una nación.” (Paz, 1983: 153).

13 Finally, another factor that problematizes the deperipheralization of Hispanic America is the competition among various centers of prestige to dominate the space, not only Hispanic American, but Hispanic in general. This produces a power dynamic quite different from that which Casanova proposes for other processes of autonomization. In the Hispanic American case, it must be taken into account that during several periods the

3 The Political Power of Autonomy

Casanova insists that the boundaries and history of literary fields do not coincide with the boundaries and history of politics (Casanova, 2004: 4ff.). In line with Bourdieu's approach, she argues that the symbolic capital of authors increases and their position in the field improves when politics and any other extra-literary interests do not interfere in the act of creation.¹⁴ Prestige in the autonomous field gives the work of a regarded author an absolute universality and contemporaneity, and therefore total independence from national or historical particularities. Bourdieu goes on to explain, however, that a writer can paradoxically use this specific independence conferred by a respected position in the autonomous field to intervene effectively in the political arena (Bourdieu, 1995: 340–341).

Considering that in Latin America political contestations have for two hundred years revolved around the construction of the political subject,¹⁵ that is around the shaping of a narrative of an imagined community, it is logical that writers have been active politically more often than is the case in other models of deperipheralization. This is exemplified not only by the many authors who have become presidents of their countries or have aspired to the presidency (among these Sarmiento, Gallegos, Neruda, Vargas Llosa, Sergio Ramírez), but also by the importance that politics has had and continues to have in the tensions accompanying both the emergence of national Hispanic literary fields and the preservation of a common pan-Hispanic field.

Although the following sections will mainly discuss periodization with regard to the deperipheralization of Hispanic literature, it is important to highlight at least three political events that activated the prestige of the autonomous literary field, and by their intensity have contributed to shaping His-

strategies of intellectuals were aimed at promoting the hegemony of one center to the detriment of another. If there is such a thing as Hispanic American literature, its center is always in dispute and it often remains outside Central and South America. Whether for reasons unrelated to literature itself, such as exile or economic profitability, or to seek proximity to the zero meridian of literary art, it is common to find Latin American writers radiating innovation from outside Latin America: José Martí in New York, Rubén Darío in Paris and Madrid, Cortázar in Paris, Vargas Llosa, García Márquez and Bolaño in Catalonia or today Samanta Schweblin in Berlin.

14 In Casanova's scheme, this phenomenon is apparent in what she calls "the Irish paradigm" (Casanova, 2004: 303ff.).

15 Anna Housková points out that themes concerning cultural identity are a peculiar feature of Hispanic literature, a phenomenon which underscores the vital participation of literature in shaping political processes (Housková, 1998: 12).

panic identity discourse. In all three cases, we encounter an artistic community which possessed both peer recognition as well as enormous symbolic capital which was used in the creation of the Hispanic American identity.

After the Spanish-American War (1898) and the subsequent loss of its last colonies, Spain became aware of its own backwardness, including in the field of art and literature. Moreover, this significant historical awakening coincided with the moment when the literary autonomy of Hispanic America was achieved, due in large part to the Modernism of the Nicaraguan-born Rubén Darío (“Prince of Castilian Letters”). One significant turning point had come in 1896 with the first publication of Darío’s masterpiece *Prosas profanas y otros poemas*. In the aftermath of Spain’s loss of territory and prestige following the war, several intellectuals of recognized stature within this newly autonomous Hispanic American field, including Darío himself, José Enrique Rodó and Paul Groussac, developed a current of thought that would have an enormous influence on the political life of the entire region throughout the 20th century. Arielism as postulated by Rodó in his essay *Ariel* (1900) is reflected in several poems in Darío’s last major work, *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1906). The narrative of Latin Americanism in opposition to U.S. imperialism is articulated in the works associated with Arielism, the symbolic axis of which opposes Hispanic spirituality and solidarity against the materialism and predatory individualism of the Anglo-Saxon world. In doing so, the moral, aesthetic and spiritual associations of Latin America are linked with the Greco-Latin, and therefore Spanish, tradition. In this way, Arielism has influenced Latin American political thought ever since.

With the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and the subsequent victory of Francoism came another moment in which intellectuals who had earned the prestige of autonomy altered the course of the construction of the Hispanic American cultural identity. In this case, a group of intellectuals and artists representing the so-called Silver Age of culture and art in Spain in the 1920s and 1930s was forced to leave Spain and welcomed into exile by several countries in Latin America. Many members of this cosmopolitan intellectual elite, including poets, philosophers, plastic artists, doctors, jurists and academics, had already obtained “worldwide” recognition in Casanova’s sense. The countries in which they took refuge from Franco’s repression had by then been influenced by strongly nationalist and populist movements (the Mexican Revolution, Peronism in Argentina, Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana in Peru, etc.), and their cultural production had been nationally oriented for decades. The arrival of these Spanish intellectuals, who often went on to hold political and cultural leadership positions, also contributed to the internationalization of Hispanic cultural production.

According to Pascale Casanova, one of the reasons Paris is the capital of literature par excellence is that it embodies the fusion of literature and revolution (Casanova, 2004: 25). The same can be said of Havana in the aftermath of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the third event in our paradigm. As was the case with Modernism at the beginning of the 20th century, this major political transformation coincided with a moment in which Hispanic literature was “catching up” with the zero meridian of modernity in a series of works that would lead to the globally recognized Latin American Boom of the 1960s and 70s, during which authors such as García Márquez, Vargas Llosa, Cortázar, and Carpentier became household names. From the beginning, these and many other authors threw themselves into the vortex of the Cuban Revolution. Writers founded, guided, directed and / or participated in many of the cultural incentives and initiatives of the new Castro regime. Consequently, the prestige of the Boom rejuvenated the Latin American and anti-imperialist discourse of Arielism. As described by Pedro Sánchez, the arrival of these authors in Cuba gave rise to a “leftist anti-dictatorial ideological cohesion that was decisive in those years and that promoted the creation of a transoceanic avant-garde that combined literary modernity with political utopia” (Sánchez, 2018: 51).¹⁶

As I have tried to show in the previous paragraphs, intellectuals and other authors used the prestige they had gained in the autonomous literary field to participate in the political arena. The three principal moments of Hispanic literary production in the 20th century (Modernism, the Spanish Silver Age and the Latin American Boom) coincided with important events in the history of Spanish-speaking countries on both sides of the Atlantic. This context must be taken into account in any historical depiction of deperipheralization of Hispanic literature.

16 “[...] una cohesión ideológica antidictatorial e izquierdista que fue decisiva en esos años y que favoreció la creación de una vanguardia transoceánica que aunaba la modernidad literaria con la utopía política.” Among the many anecdotes in Xavi Ayén’s book on the Boom, those concerning writers’ relations with the Cuban regime are especially revealing with regard to the influence that the prestige of the autonomous field can exert on politics. Ayén shows how Vargas Llosa and García Márquez used their prestige in different ways, e.g. by comparing the actions of each author following the arrest and torture of the Cuban poet Heberto Padilla in 1971. While Vargas Llosa drafted the public manifesto “Letter of the One Hundred Intellectuals,” in which figures such as Sartre, Beauvoir, Calvino, Duras, Erzensberger, Juan Goytisolo, Moravia, Paz, etc. had unsuccessfully denounced the violation of the artist’s freedom, García Márquez used his influence over Castro in private interviews. According to García Márquez, he was able to negotiate the departure from Cuba of Padilla himself as well as many other intellectuals and dissidents persecuted by the regime (Xavi Avén, 2019: 242–246).

4 The Academic Field

A final feature of the struggles for the autonomy of the Hispanic literary space is the role played by the academic world. Of course, as a consecrating body the university is a decisive factor in any such struggle, but in the case of Latin America the hegemony of institutions in the U.S. university system influenced the attitudes of intellectuals in exceptional ways.

Headed by the Spaniard Federico de Onís, the world's first doctoral program in Hispanic American literature was initiated at Columbia University in New York, with the first doctorate awarded in 1923. The consecration of this literary tradition as a part of university programs was of course essential to the autonomization of the literary field itself.¹⁷ In 1920 Onís founded the *Hispanic Institute*, with its goal “to direct the trilateral relations between Spain, Latin America and the United States” (Onís, 1955: 1; Onís, 1955: 9, cited in Roggiano, 1966: 123) This position of the United States—external, mostly non-Hispanic, we should add—as the vertex of the triangle between Spain and its former colonies, brings into play crucial symbolic elements for the establishment of power relations in the literary sphere, especially if we consider that the presence of Latin American studies in Spain is much less significant than in the United States.¹⁸

At the time of the Boom, the prevalence of U.S. universities was decisive, with the ever-increasing number of departments of Latin American literature also crucial in spreading and consecrating the new Latin American aesthetic avant-garde of the 1960s. It is not our task here to dissect the internal tensions within the history of the U.S. university system at the time, but it is worth recalling a few facts, even at the risk of generalization.

During the decades characterized by social and political militancy in the United States (the Civil Rights Movement, protests against the Vietnam War, the rise of second-wave feminism), the university played a crucial oppositional role to the conservative attitudes of the “silent majority” of American society. Thus, in addition to its intrinsic and autonomous literary values, Boom literature was often situated within the framework of critical theory and its offshoot cultural studies, with works studied primarily as an expression of power

17 The first chair of Argentine literature was founded at the University of Buenos Aires in 1913, an example that shows that the competition between various national fields and the Hispano-American field existed in the academic world from the very origin of university studies devoted to this discipline.

18 Vilanova defines three causes for the lack of Latin American studies in Spanish universities: endogamy, lack of transdisciplinarity, and the hegemony of Spanish philology, within which Hispanic America is generally considered as a mere periphery (Villanova, 2007).

relations within systems of oppression, particularly imperialism or capitalist exploitation. The resulting image of Hispanic American literature as Third World literature (using the terminology of the time) was mainly due to the effective use of the Latin American Boom by U.S. universities in promoting ideological issues.¹⁹

In the 1980s, Peruvian professor Julio Ortega of Brown University founded Transatlantic Studies as an alternative to the putative hegemony of Postcolonial Studies. As an attempt at a significant innovation, transatlanticism focuses its examinations on literary and cultural exchanges between the two sides of the Atlantic. The transatlantic approach deemphasizes the center-periphery division and studies literary interaction in terms of shared space, common interests, and mutual influences. This approach has been criticized for an imprecise methodology, bringing questions regarding ahistoricity (Galster, 2015: 77). Nevertheless, this approach, which privileges neither the Latin American nor Iberian context, has attracted several scholars from European and Anglo-Saxon universities, leading to a shift concerning symbolic sources of the literary field.

5 Periodization²⁰

5.1 *The Emergence of National Literatures*

During the transition in which Latin America developed politically from the colonial period to independent liberal republics (roughly between 1750 and 1870), the literature was dominated by what Pascale Casanova calls the national pole (Casanova 2004: 108 ff.). Artistic production was closely linked to state institutions. The ultimate purpose of literature was to create a national identity, since as discussed above the new republics had not been founded on the basis of Herderian conceptions, thus the emerging nations had to be constructed

19 According to María Caballero, “postcolonialism and subalternity are privileged in the United States, while transculturation or anthropological and cultural reconversion are preferred in Latin America” / “[e]n Estados Unidos se privilegia el postcolonialismo y la subalternidad, en Latinoamérica la transculturación o reconversiones culturales de tipo antropológico” (Caballero, 2017: 128). Here Caballero provides an illuminating overview of the relationship between cultural studies and Hispanic American literature in recent decades.

20 This outline follows Sánchez (2018: 10), who analyses the matter in transatlantic terms. What he considers transatlantic exchange is considered here as part of the struggle for autonomization. To the five “episodes” proposed by Sánchez, we add a prologue, that of the founding of national literatures.

a posteriori. “Pure” literature was all but banished, with the main inspiration, albeit expressed heteronomously, being utility and service to the particular emergent national domain.

But even though the times did not favor innovation and experimentation, Spain and Latin America produced a certain amount of interesting works during this period. As everywhere else in the world, French literary patterns prevailed at this time, with sentimental and historical novels the most popular in this age of Romanticism. Applied to the construction of national imagery, the admiration for French models gave rise to surprising paradoxes, such as the exotic representation of the native Indian in imitation of Chateaubriand’s novels.

Writing practices connected to Realism were cultivated in Latin America until the early 20th century, with the prolonged survival of these forms showing that Latin American authors were in no hurry to catch up with the literary contemporaneity of the Parisian meridian. Instead, these writers adapted their works to the needs of the homeland, as realistic literary forms were considered most suited to the task of building national literatures and producing literary works upon which to establish a tradition.²¹

The thematic and figurative resources accumulated by the new American literary fields were therefore situated at the political pole. Still, the use of these resources did yet not allow the new national literatures to abandon their position as part of an outdated “past” of world literature. This deferral of Modernism, however, did not prevent Hispanic literature from breaking out of its marginal position vis-à-vis Spain. The reason for this is that the former metropolitan center had also turned back developmentally toward the national pole, and a great aesthetic distance separated it from other contemporary Western literature, creating a similar situation for literature in Spanish on both sides of the Atlantic. As a result, the particular literary domains developed in parallel and isolation, with national interests outweighing aesthetic concerns. The market for authors and readers was both small and fragmented, as elites read directly in French, while the symbolic capital of Spanish-language literature (the literary tradition of the Golden Age) that had been accumulated in the past lost its exchange value after the transformation of European thought and society in the 18th and 19th centuries.

21 “Because neorealism in its national and popular versions excludes any form of literary autonomy and makes literary production a function of politics, it is not surprising to find that, despite certain variations, the same realist (or “illusionist”) assumption is common to emerging literary spaces and to those that are subject to strong political censorship” (Casanova, 2004: 197).

Argentine Gaucho literature represents to some extent an exception. Widely cultivated between 1860 and 1890, this autochthonous literary genre cannot be considered peripheral to any literature, as it comprises the essential accumulation of literary capital of the Río de la Plata tradition. Gaucho literature represents both a rejection and a challenge to modernity and the modern ways of life that had become overwhelmingly established in Argentina in this period. It is thus a genre that responds artistically to the most pressing problems of Western civilization in the same way as Symbolism and Modernism, albeit from very different aesthetic approaches. The novelty of the genre is enhanced by the moral ambiguity of the stories, which are generally told in a very characteristic oral style by gauchos, representatives of authentic Creole values who find themselves outlawed and stoically accept their fate. Thus, with Gaucho literature Argentina creates its own authentic literary tradition, one that has not become the focus of other Spanish-language literatures.

The enormous public success that surrounded Gaucho literature as well as the political use of many of its works (such as *Martín Fierro*, 1872, the pinnacle of the genre), make it difficult to speak of a completely autonomous literary field in those years. On the other hand, the innovative features of this genre—including the formal structures—are too closely linked to the particularities of the gaucho's life. Nevertheless, this does not prevent authors in the Gaucho genre, with its topics, conflicts, motifs and stylistic turns, from remaining productive even throughout the 20th century. The works have become a powerful stimulus for reworking forms and creating intertextual dialogues in the literature, not only with such figures as Güiraldes, Lugones, Borges and Aira, but also with works in other artistic fields. In Gaucho literature, Argentine culture does not reach the “literary contemporaneity” of the zero meridian of which Casanova speaks, since it lacks the necessary universality as a genre. However, the accumulated literary capital is remarkable, which gives the literature of the region an unquestionable autonomy.

5.2 *Modernism and the “Return of the Galleons.”*

In 1930, the Dominican poet and critic Max Henríquez Ureña published a book-length essay, *El retorno de los galeones* in which he discusses the influence of Hispanic writers, especially authors of the modernist movement. The title of Henríquez Ureña's essay speaks explicitly of an inversion of the literary relationship between center and periphery in Hispanic literature. According to Pablo Sánchez, this book created “a new narrative about the history of transatlantic relations” (Sánchez, 2018: 21). The aesthetic renewal of Hispanic modernist writers marked a radical change of direction in the trajectory of transatlantic influences. The “mental Gallicism” of Rubén Darío and his follow-

ers brought Latin American literature closer to Paris, the contemporary zero meridian of world literature. Spanish America began to “radiate” innovation towards Spain, which now occupied a peripheral position as a space of reception and reproduction of imported innovations.

Rubén Darío’s mastery and the adoption of his aesthetic proposals by a younger generation of Spanish authors exposed continental Spanish literature’s inferiority to Hispanic literature, thus earning the latter a central position in the whole of Spanish-language literature.²² It may be debated whether the “Frenchness” of Hispanic authors engendered their repositioning as the center of Spanish-language literature, and if their innovation consisted merely in imitating Parisian models. At any rate, this is the pejorative image that Spanish critics such as Leopoldo Alas, alias “Clarín,”²³ tried to impose. On the contrary, Octavio Paz seems to have a point when he explains that “the modernists did not want to be French: they only wanted to be modern” (Paz, 1972/1965: 19). This meant, among other things, to be cosmopolitan, to escape from linguistic particularities of a specific region (*casticismos*). Hispanic Modernism used Paris as a banner, as an escape from nationalist immobility, as a provocation. Yet the paradigm shift in literary production was so profound that it went far beyond the mere imitation of decadent modes and attitudes. Without introducing contemporary discourses of a new conception of poetry as a new interpretation of the world, let us at least say that the reform of versification was so radical that it became a milestone in the history of Spanish poetry comparable to the introduction of Italian hendecasyllabic verse during the Renaissance period. This reform of the rhythm and sonority of the Spanish language has nothing to do with Paris except possibly circumstantially; it proceeded from a profound revision of the roots of prosody.

An essential characteristic of the “return of the galleons” is its continental dimension. Once again, the integrational figure of Darío was fundamental to bringing a sense of unity to the work of dozens of writers scattered throughout the vast Spanish-American territory. As a result, the Hispanic American field produced and accumulated substantial literary capital in a relatively short time. The spirit of Modernism greatly bolstered authors in their overcoming

22 As Octavio Paz explains, even figures who sought to distance themselves from modernist aesthetics such as Miguel de Unamuno and Antonio Machado “were marked by modernism” since “modernism was the language of the time, its historical style, and all creators were destined to breathe its atmosphere” / “están marcados por el modernism”; “el modernismo era el lenguaje de la época, su estilo histórico, y todos los creadores estaban condenados a respirar su atmósfera” (Paz, 1972/1965: 12–13).

23 On Clarín’s bitter hostility towards Rubén Darío, see for example Ibarra (1973).

of the aforementioned innate fragmentation of the Hispanic-American space, enabling them to abandon servility to the needs of individual nations. Doing so, Latin America emerged as the center of Spanish-language literature as it was engaging with the pan-Hispanic Arielist discourse that emerged from the Spanish-American War of 1898.

In terms of center and periphery, then, Modernism forged a dual trajectory. First, in the period after Darío's encounters with Martí, González Prada and other predecessors from all over the Americas, through his publication of the collection *Azul* (*Blue*, 1888), to what Paz calls the "zenith" of Darío's 1896 collection *Prosas profanas*, the modernist Hispanic movement detached Spanish-language literature from the provincially national, allowing it to forge forward with a modernizing esthetic renewal. Second, an autonomous sector arose in the literary field, with Darío as its hegemon and Latin America as the center. The prestige derived from this recognition was used to a greater extent in the second phase from 1898 onwards by authors to intervene in political issues. At this point, Modernism merged with the ideas of Arielism. By the time Darío himself published *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (*Songs of Life and Hope*) in 1905, the text served as a testimony that the movement (or at least its hegemonic figure) was already leaning strongly towards the political pole. The work had ceased to be national and had become pan-Hispanic and anti-imperialist, which may be sensed even in the titles of the poems such as *Salutación del optimista* (*Salute to the Optimist*), *A Roosevelt* (*To Roosevelt*), *Letanía de nuestro señor Don Quijote* (*Litany to our Master Don Quixote*).

By the time the engines of literature were accelerating frenetically past Modernism with avant-garde speed, an awareness of a Hispanic American literary field had already emerged as a space independent of, yet unavoidably twinned, with the literature of Spain.

5.3 *Avant-Gardes: The Aggiornamento of Hispanic Literatures*

The period of the "art for art's sake" avant-gardes meant a definitive inclination of the literary field towards the autonomous pole. In general, literature in 1915–1930 period radically turned away from historical upheavals and national identities, with the boldest aesthetic innovators coming to ascendance during this time.

In the Hispanic world, transoceanic relations were fluid in this period. By the second and third decades of the 20th century, the prophets of the Parisian "*-isms*" had begun to operate in countless urban centers on both sides of the Atlantic. The Chilean Vicente Huidobro and Spaniard Guillermo de la Torre were vying for the throne of the "guru" of new trends throughout the entire Spanish-speaking world in competition with less "mobile" figures such as Jorge

Luis Borges and Ramón Gómez de la Serna. In any case, the Hispanic literary space was increasingly perceived as a unified whole. Examples abound, especially in poetry, a genre that is generally more autonomous than prose and drama. Of a number of Latin American poets published in Spain, in addition to Huidobro, mention should be made of César Vallejo and Pablo Neruda, with the latter's works prefaced and celebrated by several Spanish authors. The reverse trajectory also proved robust, as works by the later Generation of '27 authors Guillermo de la Torre and García Lorca, for example, were published in Latin America significantly early in their careers.²⁴

During any radical reconfiguration of aesthetic values, power struggles proliferate in a turbulent literary field, which was certainly the case with the experimental movements of the early 20th century. The history of the Hispanic American poetic avant-garde of the 1920s and beyond is replete with quarrels, both transcontinental and national, for example, the polemic between the Chilean Pablo Neruda and the Spaniard Juan Ramón Jiménez in the journal *Caballo verde para la poesía* (*Green Horse for Poetry*), and the competition between the Boedo and Florida groups in Buenos Aires. Out of all of these rivalries, however, no Spanish-language literary space emerged as most influential or dominant, as the undisputed center, the zero meridian, remained more so than ever in Paris.

5.4 *Exiles and Autarky*

The political events of the following decades which shook the whole world also decreased the autonomy of the Hispanophone literary field. The 1930s saw the onset of a long period of militancy for many writers. Even if a few artists sought or were able (in varying degrees) to avoid direct personal commitment, national and political institutions often demanded that the literature served some didactic ideal.

Following the Spanish Civil War, the National Catholic dictatorship of Francisco Franco Bahamonde isolated Spain from the rest of the world almost completely for forty years. Writers who remained in Spain found themselves on the margins of universal literary currents, while many Spanish artists who went into exile were able to maintain universalist and anti-nationalist positions, either because of their dedication to more autonomous literature or because of their fidelity to Marxism and other ideologies of the left. The arrival in Latin America of figures such as María Zambrano, Max Aub, Luis Buñuel, Margarita

24 The friendship between Pablo Neruda and Federico García Lorca is discussed in detail by Sánchez (2018).

Xirgù along with dozens of other prominent artists and intellectuals mitigated the autarky and cultural localism promoted by populist and nationalist regimes in Latin America.

Due in large part to the contributions of these Spanish exiles, Hispanic American literature remained connected to new trends in world literature, primarily as the beneficiary of innovations which often never even reached Spain. Nevertheless, these were decades of local enclosure for Spanish-language literature. Among narrative genres, indigenist themes, regionalist fiction and novels about the Mexican Revolution predominated in works which returned to the well-worn forms of objectivist Realism. Nevertheless, as is the case with the 19th century, this period cannot be evaluated simply in terms of a center of Spanish-language literature concentrated around a subordinate periphery. Instead, the tendency towards autarky led to the atomization of the literary field, with localist writers in one part of the continent remaining unaware of localist trends in another part. While writers of the Latin American Boom would later denounce and work against this atomization, the flame of the autonomous aesthetic pole continued burning between the 1930s and 1950s, maintained by veterans of the avant-garde and precursors of the Boom such as Borges, Asturias and Rulfo. During this regionally-oriented literary period, world literary innovations penetrated the Latin American milieu through the major publishing houses that moved from Spain across the Atlantic after the Spanish Civil War (Sudamericana, Losada, Joaquín Mortiz, etc.). With the emergence of a new generation of authors and a new image of Latin America after the victory of the Cuban Revolution in the 1960s, the narrative innovations that had remained marginal for decades came to occupy a hegemonic position, allowing Latin America to make its own mark of modernity on world literature.

5.5 *The Latin American Boom: A Literary Revolution and a Literature of the Revolution*

In the 1960s, Hispanic American works broke through to the very center of world literature, especially in the narrative genre. Firmly established internationally in university literature studies, the Latin American Boom gave birth to a vast variety of works, thus it is impracticable to attempt to reduce this fecundity to a single formula.²⁵ Nevertheless, a number of common features will be

25 Within the copiousness and diversity of Boom narratives, the aesthetic current shown to have the most significant influence in the *World Republic of Letters* was Magical Realism. The novelistic innovations of Rulfo, Carpentier and García Márquez, for example, became the ideal recipe for locating the remote exoticism of the periphery in many ways. This trend of the literary field influenced by Western modernism set the stage for the popu-

highlighted here which can be related to the dynamics of center-periphery and to Pascale Casanova's vision of world literature.

First, the Boom is characterized by works of remarkable formal sophistication and dense intertextuality. José Donoso explains that young writers of the late 1950s lacked stimulating literary models in Hispanic America, since writers of the novel were seemingly trapped by "debilitating mimetic criterion and moreover just an imitation of what was demonstrably 'ours'—social problems, races, landscapes, etc." (Donoso, 1999/1972: 28–29). Turning away from local traditions which felt alien to them and choosing their own models, often from outside of Hispanophone fields, many young periphery writers sought to abandon the "past" of literature to make use of contemporary sources:

The gentlemen who wrote the foundational novels of Spanish America [...] seemed to us, with their vassalage to the Spanish Academy of Languages [*sic*] and their antiquated literary and life attitudes, like statues in a park, [...] without any power over us. Neither d'Halmar, nor Barrios, nor Mallea, nor Alegría offered seductions even remotely similar to those provided by Lawrence, Faulkner, Pavese, Camus, Joyce, Kafka

DONOSO, 1999/1972: 25²⁶

Naturally this attitude often met with rejection from the respective nationalist camps and even the wider Spanish-language readership, as described by Donoso: "The young novelists of Hispanic America [...] found themselves in a position that the public did not know whether to regard as original or simply snobbish" (Donoso, 1999/1972: 31).²⁷ Nevertheless, many of these young "uprooted" writers eventually came to recognize their affinity with each other. Consecration followed in the form of prizes from Spain, translations, and ultimately broader international success. The formal sophistication of masters such as García Márquez, Vargas Llosa, Cortázar, Borges and Carpentier gives each of these authors a unique place in any autonomous literary field, allowing them to become internationally universal. García Márquez' *Cien años de*

lar successes of writers such as Naguib Mahfouz, Salman Rushdie, Haruki Murakami and countless others from outside of Hispanophony.

26 "[...] los caballeros que escribieron las novelas básicas de Hispanoamérica [...] con su legado de vasallaje a la Academia Española de la Lengua [*sic*] y de actitudes literarias y vitales caducas, nos parecían estatuas en un parque, [...] sin ningún poder sobre nosotros. Ni d'Halmar ni Barrios, ni Mallea ni Alegría, ofrecían seducciones remotamente parecidas a las de Lawrence, Faulkner, Pavese, Camus, Joyce, Kafka."

27 "Los novelistas jóvenes de Hispanoamérica [...] quedaron en una posición ante el público que éste no sabía si definir como original o simplemente esnob."

soledad (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 1967) may remain consecrated as a classic bestseller from an imagination as lush as the Colombian jungle, but it is also a novel of literary erudition and a showcase of narrative sophistication.

The formal difficulty of Boom literature is understood not only as a quest for universality but also as a search for a new language in an effort to revive the Spanish-language literary tradition. It is also consistent with the countercultural revolution that was sweeping up the West at the time. This view brings us to the second element of the winning formula: the recovery of literature also supposes the necessity to create fresh works suitable for a newly emerging world. After the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the hope for a new stage of history flourished in Latin America. The promised possibility of definitively leaving what was perceived as a declining and corrupt Western capitalist system was based on the idea of redeeming all the world's disinherited and outcasts. Boom literature, however, is not merely a "literature of political struggle": if it had been, it would have lost its aesthetic autonomy. Vigorous debates raged regarding a Feuerbachian need for commitment and praxis (since, at least in principle, most authors expressed support for the revolution), and the Cuban regime spared no effort to support and proliferate the work of successful writers.²⁸ In the end, however, the literary Boom was generally able to maintain its autonomy in relation to the political pole of the power field.

Leaving politics aside, what has allowed the survival of Boom works in the autonomous pole of the literary field without being dragged down by historical upheavals is the third component of this literary phenomenon: the mythic substratum upon which the narratives of García Márquez and other authors are built. Emil Volek explains that myth lends a universality and alienation to certain fictional narratives, and as a result, "the indigenous, Negro, or Creole mythic worldview is defolklorized" (Volek, 1990: 13). That is, anything that is distinct or "ancient" in the narrative is erased. The mythic dimension of Boom literature connects the movement of contemporary approaches to postcolonial criticism while allowing it to escape from any conjunctural interpretation that would strip it of its autonomy. Casanova has something similar in mind when she defines a "Faulknerian revolution" (Casanova 2004: 336 ff.). Following Coindreau, she points out that "Faulkner's true domain is that of eternal myths, especially those that the Bible has popularized" (Coindreau, 1952: 4, cited in Casanova 2004: 339), which has created one of the most important aspects of Faulkner's appeal and his denotative status within Romance-language lit-

28 The complex conflicts between pure art and militancy within the Boom group are dealt with extensively in the ninth chapter of Ayén's monograph (Ayén, 2018).

erary fields. Through his mythization and universalization of the South of the United States, the American writer has become “the precursor and inventor of a specific-narrative, technical, formal solution that made it possible to reconcile the most modern aesthetics with the most archaic social structures and landscapes” (Casanova 2004: 345).

Regarding center-periphery dynamics in Spanish-language literature, the Latin American Boom presents a well-known paradox, i.e. it conquered the world, but it did so with works generally published in and sent out from Barcelona, not the localities in which they were written. The beginning of the Boom is usually placed at 1962, when the Barcelonan publishing house Seix Barral awarded the Premio Biblioteca Breve to Vargas Llosa’s novel *La ciudad y los perros* (*The City and the Dogs*, Eng. trans. *The Time of the Hero*, 1966).²⁹ Further, the discovery and dissemination of Hispanic literature was definitively linked to two figures of the Catalan publishing world: the publisher Carlos Barral and the literary agent Carmen Balcells.

Some of the more prominent authors of the movement such as García Márquez, Vargas Llosa, and José Donoso did eventually move to Barcelona, which had a greater distribution capacity on both sides of the Atlantic than any other Latin American city (Sánchez, 2018: 50). The city possessed a modern, cosmopolitan distinctiveness, and above all shared with Latin America “the defense of peripheral positions vis-a-vis Madrid’s centralist hegemony and its authoritarian connotations in the political, economic, and cultural spheres” (Sánchez, 2018: 44).³⁰ Paradoxically, while Latin America emerged as the writing center of Spanish-language literature, the capital of the Latin American literary revolution was Catalonia, with its leftist leaders known in French as the “*gauche divine*.” Leaving aside the consequences that the presence of the Boom in Barcelona had on the world publishing market, Pedrós Gascón points out that, for example, Alejo Carpentier’s conception of the revolutionary value of the innovative Hispanic literature even led to a “transitory lationamericanization of the indigenous Spanish imaginary” (“transitoria lationamericanización del imaginario patrio”; Pedrós Gascón, 2007: 91).

Although Hispanic American literature became the hegemon, the center of the literary field did not shift to *el Nuevo Mundo*, nor did it even achieve defini-

29 In later years, numerous Latin American Boom authors received or were finalists for this prize until the end of its first era in 1972, for example Vicente Leñero, Mario Benedetti, Jorge Edwards, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Manuel Puig, Carlos Fuentes, Jorge Onetti, José Donoso, Alfredo Bryce Echenique.

30 “[...] la defensa de posiciones periféricas frente a la hegemonía centralista madrileña y sus connotaciones autoritarias en lo político, lo económico y lo cultural.”

tive autonomization. Latin America did not replace the old colonial domination of Europe, although for a time Havana did seek to take cultural advantage of the impetus of the Cuban Revolution to create a center of Spanish-language literature. In the 1960s, there was an unprecedented transfer of economic and political capital from the regime and from Cuban institutions into literature: in that decade, there was virtually no Spanish-language writer (or artist or intellectual) who was not associated with the universities, publishing houses, prizes, congresses, meetings, journals, etc., that emerged in Havana. The organization *Casa de las Américas*, around which all these activities took place, stands as a beacon of cultural exchange as well as a marker of anti-imperialist and anti-dictatorial Latin American brotherhood. In the mid-1960s, the prize and magazine bearing the name of the institution took on the highest symbolic value in the field of Spanish-language literature, exercising the exclusive power of the central space. Nevertheless, the autonomy of this symbolic capital evaporated within a few years.

The disillusionment caused by “Padilla affair” of 1971³¹ is often mentioned as the moment when the ideological and aesthetic unity of the Boom broke down, and by the 1980s Hispanic literature had largely lost its status as the center of world literature. Still, the Latin American Boom forever changed the symbolic value of Spanish-speaking America within the literary field. With the disillusion of utopian dreams and the advent of postmodern culture, “Latin America became an object of imaginary consumption for the eyes of the idle citizen” (Pedrós Gascón, 2007: 106).³² According to Pedrós Gascón, Latin American literature has lost the exclusivity of its narrative technique, with its mythic substratum transformed into harmless folklore. In this view, the militancy and aggressive virility of the texts and their authors has given way to an overly naive romantic spirituality, as shown for example in the mass international appeal of authors like Isabel Allende and Laura Esquivel.

5.6 *Globalization*

From the 1970s onwards, the Boom movement and revolutionary enthusiasm began to dissipate along with the hierarchies and boundaries of the literary field. The idea of a zero meridian of Spanish-language literature faded away, with neither Barcelona nor Havana succeeding in creating such a locus. The literary field came to be seen as a confluence of dynamic spaces rather than a

31 The poet Heberto Juan Padilla was imprisoned in Havana for criticizing the Cuban government. See above.

32 “Latinoamérica se tornó objeto de consumo imaginario para los ojos del ciudadano ocioso.”

struggle between center and periphery. The abandonment of national cultural policies after neoliberal economic measures were adopted across Latin America in the 1980s generated centrifugal tendencies in some areas of the Hispanic literary field. Mexico and the Caribbean, for example, felt not only the economic and political hegemony of the U.S.A., but also the prestige and influence of U.S. academic institutions. A concomitant economic and cultural effect was felt in Latin America after the influx of Hispanic immigrants into North America, which caused a significant number of Hispanic readers and writers to leave their *países natales*.

While Boom literature can be considered a kind of universal and atemporal cosmos, by the 1970s the Hispanic American field was in large part exploring what had remained at the margins of all-encompassing myth as well as elitist narrative technics. Thus an interest (influenced in part by Postmodernism) arose in women's literature (Rosario Castellanos, Luisa Valenzuela, Cristina Peri Rossi, etc.), in queer literature (Manuel Puig), and in exploring narrative subgenres such as the detective story (Paco Ignacio Taibo II). Among the genres that reappeared in the 1970s, the hybrid testimonial novel stands out.³³ Influenced by the new journalism (Oviedo, 2001, p. 373) and documentary drama,³⁴ this type of fiction works against governmental and corporate censorship, "offer[ing] a tribune that gives voice to the voiceless and is the memory of the forgotten" ("abre una tribuna que da voz a los que no la tienen y es la memoria de los olvidados"; Oviedo, 2001: 373). A large part of the work of Elena Poniatowska and Carlos Monsiváis consists of ceding narration to the witnesses of historical events, while some actual actors involved in real events such as Rigoberta Menchú and Domitila Chúngar collaborated with professional writers to tell their stories. It can be argued that the prestige these works have acquired despite their distinctive and parochial nature is due primarily to the rise of postcolonial studies.

In any case, the foremost change that has taken place in Latin American literature from the Boom period to the present is the fundamental transformation of the publishing market. Since the late 1990s, the Spanish-language publishing sectors have become increasingly polarized, concentrated, and denationalized. Most Latin American publishing houses have been taken over

33 This form has reappeared at least in part because these works are associated to a large extent with the first manifestations of Hispanic literature in the form of the chronicles of the conquest of the Americas.

34 Conceived by Peter Weiss in *Ermittlung* (*The Investigation*, 1965), this theatrical genre was cultivated in Latin America by Vicente Leñero and other authors.

by Spanish companies (Alfaguara, Planeta) which have subsequently become part of huge international conglomerates (Bertelsmann, Random House).³⁵ As Jorge J. Locane explains, this change also affects the poetics of Hispanic literature as authors and publishers pursue penetration into wider global markets. As described by Locane (2019: 11) in his study of “the material conditions, processes, and actors [that] intervene in the production of world literature today in the context of the current phase of globalization,”³⁶ given the high costs of producing and distributing mass (and other) literary products caused by the multiplicity of intermediaries and the associated professionalization, the publication of any work must follow market and other commercial trends in order to make the investment worthwhile in terms of profitability. Consequently,

Bourdieu’s literary field—if it is even possible to transfer the theory to the present day—is so dominated on a world scale by this actor—incarnated exemplarily by the sales manager—that academic criticism or cultural activism very rarely can influence the production and circulation of literature.

LOCANE, 2019: 29³⁷

35 To illustrate: in 2000, 75 % of book sales in Argentina belong to companies dependent on the publishers Planeta or Random House (Szpilbarg, 2019).

36 “[...] condiciones materiales, proceso y actores [que] intervienen hoy, en el contexto de la actual fase de la globalización.”

37 “[...] el campo literario de Bourdieu pensado hoy y—si es que resulta posible el traslado—pensado a escala mundial se encuentra de tal suerte dominado por este actor—encarnado ejemplarmente por lo gerentes de ventas—que la crítica académica o el activismo cultural muy raramente pueden influir en la producción y puesta en circulación de literatura.” Let us add another of Locane’s opinions: “The best way to distinguish between the process of internationalization of the Latin American novel during the 1960s and the deliberate production of Latin American literature for the world market from the 1990s onwards is that in the first phase literature still followed an agenda of its own, concentrated at the same time on the exploration and design of a Latin American identity as on the assumption of certain formal challenges. In the second period, on the contrary, literature attempting a global reach would have to forego its own program to accept the demands of the international market as its foundational premise. Thus, it can be argued that *Farabeuf* (1965) or *Paradiso* (1966) became world-class despite the international publishing industry, while *El viajero del siglo* (2009) became successful only because of it.” / “La mejor manera de distinguir entre el proceso de internacionalización de la novela latinoamericana durante los años 60 y la producción deliberada de literatura latinoamericana *para* el mundo a partir de los años 90 es que, en la primera fase, la literatura todavía seguía una agenda propia, concentrada al mismo tiempo en la exploración y diseño de una identidad latinoamericana como en la asunción de ciertos desafíos formales. En el segundo período, por el

The full implications of Locane's point must come through the answer to the question of what exactly should be the characteristics of (Latin American or other) literature on a world scale if the goal is to obtain global impact.³⁸ To begin with, "texts that, due to their low level of formal requirements or scarcity of socio- or ethno-linguistic marks, favor translation" will receive more attention since they will entail lower production costs with higher possible profit (Locane, 2019: 40).³⁹ The second characteristic is "*contenidismo*" ("contentism," Locane, 2019: 42), as world-oriented Latin American literature must tell stories that emphasize potentially contentious narratives that are marketable from the perspective of Western liberal democracy: "transition" in Cuba, the "political situation" in Venezuela, "violence" in Brazil, "peace" in Colombia, etc. (Locane, 2019: 42).⁴⁰ Finally, to ensure the broadest possible audience, this literature must present low formal—which means low financial—risk.

It remains to be seen what all of this means in terms of center-periphery relationship. How in fact does a text travel from the (Latin American) periphery to the global *World Republic of Letters*? According to the model described by Locane, large publishing conglomerates promote local peripheral authors only when the writers imitate (adapt, provincialize) formulas of proven financial success in the center. Peripheral authors who question or challenge the hegemony of the center are never mass marketed. This vision of the hegemonical domination of the few global entities involved in the international circulation of literary works seems radically at odds with Pascale Casanova's

contrario, la literatura con vocación mundial habría resignado su propio programa para aceptar como premisa máxima las demandas del mercado internacional. *Farabeuf* (1965) o *Paradiso* (1966)—se podría postular—devienen mundiales a pesar de la industria editorial internacional. *El viajero del siglo* (2009), gracias a ella." (Locane, 2019: 28). *Farabeuf* was written by the Mexican Salvador Elizondo, *Paradiso* by the Cuban José Lezama Lima, and *El viajero del siglo* by the Argentine Andrés Neuman.

38 These characteristics correspond to works published, for example, by the Random House groups (including Alfaguara) as well as Planeta. According to Locane, this can be also applied to the Anagrama publishing house, which follows the same commercial logic (Locane, 2019: 99 ff.). It should be noted that these three entities have published practically all the Hispanic American literature in wide international circulation since the 1990s.

39 "De acá se infiere que los textos que por un bajo nivel de exigencia formal o escasez de marcas socio o etnolingüísticas favorezcan el proceso de traducción van a recibir mayor atención que los que presenten resistencias."

40 "As such, world literature does not lead to a redefinition of the constitutive self of the consumer subject, but to an affirmation of it as such and of a ethnocentric imagination of the world" / "La literatura mundial, esta, no conduce a una redefinición del yo constitutivo del sujeto consumidor sino a su confirmación como tal y a su representación etnocéntrica del mundo." (Locane, 2019: 42).

strictly literary, autonomous approach. The model of Casanova's *World Republic of Letters*, it seems, may be in many ways incompatible with economic neoliberalism.

So does this mean that today there is no innovative Hispanic American literature? It is true that literature does continue to be produced in local literary fields, but it seems to be so according to an entirely different logic, one that eschews the global marketplace, i.e. it is more domestically "artisanal" than "professional."⁴¹ With limited possibilities (or desire) for international market distribution—in fact, precisely because of this factor—the works are able to make a bolder aesthetic and / or political impact. These initiatives are often characterized by a micro-territorial specificity: they neither create a national space⁴² nor are they part of a deterritorialized global space of literature written for international circulation (Locane, 2019: 168). A number of micro-publishing communities, some of which Locane analyses in chapter four of his monograph,⁴³ have formed an atomized network without a center. The Argentine critic suggests that it is through these "pluriverse" initiatives that the product can be more closely controlled by the author and thus remain more autonomous. It is in these environments that contemporary Latin American literature should be sought:

A reading of contemporary Latin American literature that would revitalize discussions of the limits and possibilities of literature must consist of a

41 This form of production "responds to concrete material circumstances linked to the constitutive precariousness of territories where global capitalism is superimposed on realities marked by experiences of (neo)colonial expropriation and which, therefore, systematically fails as an emancipatory solution capable of fostering equality and social well-being" / "responde a circunstancias materiales concretas vinculadas a la precariedad constitutiva de los territorios donde el capitalismo global se sobreimpone sobre realidades marcadas por experiencias de expropiación (neo)colonial y que, por lo tanto, fracasa sistemáticamente como solución emancipatoria capaz de general igualdad y bienestar social." (Locane, 2019: 160).

42 "Literature aimed at the promotion of forming national subjectivities and belonging within them has thus become obsolete." / "La literatura orientada a favorecer pertenencias y forjar subjetividades de corte nacional ha devenido, así, obsoleta." (Locane, 2019: 21).

43 Apart from those already mentioned, Locane indicates other features of these publishing houses and the books they produce, including self-managed distribution channels, alternative publishing policies, political and social activism, a tendency towards brevity, literary experimentation, innovation in the ways works are composed and constructed, *technē* (as opposed to *arete* or elite "art"), and heterodoxy.

focus on local publications. In comparison, the literature of international circulation appears formulaic, repetitive, but perhaps that is also why it is so salient

LOCANE, 2019: 189⁴⁴

Since the production is so strongly localized, the difficulty, as Locane acknowledges, is that literary criticism has to go in search of it: “The novel *Acerca de Suárez* (“About Suárez”) is a text demanding that international readers seek it out, or else do without it.” (Locane, 2019: 199)⁴⁵ If we accept Jorge J. Locane’s view that “world (Hispanic American) literature” has ceased to be truly Hispanic—as it is already global literature—then scholars must assume that they cannot rely on the logic of *Weltliteratur* or the *World Republic of Letters*, which has ceased to be autonomous and therefore cannot contain Hispanic American literature within itself. Paradoxically, contemporary Hispanic American literature, plural and decentralized, is generally no longer analyzed in universities in the context of *Weltliteratur*, as Goethe’s dream of such an entity is increasingly channeled through Amazon.com or one of the dozens of domains associated with it around the world.

After this sketch of these two trends or logics of literary production in Latin America in terms of their relation to the *World Republic of Letters*, let us point out some of the most outstanding writings of recent decades along with some pertinent features of them.

One phenomenon of contemporary literature not exclusive only to Latin America is nomadism. The nomadic figure par excellence is Roberto Bolaño, but the list of transterritorial authors and works produced since the 1990s is extensive, including Mario Bellatin, Jorge Volpi, Rodrigo Rey Rosa, Rodrigo Fresán, Alan Pauls, Samanta Schweblin, Guadalupe Nettel, and others. A rootless, wandering attitude, so typical as a reaction to globalization, would seem to detach Hispanic literature from the national pole definitively. In the words of Francisca Nogueroles:

44 “Leer la literatura latinoamericana hoy, la que anima el debate sobre los límites y posibilidades de la literatura, consiste, en este sentido, en leer las publicaciones localizadas. Frente a ellas, la literatura de circulación internacional, sería formulaica, repetitiva y, por esto mismo, también efectiva.”

45 “[...] por esto, *Acerca de Suárez* es un texto que reclama que los lectores internacionales vayan a su encuentro o, de otro modo, acepten prescindir de él.” Francisco Ovando, *Acerca de Suárez* (2013).

We are living in an era in which the search for identity has been sidelined in favor of diversity: as a result, it appears that literary production is alien to the nationalistic impulses from whose positions it has been analyzed since Independence and which is still in force in many academic forums which reject universalist literature as merely a part of the cultural heritage of the [Indian] subcontinent

NOGUEROL, 2008: 20, cited in Aínsa, 2010: 57⁴⁶

According to Aínsa, “the contemporary canon of Latin American literature has been dispersed. It has lost its traditional national references” (Aínsa, 2010: 76).⁴⁷ In addition to this reconfiguration of traditional poetics, nomadism also transforms the writer’s position, as compared for example to the Boom period. Guerrero emphasizes that nomadism “is a conscious choice that does not translate into a poetics of nostalgia, nor into a political program of return to the homeland, nor into an internationalist militancy, nor into a literature aimed at rethinking the events of this or that country, its history and its fate, as is the case in the Boom” (Guerrero, 2014: 379).⁴⁸

It is worth emphasizing the contrast between the nomad and the exile, the latter of which appears so often in previous stages, as well as between the nomad and the “great modern cosmopolitan intellectual of the Boom period” (“gran intelectual cosmopolita moderno del *boom*”; Guerrero, 2014: 379). In contrast to Pascale Casanova’s conceptual apparatus, we can say that many of today’s works generally do not signify an attempt to live or create in a universal (central) way, but to develop “multiple identities” (“identidad múltiple”; Aínsa, 2010: 60) and a pluricentric poetics. Guerrero believes that this nomadic literature “through its displacements [draws out] distinctive maps of a contemporary world that no longer conforms to the traditional logic of North-South, Center-Periphery or East-West relations” (Guerrero, 2014: 382).⁴⁹

46 “Vivimos un momento en que la búsqueda de identidad ha sido relegada a favor de la diversidad: como consecuencia, la creación literaria se revela ajena al prurito nacionalista a partir del cual se la analizó desde la época de la Independencia, aún vigente en múltiples foros académicos y que rechaza la literatura universalista como parte del patrimonio cultural del subcontinente.”

47 “[...] el canon actual de la literatura latinoamericana está disperso. Ha perdido sus tradicionales referentes nacionales.”

48 “[...] es una elección asumida que no se traduce ni en una poética de la nostalgia ni en un programa político de vuelta a la patria, ni en una militancia internacionalista ni en una literatura abocada a repensar un país, su historia y su destino, como la del *boom*».”

49 “[...] con sus desplazamientos, mapas distintos del mundo contemporáneo que ya no obedecen a las lógicas tradicionales según las relaciones Norte-Sur, Centro-Periferia u Oriente-Occidente.”

The fluid, postmodern nature of contemporary literature is also affecting women's writing in a particular way. Authors like Samanta Schweblin, Guadalupe Nettel and many others no longer express their experiences as (mere) nomadism. Recent Latin American women's literature is characterized by a tendency to "inhabit borders" between languages, genres, and subjectivities (Punte, 2020: 103). In the Caribbean, where literary reflections on Africa date back to the avant-garde era, a feminine recontextualization of Africanness is now developing. In this trend, the figure of Rita Indiana stands out, a nomad moving among New York, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo, between music and literature, between translation and localism, between international success and independent publishing (Helber, 2020).

Another important center of new women's literature is to be found in the Southern Cone of South America. A significant corpus of novels by Chilean and Argentine women authors addresses issues such as romantic love, feminicide and, above all, motherhood. On this last theme, Gallego Cuiñas notes that

especially since the 1980s and 1990s, the literary discourse on motherhood has opened up to new and different—political—approaches: from the rejection of procreation (e.g. Lina Meruane); to the figure of the bad mother (e.g. Mariana Dimópulos or Ariana Harwicz); or the advocacy of abortion (e.g. Ana María Shua or Claudia Piñeiro)

GALLEGO CUIÑAS, 2020: 83⁵⁰

In some cases, these themes in this fiction hybridize with established genres of the Latin American tradition, such as influence of fantastic literature in Samanta Schweblin's prose, or in the case of Ana María Shua "monstrous urges and Black humor" ("desde las pulsiones monstruosas y el humor negro"; Drucaroff, 2018: 364, cited in: Gallego Cuiñas, 2020: 84).

Among local initiatives not destined for global circulation, *Cartonera* publishing ("Cardboard"), which here also refers to street collectors of paper products, has arguably attracted the most interest among critics in the last twenty years. The phenomenon emerged in Argentina in 2003 during an economic and social crisis in the work of the Eloísa Cartonera Foundation. This publishing house launched a model that has since been followed by dozens of other publication and dissemination collectives throughout the subcontinent. The

50 "[...] sobre todo a partir de la década de los ochenta/noventa—el discurso literario de la maternidad se abre a nuevos planteamientos—políticos—disímiles: desde la negativa a la procreación (v.g., Lina Meruane); a la figura de la mala madre (v.g., Dimópulos o Harwicz); o la defensa del aborto (v.g., Shua o Piñeiro)."

paradigm consists of embedding publishing within “specific contexts in which the circulation of a product—the book—impacts the creation of new social identities” (Bilbija, 2012/2009). Thus, the commercial purpose is largely discarded and the process tends to intervene directly in social conditions. In this particular case, the publishing house Eloísa Cartonera employs paper and cardboard collectors in Buenos Aires who produce books from recycled paper.⁵¹

The catalogs of publishers based on this principle combine two types of authors. Several of these are world-renowned writers praised for their innovative poetics such as Ricardo Piglia, Mario Bellatin, Enrique Lihn, Rodolfo Fogwill and others.⁵² On the other hand, alongside these established names, local writers have emerged who entertain little hope or desire of entering the world literary mainstream. In this sense, the *Sudaca border* literary prize awarded by Eloísa Cartonera stands out. The prize title, combining a general pejorative for South Americans with the English term for *frontera*, emphasizes the peripheral character of this literature (Ros, 2015). The title might also suggest a strategy for localized Hispanic American literatures: “In order to struggle against dependency it is necessary to create a distinctive identity and in this way, by laying the basis for rivalry, form a literary space.” (Casanova, 2004: 221) In this case, it is not so much a competition with a center as much as challenge to it in terms of a disregard for geographical (transnational) and economic logic. By asserting its liminal and culturally marginalized (*sudaca*) space as well as its local literary production, the Eloísa Cartonera Foundation appropriates a symbolic source of radical independence and sets itself in opposition to large publishing conglomerates governed exclusively by the rules of the economic and social power field.

51 “Their intervention against the hegemonic economic and aesthetic logic in book publishing works in four ways: It incorporates cartoneros as central agents of the space for the production of cultural goods; it shields the logic of cooperative labor; it transforms both the symbolic value of the cardboard collected on the street (garbage becomes a book cover) as well as the conventional representation of the object “book”; and it transforms a widespread form of popular cultural consumption into the identity stamp of a new modality of production and publishing circulation.” / “Su intervención, a contracorriente de las lógicas económica y estética hegemónicas en el campo editorial, opera en cuatro órdenes: incorpora a los cartoneros como agentes centrales de un espacio de producción de bienes culturales; defiende la lógica del trabajo cooperativo; transforma tanto el valor simbólico del cartón recogido en la vía pública (la basura deviene tapa de libro) como la representación convencional del objeto “libro”; y convierte a ciertos consumos culturales expandidos en los sectores populares en sello de identidad de una nueva modalidad de producción y de circulación editorial.” (Gerbaudo, 2020).

52 In general, the authors cede their rights to these publishing houses, which for their part generally do not seek profit as a primary motive.

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Surviving the Borderlands: Living *Sin Fronteras*, Becoming a Crossroads. The Deperipheralization of the Chicano/a Cultural and Literary Space

Markéta Riebová

Inspired by the words of the Chicana¹ writer Gloria Anzaldúa,² the title of this study expresses the struggle of a cultural space and its literature to survive, live and ultimately thrive in what Pascale Casanova envisioned as the *World Republic of Letters* (Casanova, 2004). The complexity stems from the fact that the culture and literature Anzaldúa stands for springs from what she has coined the Borderlands, a hybrid space that can be understood physically as the zone surrounding the Mexican American border and the area of today's US Southwest. But the land must also be viewed as a spiritual space, one which represents intersections of cultural legacies and influences based on ever-changing centers of gravity as well as its (former) peripherality to larger systems. Finally, however, in the second half of the 20th century after a long and strenuous struggle this periphery came to achieve a position in which it became able to talk back to its former double (or even triple) metropolis: the Anglo-American Northeast, Mexico and Spain.

The evolution of this literary Borderlands presents an intriguing dynamic as seen through Casanova's conception of the world literary space as interweaving networks of literary centers and peripheries through which writers debate the existence of the artist as a struggle between striving for universality and the yearning to enhance the cultural visibility of one's own place of origin. A relationship of center and periphery squared (or even cubed) comes into

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- 1 Concerning terminology, here the expression Mexican American is used to refer to literature and authors with Mexican ancestry living in the US (especially the Southwest) up to the Chicano cultural revival. Starting with our descriptions of the 1960s Chicano Movement and the 1970s Chicano Renaissance which followed, the terms Chicano, Chicana or Chicano/a are employed. In the context of this article, the gender-nonspecific terms ChicanX and LatinX that have gained popularity in a number of circles will not be used as they are posterior to Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*. Finally, the pan-ethnic terms Hispanic and Latino/a do not coalesce with our focus on US writers with Mexican roots.
 - 2 "To survive the Borderlands/ you must live *sin fronteras*/ be a crossroads." (Anzaldúa, 2012: 217).

view as we recall that the world literatures that influenced Mexican American and especially Chicano/a literature developed within a rich Native American mythological foundation layered over by a grand heritage of Spanish letters beginning five centuries ago. The Mexican (or more broadly, Hispanic American)³ and American literatures that influenced this literary Borderlands in the twentieth century had in fact only recently emerged from their own peripheral condition, overcoming their dependence on the centrality of French literary production.⁴

The evolution and emancipation of the Chicano/a cultural and literary space can be projected along three main lines of thought inspired by Anzaldúa's geo-cultural trope. Firstly, "surviving the Borderlands" is directed towards the delimitation of the subject of deperipheralization. Next, "living *sin fronteras*" (with no borders) is dedicated to the Chicano/a cultural revival and the self-conscious formation of a self-defined literary space and canon. And finally, "becoming a crossroads," represents the multivariate development of the post-Chicano Movement period, leading to further shifts in perspective.

1 Surviving the Borderlands

This land was Mexican once
 was Indian always
 and is.
 And will be again.

Anzaldúa, 2012: 113



Bearing in mind that indigenous, Hispanic, Anglo and, most significantly, mestizo roots can (and in fact must) be traced through today's Mexican American

3 To denominate literature produced in the US, we opt for the generally used term "American" in spite of its polemic synecdochic value. We use the term "Hispanic American" to refer to literature written in Hispanophone countries (i.e. not Brazil, Haiti, etc.) south of the Mexican American border despite the fact that the term "Latin American literature" is commonly used in the US.

4 In contexts such as literary peripherality/non-peripherality, we can point to the pivotal importance of writers in Anglo-American literature such as William Faulkner (and the gradual development of the status of his works) as well as the popular success of so-called Boom

Borderlands culture, it is important to acknowledge that this line of development evolved along a strong center-periphery dynamic.⁵ A brief overview is essential to begin to understand the imagery of Chicano/a literature.

The first cultural level is represented by indigenous people, as in the territories of what is now called the US Southwest we can find signs of the first Paleolithic human settlements that eventually spread throughout the entire American continent. The ancient claims of American Indian tribes to these lands was heavily emphasized during the Chicano cultural revival in the 1960s. Special emphasis was placed on Mesoamerican mythology, which for example situated Aztlán, the mythical place of origin of the Aztec/Mexica/Tenochca people, to the northwest of Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec empire. The contemporary siting of Aztlán, or “the Land of white herons,” corresponds precisely with the geographical area of the Mexican American Borderlands we are interested in (see Anaya, Lomelí, 1991). As will be shown later, Aztlán as well as the Aztec religious pantheon of gods such as Tláloc, Coatlicue, Coatlatopeuh along with later historical figures such as Cuauhtémoc and La Malinche are often alluded to in the emerging Chicano/a literature. After a century of splendor, Tenochtitlán collapsed under Spanish siege in 1521, giving birth to la Ciudad de México (Mexico City), founded in 1535 and soon to be the capital of the colonial Virreinato de Nueva España (the Viceroyalty of New Spain).

Here the first important cultural shift can be traced: Aztec Tenochtitlán, central to Mesoamérica in the beginning of the sixteenth century, becomes peripheral as it morphs into la Ciudad de México, a city based largely on cultural and political structures from the European metropolis (Madrid, Spain). Although it itself remained peripheral to Europe, Mexico City was seen to represent the center of the colonial society of New Spain, a jurisdiction which soon expanded in the 16th century in all directions, including northwards. This is how Habsburg Spanish and the native mestizo culture (as from the beginning Spanish colonization included miscegenation) first spread to the region of the Mexican American Borderlands. Thus the mestizo hybridity that Gloria Anzaldúa expresses so eloquently in the late 20th century had already marked interactions between indigenous peoples and the Spanish *conquistadores* 450 years earlier.

authors such as Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes and Julio Cortázar in Hispanic American literature.

5 This chapter is based on my own article *Surviving the Borderlands: Living Sin Fronteras, Being a Crossroads The Deperipheralization of the Chicano/a Cultural/Literary Space*, *Svět literatury*, 65, 1, 25–41.

The expeditions of Spanish explorers such as Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (1540) and Juan de Oñate (1598) mark the beginning of the Spanish presence in the US Southwest. Center-periphery dynamics and the subsidiarity of power is clearly apparent in the 1598 foundation of the province of Nuevo México (part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain) by Oñate. Founded in 1610, the city La Villa Real de la Santa Fe de San Francisco de Asís (Santa Fe) remains the oldest of all the state capitals in the US.⁶ The Spanish and mestizo colonists also brought with them the Spanish literary tradition, which formed the basis for Mexican American vernacular literary expression: religious theatre (*autos*), octosyllabic poetry (*redondillas*, *décimas*, *coplas*, *romances*, which evolved into the later folk ballads called *corridos*), fiction genres (*cuadros de costumbres* and *novelas de caballería*, which remained underground during most of the early colonial period, as they were deemed a corrupting influence on readers, similarly to attitudes to fiction across Europe at least until the time of Flaubert).

Spanish colonial centrality continued into the twentieth century after Borderlands areas had already been made part of the US, with Spanish elements appreciated by some, resented by others. The special characteristics and isolation of the New Mexico federal state, for example, led many of its citizens to claim direct descent from the Spanish, i.e. European, conquistadors and call themselves Spanish American. This was induced, as some sociologists explain, by the fear of racial discrimination connected to being of Mexican origin, as US authorities valorized Spanish heritage to the detriment of any aspects of a Mexican/mestizo/indigenous cultural legacy. In contrast, the Chicano Movement in the 1960s portrayed the Spanish conquest and colonial era in America in extremely negative ways, now interpreting figures such as Columbus and Hernán Cortés as oppressive. The supposedly treacherous female roles of Cortés's interpreter La Malinche and the mythical ghost figure of La Llorona, once disparaged as symbols (or sometimes conflated as one symbol) of European patriarchy, have with the rise of Chicana literature come to take on an ambiguous and even empowering position.

As the year 1821 brought the end to Spanish colonial rule in a large part of the American continent, naturally the interpretation of the Borderlands as periph-

6 A few comparisons are in order: the first permanent European settlement in contemporary US territory was San Agustín, founded in 1565 in what is now Florida, i.e. 35 years before Santa Fe. Nearly half a century later, the first permanent English settlement was established in 1607 in Jamestown, Virginia; the Mayflower carried the Pilgrims to American shores in 1620, where they founded the colony of Plymouth, Massachusetts. The Spanish presence in the Southwest, ranging from *Tejas* to California, materialized in the establishment of *pueblos* (reserved for white settlers), *presidios* (military fortresses) and *misiones* (missions directed at the Catholicization of the indigenous people) during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

eral would undergo transformation. The center changed from Spain to Mexico, first under the short-lived First Mexican Empire, which later became for a time a federal republic. The political instability that accompanied the formation of the independent Mexican state accentuated the precarious hold that Mexico had on the northern territory. In addition, Mexican authorities (unlike the Spanish) began inviting colonists from the north regardless of their origin, thus the Mexican population in *Tejas* soon found itself outnumbered by Anglo settlers. Fifteen years later the instability in Mexican Texas (1821–1836) resulted in the territory declaring independence in 1836 and the formation of the Republic of Texas, followed twelve years later by the annexation of the territory by the US and eventually statehood in 1846. The next decade saw a gradual acceding of Mexican territory due to Anglo pressure from the east accompanied by fierce imperialist US rhetoric expressed in attitudes and beliefs such as Manifest Destiny. This tension culminated in the 1846–1848 Mexican-American war under the US presidency of James Polk, a conflict which ended with the signing of the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty in 1848, wherein Mexico lost approximately half of its territory. The Gadsden purchase in 1853 added another portion of Mexican territory to the US.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Borderlands came under full US legal jurisdiction in the area that now forms the federal US states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Utah, and parts of present-day Colorado, Wyoming, Oklahoma and Kansas. As the popular saying goes: “in 1848 Mexican people did not cross the border, the border crossed them”; the inhabitants were declared US citizens under conditions that supposedly secured their land and civil rights, but in reality these agreements—both the implicit and explicit ones—were never honored by the US. Those who remained soon became a second class society whose peripheral condition was yet again oriented towards a different center, the US Anglo mainstream culture. The Borderlands people, however, never truly gave up their Spanish/Mexican/mestizo culture, which was perpetuated by Catholic institutions, vernacular poetry, popular theatre, local newspapers and radio. Cultural production from Mexico also continued to stream over the borders thanks to the subsequent waves of Mexican immigration to the region (see Ceballos Ramírez, 2001).

Since its annexation to the US, the Borderlands and its literature/culture has gone through various periods of relations to and negotiations with the mainstream Anglo culture. The second half of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century witnessed strong racial discrimination and land grabs by the Anglos against the original inhabitants, provoking a virulent reaction on their part in the form of ferocious social movements, for example Los Gorras Blancas (The White Caps), who fought against the fencing off of lands in New

Mexico. The famous 1901 Texas Rangers manhunt of Gregorio Cortez Lira, who was accused of killing a sheriff in self-defense, gave birth to the Corrido de Gregorio Cortez.⁷ This border ballad later came to take on key importance in terms of Mexican American literary self-awareness, the vernacular roots of which are explored in the 1958 academic work *With His Pistol in His Hand* by Américo Paredes (see Stavans, 2001: 170–179).

The beginning of the twentieth century was characterized by a strong influx of Mexican immigration into the US caused by the violence of the Mexican Revolution, only to be followed by the repatriation of many illegal residents back to Mexico during the economic crisis of the 1930s. Nevertheless, the need for a labor force during the Second World War led Mexicans to the US once again through the Bracero program, through which agricultural workers were invited to settle within the US borders beginning in 1942. These migration waves brought about recurring upsurges of fresh Mexican influence intermingling with the already quite defined Mexican American Borderlands culture.

The clash resulting from the assimilationist expectations of the leading Anglo elites of the time (echoed in the trope of a “melting pot” of a culturally homogeneous and stable nation) in contrast to the diversity and cultural resistance of different minorities exacerbated racial stereotypes, attitudes which also affected those with Mexican roots in the Southwest.⁸ Further marginalization was authorized by the discriminatory legal and educational system, segregated public spaces, the rejection of the Spanish language in public institutions, the availability of easily exploited migrant laborers in the country as well as the growing urban population of the Mexican barrios, especially in large cities of the Borderlands. One of the most notorious examples of the cultural conflict brought about by racial segregation (as well as general xenophobic atti-

7 Recorded along Mexico-Texas border and reconstructed into literary form by Américo Paredes as *The Legend of Gregorio Cortez* (Ortego, 1973: 53–77).

8 It is clear that racial bias was not limited only to the Northeast/Southwest axis. It influenced the lives of various ethnic groups all over the American territory: the original indigenous people, African Americans, former citizens of Mexico in sections of the US overtaken in 1848 and subsequently; later immigrant groups with Irish, Italian, Mexican, Asian as well as Central and Eastern European ancestry were also affected. An eloquent illustration of how mistrust may be attached to any kind of otherness is provided by the American Studies scholar Kateřina Březinová in the introduction to her study *Latinos: jiná menšina? Američtí Hispánci mezi Kennedym a Trumpem* (*Latinos: another minority? US Hispanics between Kennedy and Trump*). The author cites Benjamin Franklin's opinions of German immigrants in 1751, which are strikingly similar to Anglo evaluations of the capacity of Mexican immigrants to integrate into the US mainstream two centuries later (Březinová, 2020: 9).

tudes kindled by World War Two) were the Zoot Suit riots and ensuing criminal prosecutions in Los Angeles in 1943.

A unique Borderlands amalgamation of the local, Mexican and Anglo culture resulted not only based on cultural pride, but also from the necessity to survive. Nevertheless, expressions of this hybrid culture were equally scorned by the US mainstream as well as in Mexico itself. The use of linguistically liminal expressions such as *pocho*, *pachuco*, *chicano*, etc. originated as Mexican accusations of the profanation of Mexican Spanish as well as the traditional way of life (Villanueva, 1994: 42–46), while derogatory Anglo expressions like *greaser*, *spick*, and *wetback* reveal the racist attitudes of the white population towards Mexicans and US citizens with Mexican ancestry. Despite the racial discrimination, a significant portion of the Borderlands population strived towards full assimilation, leading to the formation of a Mexican American middle class which would soon begin a fight for political rights. The participation of many Mexican American men in World War Two and their experience of (a higher degree of) equal treatment in the battlefield eventually motivated them to demand the same respect upon their return home. Paralleled by the service of African Americans during the war, this period signalled the naissance of programs for minority rights into the 1950s, culminating in the Civil Rights Movement and US federal legislation banning racial segregation and securing voting rights for all citizens in the mid-1960s.

The Borderlands literary periphery was beginning to recognize the significance and power of its liminal position between two centralities by the middle of the twentieth century. One of these centers can be seen in the famous upswing in mainstream American literature, with authors such as William Faulkner attracting world literary attention. This influence would be reflected in Mexican American writers of the 1960s and later. The second center of inspiration—Mexican literature—largely retained the pre-Boom dominance of Realism. This accounts for the Mexican American preference for *cuadros de costumbres* and regionalist fiction as exemplified in the short stories and literary chronicles by Jorge Ulica and Mario Suárez as well as later in José Antonio Villarreal's novel *Pocho*, a work which represents the Mexican American Generation narrative and embodies the cultural dilemma of many Mexican Americans in the US of the 1930s and 1940s (see Calderón, 2004: 1–27). The soon-to-come star moment of the Hispanic American literature in the 1960s, when the Boom positioned itself right on Casanova's "Greenwich Meridian" of world literature, would clearly later influence a number of Chicano/a writers as well.

Although the Borderlands had forged by that time a century-long history of oppositional activities ranging from radical labor protests to more reformist-

minded efforts (Alba Cutler, 2015: 7), it was the Chicano Movement in the 1960s that fundamentally changed Mexican American self-perception at the political, economic and cultural level, enabling Chicano/a literature to emerge in search of independence and self-confidence. The initial fight for the possibility of artistic expression in Spanish (from 1848 on) had led to the assertion of Spanish as the major literary language of Mexican American literature in a movement based in the Spanish cultural capital in the first half of the 20th century. By the middle of that century English began to co-exist with Spanish as the vehicle of literary expression assuring thus wider reader reception. The complementary use of both languages (i.e. English intertwined with words or phrases in Mexican Spanish, or Mexican Spanish sprinkled with English words, or the direct use of Spanglish and Caló) demonstrates signs of the self-empowerment that would progressively lead to the deperipheralization of the Chicano/a literary creation and concomitant popularity worldwide.

2 Living *sin fronteras*

I refuse to be absorbed.
 I am Joaquín
 The odds are great
 but my spirit is strong
 My faith unbreakable
 My blood is pure

Gonzales, 1997: 222



The Chicano Movement represents an immense burst of energy on various fronts (political, economic, social, cultural, educational), with goals related to changing the peripheral status of Mexican Americans in the Southwest. The marginalization of people of Mexican descent was to a great extent created by racially based *fronteras* / limitations created by US sociologists. For several decades Mexican Americans had been associated with underachievement, superstition, and ignorance, putatively exemplified by their lack of assimilation into the melting pot of American society and thus justifying educational, residential, judicial and labor discrimination against them (see Villanueva, 1994:

112–114; Březinová, 2004: 52–57). In contrast to these debilitating stereotypes, however, over a period of many decades and especially since the 1960s a considerable portion of Mexican Americans had in fact become successfully integrated into the mainstream (Březinová, 2004: 93).

On many levels, the Chicano Movement fought against these *fronteras* in ways very different than those associated with the strategy of assimilation (Březinová, 2020: 120–126). The empowering reclamation of the initially racially derogative denomination *chicano* shows the cultural and literary renaissance of the movement as built upon ethnic roots harking back to a Aztec and Mexican heritage as opposed to mainstream Anglo culture. The iconic strike of grape pickers led by César Chavez and Dolores Huerta in Delano, California in September 1965 initiated the Chicano Movement, drawing attention to the economic inequity of people of Mexican descent and, most importantly, anchoring Chicano cultural and literary emancipation within a profoundly political dimension. The titles of pioneering Chicano scholarly journals of the time represent eloquent examples of this legacy: *El Grito (Outcry)* alludes to the birth of the Mexican fight for independence,⁹ while *Aztlán* is derived from Aztec mythology, as alluded to above.

Many circumstances led up to the full flourishing of the original Chicano Movement. The 1950s and 1960s had witnessed several factors that led to the growing conscience of Mexican American people regarding their cultural heritage and social position. Greater numbers of minority and low-income students were able to go on to university thanks to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Higher Education Act, building a future Mexican American readership base. Another important condition was the expansion of postcolonial and cultural studies and multiculturalism in the US university sphere. The publication of literary (José Antonio Villarreal's *Pocho* in 1959)¹⁰ and academic (Américo Paredes's *With His Pistol in His Hand* in 1958) works along with the subsequent storming-in of radical poetry and theatre exemplified by Rodolfo "Corky" González's *I Am Joaquín/Yo soy Joaquín* (1967) and by Teatro Campesino, founded in 1965 by Luis Valdés. A wider Chicano nationalist self-awareness was thus engendered which became essential to the creation of a Chicano literary canon as well as educational centers that would promote Chicano culture.

9 The title alludes to the call to arms "El Grito de Dolores" made by the priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla on 16 September 1810, leading to the Mexican War of Independence.

10 In his study, Alba Cutler traces the interesting evolution of the general acceptance of Villarreal's novel (Alba Cutler, 2015: 26–35, 50–56).

An accompanying artistic and cultural movement known as the Chicano Renaissance was by many accounts initiated with the proclamation of El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán by “Alurista,” the alias of poet Alberto Baltazar Urista, during the landmark Denver Youth Conference in 1969 (Contreras, 2008: 30–33). The nationalist and political orientation of this event was epitomized in its polarizing call to arms of “Por La Raza todo. Fuera de La Raza nada.”¹¹ Also in 1969 the Plan de Santa Bárbara (Castañeda Shular, Ybarra-Frausto, Sommers, 1972: 85–86) declared the need for the adaptation of curricula to meet the cultural needs and prerequisites of pupils and students with Mexican American roots as well as to facilitate their more proportionate participation in higher education. This manifesto openly indicted the deficiencies of the US educational system (classes only in English, exclusion of Hispanic or Mexican related cultural content, strictly Anglo American staff, punishments for speaking in Spanish, etc.) that limited the Mexican American population to basic education and, subsequently, to low-paying jobs.¹² The political and academic impulse initiated by the Santa Bárbara plan (openly alluding to the Mexican tradition in stating: “At this moment we do not come to work for the university, but to demand that the university work for our people.”¹³) eventually materialized in the establishment of departments of Chicano/a studies in universities across the US Southwest: California State College at Los Angeles; University of California at Berkeley, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Irvine; University of Texas at Austin, San Antonio and El Paso; University of Arizona; University of New Mexico and others (Maciel, Iriart de Padilla, Padilla, 1994: 104–119). These departments pragmatically sought academic institutional incorporation

11 Addressing US citizens with Mexican roots as “La Raza” pays homage to the concept of *mestizaje* (miscegenation) coined by the Mexican intellectual José Vasconcelos, and it also clearly echoes Fidel Castro’s celebrated discourse dedicated to Cuban intellectuals in 1961 known as “Palabras a los intelectuales” in which he claims: “Dentro de la Revolución, todo; contra la Revolución, nada.” (Urista, 1972: 83–84).

12 In their text *Los Chicanos: Ensayo de Introducción*, David R. Maciel, Christine Iriart de Padilla and Amado M. Padilla demonstrate how academic studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s contextualized the stereotypes of poor school performance of Mexican Americans by demonstrating educational neglect as well as the failure of the system to address the needs of Chicano children and provide equal opportunities. The authors mention especially works by T. Manuel Herschel (*Spanish-Speaking Children of the Southwest: Their Education and the Public Welfare*, Austin, UTP, 1965), Thomas Carter (*Mexican Americans in School: A History of Educational Neglect*, 1970) and the 1971/1972 United States Commission on Civil Rights Mexican American Education Study (Villanueva, 1994: 115–119).

13 These words paraphrase a passage from José Vasconcelos’ inaugural speech as he became rector of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México: “Yo no vengo a trabajar por la Universidad, sino a pedir a la Universidad que trabaje por el pueblo.”

through which to actively change the unfavorable social and cultural image of the Mexican American community and to form a new corpus of Chicano secondary literature that would aid in overcoming racial and cultural prejudice.¹⁴

A great deal of work in this process was carried out by the Chicano scholarly and literary journals and publishing houses that accompanied the establishment of the Chicano/a studies departments. The first of these iconic journals, *El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican American Thought*, was established in 1967 at UC Berkeley by Octavio I. Romano, Nick C. Vaca and Andrés Ybarra along with the first fully independent Chicano publishing house Quinto Sol Publications, with both institutions functioning up to 1974. Another journal, *Aztlán: Chicano Journal of the Social Sciences and the Arts*, was founded by Juan Gómez-Quiñones (among others) in 1970 at UCLA and is still being published. Supported today by the University of Houston, the organization Arte Público Press was established in 1979 by Nicolás Kanellos, the founder and editor of the *Revista Chicano-Riqueña* (1973–1999) at Indiana University.¹⁵ Mango Publications (founded by Lorna Dee Cervantes in 1976) and Third Woman Press (founded by Norma Alarcón in 1979) demonstrate the importance of women in the building of Chicano/a cultural self-confidence. It is also important to mention the New Press, headquartered on Wall Street in New York and at the time of this writing the largest US publisher of Latino authors in the US.

The Chicano Renaissance of the late 1960s and early 1970s thus played a decisive role in the creation of Chicano cultural capital, with the case of Quinto Sol Publications often seen as exemplary. Quinto Sol published the first modern Chicano literature anthology *El espejo/The Mirror* in 1969, and initiated in 1970 the nationally promoted annual literary award Premio Quinto Sol for the best literary work written by an author with Mexican roots, with all its activities intensely advertised by the journal *El Grito*. The first finalists for the award, known as the Quinto Sol Generation, include Tomás Rivera for his 1971 novel

14 Nevertheless, the historic gains by emancipation movements were also to yield to counteractive political shifts. Signed in 2010 by Governor Jan Brewer into law, Arizona House Bill 2281 banned Mexican American Studies from its public schools. The law was ruled unconstitutional in 2017 by U.S. District Judge A. Wallace Tashima. Norma Elia Cantú and Aída Hurtado point out in their introduction to the 25th anniversary edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* that Anzaldúa's book was also among the texts banned for use in the classroom by the Tucson Unified School System in Arizona (Anzaldúa, 2012: 3).

15 Other publishers also began operations during this time, including Pajarito Publications, the Bilingual Press, Justa Publications, and Tonatiuh Publications, just to mention a few.

... *y no se lo tragó la tierra*,¹⁶ Rudolfo Anaya and the novel *Bless Me, Ultima*¹⁷ for 1972, Rolando Hinojosa¹⁸ with the prose work *Estampas del Valle* in 1973, and Estela Portillo Trambley with her collection of short stories *Rain of Scorpions and Other Works* for the year 1975. All these works were strongly promoted by *El Grito* and were recommended by scholars for study in higher education studying programs. Thanks in part to the canonizing power of Premio Quinto Sol, these works continue to be taught today. In his analysis of the Quinto Sol publishing house, John Alba Cutler demonstrates how the Premio Quinto Sol award entered the literary “economy of prestige,” highlighting the academic background of the celebrated authors and the prize jury (university staff and students) as well as its aggressive marketing to educators (Alba Cutler, 2015: 57–58). On the other hand, a number of critics of the award (Juan Bruce-Novoa, Dennis López) have pointed to the prize’s reification of literary nationalism, which valorizes the idea of Chicano community cohesion while sacrificing the heterogeneity which might ignite more universalist interest outside of the Chicano readership. Nevertheless, as Alba Cutler argues, the establishment of the Premio Quinto Sol award set out to prove “Chicano’s capacity to *produce* culture,” and the prize has broadened “the boundaries of what constituted literature giving entrance to folklore, *testimonio*, jokes and other vernacular forms” (Alba Cutler, 2015: 60, 84–85).

The canonizing power of the Premio Quinto Sol was at first recognized only regionally: in the 1970s, for example, Castañeda Shular refers to an absence of Mexican American or Chicano/a authors in mainstream North American literature (Castañeda Shular, Ybarra-Frausto, Sommers, 1972: xxv–xxviii). Due to this initial lack of recognition from the outside, Chicano/a academic and intellectual culture gradually began to develop through the publication of literary anthologies edited by scholars of Mexican American origin which were often then put out by established corporate publishers. Apart from the aforemen-

16 Written in a northern Mexican Spanish dialect, Rivera’s novel deals with the lives of Texas farmworkers of Winter Garden region in the 1940s and 1950s (see Calderón, 2013: 398).

17 Héctor Calderón emphasizes the importance of *Bless Me, Ultima*, the second book to receive the Quinto Sol Prize, calling it “a breakthrough in New Mexican writing. New Mexico is a region that has enjoyed its own literary traditions both in Spanish and in English. It is also a land that has lived its cultural and racial contradictions between Old Spain and Nueva España, Old Mexico and La Nueva México. [...] But *Bless Me, Ultima* marked a radical departure with regards to its mestizo characters, especially its women characters.” (Calderón, 2013: 399).

18 In 1976, Rolando Hinojosa became the first Chicano writer to win the prestigious Cuban literary prize Premio Casa de las Américas for his novel *Klail City y sus alrededores*, the second in a series of 15 works to date.

tioned *El Espejo/The Mirror* anthology, the numerous other collections over the years include: *Aztlán: An Anthology of Mexican American literature* (eds. Luis Valdez and Stan Steiner, New York: Random House, 1972); *Mexican-American Authors* (eds. Américo Paredes and Raymund Paredes, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972); *Chicano Literature, Text and Context* (eds. Antonia Castañeda Shular, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, Joseph Sommers, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1972); *We Are Chicanos* (ed. Phillip D. Ortego, New York: Washington Square Press, 1973); *Chicanos* (ed. Tino Villanueva, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985); and *Literatura Chicana 1965–1995. An Anthology in Spanish, English and Caló* (eds. Manuel de Jesús Hernández-Gutiérrez, David William Foster, New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1997).¹⁹ Nevertheless, it took nearly half a century after the beginning of the Chicano Renaissance for educational canonical anthologies to be published such as *The Norton Anthology of Latino/a Literature* and *The Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature*, which were published in 2010 and 2013, respectively.

Chicano/a literature came out of the Chicano Renaissance as a culturally self-conscious project based on the experience of life within two cultures. While some works continue with established Spanish and Mexican genres (vernacular poetry, legends, *cuadros de costumbres*, satire, picaresque novel, political essays), other writings are inspired in the new Hispanic American novel and bring original and innovative themes (dislocation, migration, social exploitation by the Anglo, life in the barrio, self-definition). The works incorporate new forms and especially new language in experiments with the deliberate blending of Spanish, and English as well as the use of Caló, an argot with an adstratum of Romani lexical features used by youth in cities in the US Southwest.

Apart from the literary creation and the growing number of Chicano/a readers and lending libraries, the newly emergent editorial, academic and critical autonomy of Chicano/a cultural production signals a decisive turning point with regard to its peripherality, as avenues and instruments for wider dissemination and acceptance of these works have been created. The main current of Chicano/a literature of this time, as Alba Cutler claims, is characterized by an effort to prioritize ethnic content as well as affirm an idealized image of

19 For more on anthologies published in the 1970s and 1980s, see Preface. Three Decades of Contemporary Chicana/o Literature (Hernández-Gutiérrez, Foster, 1997: xx–xxiii). Apart from the anthologies specifically of Mexican American and Chicano/a literature, Chicano/a literary works and excerpts from them are also integrated into 1990s pan-Hispanic anthologies such as *Latinos in English: A Selected Bibliography of Latino Fiction Writers of the United States*. (Harold Augenbraum, ed., Mercantile Library, 1992) and *Masterpieces of Latino Literature* (Frank Northen Magill, ed., HarperCollins, 1994).

the Chicano imagined community in a desire to create the foundations of the Chicano/a literary tradition. Other authors, however, have chosen to critique the mainstream pressure for assimilation through the emphasis on the literariness of their own works, reflecting, for example, how the projected need to choose between becoming “American” or remaining “Chicano/a” represents a false binary (Alba Cutler, 2015: 11). This more universal tone, also reflected in debates on cultural de/peripheralization around the world, is in this case also inspired by the literary influence (and financial success) of Hispanic American Boom literature with its vanguard use of language, literary structures and myth. Traces of Juan Rulfo and Gabriel García Márquez are to be found in the fiction of Tomás Rivera and Rudolfo Anaya. At the same time, the impact of the US Beat Generation of the 1950s can be seen in Oscar Zeta Acosta’s *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972).²⁰ Nevertheless, as we have seen in several chapters of this book, influences from the outside are never accepted without adaptation, modification, or even complete transformation, in this case to communicate the unique features of the Mexican American or Chicano/a experience.

3 Being a Crossroads

We were a woman family:
 Grandma, our innocent Queen;
 Mama, the Swift Knight, Fearless Warrior.
 Mama wanted to be Princess instead.
 I know that. Even now she dreams of taffeta
 and foot-high tiaras.
 Myself: I could never decide.
 So I turned to books, those staunch, upright men.
 I became Scribe: Translator of Foreign Mail

Dee Cervantes, 2002:510



In the post-Movement decades of the 1980s and 1990s, Chicano/a cultural capital was already gaining in value and recognition. Chicano/a university

²⁰ This satire of urban California was first published in 1972 together with Acosta’s second novel *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* by Straight Arrow Books, the publishing arm of

programs (see Vázquez, 1997: 22–23), independent publishing houses, literary awards as well as other institutions all facilitated the possibility of capitalizing on the momentum of the Chicano Movement from the previous decade as well as a shift to other themes. In spite of the fact that Chicanas were widely present and active during the Movement, for example in social activism (Dolores Huerta) and cultural/literary work (Estela Portillo Trambley, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Norma Alarcón), it was not until the eighties that the undercurrent of Chicana criticism of masculine nationalist rhetoric typical of the Chicano Movement began to be openly acknowledged. Together with LGBT writers, Chicana critics undertook a fierce reassessment of the exaltation of the trope of the male Mexican hero who never succumbs under the Anglo-American pressure to assimilate. Chicanas came to emphasize their own role, readily taking advantage of the power of the women's rights movement as generalized in the Anglo space to launch a strong critique of the subaltern role assigned to women in Mexican, and generally in Hispanic, culture. Further, these women also drew on the tradition of second-wave Mexican feminism which, if less vociferous than what would come later, remained present in the works of personalities such as Rosario Castellanos, Josefina Vicens, Elena Garro and Elena Poniatowska.

Chicana authors use distinctive female figures from Mexican mythology (La Malinche, La Llorona, Coatlicue, Coyolxauhqui) to empower themselves against the “Joaquín” of the 1960s. As Rebolledo and Rivero claim, they go even further after having “consciously designed and re-designed myths and archetypes not to their liking” (Rebolledo, Rivero, 1993: 24). This struggle for emancipation and gender identification becomes clearly visible in works such as Lorna Dee Cervantes' *Emplumada* (1981); Cherríe Moraga's *Loving in the War Years* (1983); Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* (1983); Arturo Islas' *The Rain God* (1984); and Ana Castillo's *The Mixquiahuala Letters* (1985). These trends are widely seen to culminate in Gloria E. Anzaldúa's groundbreaking long essayistic and poetic piece *Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza* (1987). Starting in the 1980s, according to Alba Cutler, “Chicano/a literature centers representations of cultural change on dramas of familial power, sex, desire and the threat of masculine domination” (Alba Cutler, 2015: 12).

These works often experiment with literary genres and a language that mixes English with words, expressions and entire phrases in Spanish or Spanglish. This gives some of the texts a more universal reach while permitting them to remain deeply rooted in the cultural space of the Borderlands. Sandra Cisneros' personal experience is illustrative of this process: the writer reveals her

Rolling Stone magazine, which had in 1967 emerged as a voice of the counterculture generation in Oakland, CA (Calderón, 2013: 400).

first literary attempts to emulate Anglo American poets, only to find her own voice coming from the *barrio*, mixing Chicano Spanish with English to express her own strife. Gloria Anzaldúa's literary expression is consciously built on intersecting forms of hybridity (*mezcla*, or "mix"): of languages (intertwining English, colloquial English, Texas Spanish, Caló, Chicano Spanish), of genres (essay combined with poetry and personal testimony or autobiography), and of themes (verbalizing the experience of life "on the border" geographically, culturally, racially, socially and in terms of gender). Tereza Kynčlová views this hybridity in Chicana writing as essential to evade categorization and achieve the clear political goal of subverting hierarchies as well as reflecting the specific position of women of color (Kynčlová, 2011: 138–142).

While Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* is emblematic of her own personal situation, at the same time it references the experiences of a multitude of non-white women in (but not only in) the US. The outburst of the Chicana voice is accompanied by the personal growth expressed in Anzaldúa's often quite intimate essay. Héctor Calderón traces themes connected to solidarity with Latina and Third World women in general as well as the tradition of storytelling and *testimonio*, especially narrating the civil wars in Central America in the 1970s and 1980s. The tension between Chicana feminism or feminism of color and white feminism makes itself clear in the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back* edited by Anzaldúa y Moraga in 1981 (Persephone Books). The distinctive voice of Chicana writers and of Chicana feminist theory is here based on the intersection of race, class and gender. According to Kynčlová, Chicana literature reflects a combination of original theoretical thinking and eclectic work with feminist, postcolonial and indigenous theories inspired by structuralism, poststructuralism, postmodern techniques and psychoanalysis (Kynčlová, 2011: 137). It finds its own space in independent Chicana publishing houses, e.g. Aunt Lute Books founded in 1982 by Barb Wieser and Joana Pinkvoss as well as the aforementioned Mango Publications and Third Woman Press

Chicana writing transcends geographical and cultural boundaries to form complexes of "crossroads." It proudly announces the *Borderlands*, transcending peripheralization to create a breakthrough space for other authors of Mexican American or Chicano/a literature (see Stavans, 2001: 232). The success of Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* also in many ways triggered the interest of readers with no direct ethnic Mexican American or Latino/a connections to Chicano/a literature. Just a few years after initial publication in 1983 by Arte Público Press, the novel was put out by mainstream publisher Vintage Contemporaries, translated into over 20 languages, became part of school curricula, and earned a place in the 1998 fifth edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. In a different way, the metaphorical power of Glo-

ria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* and its conceptualization of border/*frontera* and miscegenation/*mestizaje* lends this multi-genre text a universal quality. María-Socorro Tabuenca Córdoba recognizes this dimension of Anzaldúa's work: "It is in part due to her influence that the idea of 'the border' turned out to be very prominent in a number of academic disciplines since the mid-1980s, especially in the United States, where this image has served as a popular locus of discussion on monolithic structures" (Tabuenca Córdoba, 2013: 454). Cisneros' fiction as well as Anzaldúa's semi-autobiographical work have also come to be widely read and interpreted outside academia.

4 A Shift in Perspective

... we are on both shores at once, and, at once see through serpent and eagle eyes.

ANZALDÚA, 2012: 100–101



Over the past half century, the position of Chicano/a literature has gone through considerable changes in terms of center-periphery dynamics, with evolutions continuing to take place. After a long period of disinterest in the production of Mexican American and later Chicano/a culture outside communities with Mexican roots, US, Mexican and Spanish scholars (and, subsequently, the general public) slowly came to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Mexican American Borderlands culture. Obviously, the formation of the Chicano/a academy with its often openly political character and the building up of cultural capital during the Chicano Renaissance were seminal events, with the subsequent flourishing of Chicana writing in the 1980s increasing the already growing interest. In the following paragraphs, this gradual change is briefly illustrated using examples of the changes to the literary canon within the US along with the reflection of Chicano/a literature in Mexico and Spain, i.e. in areas that have traditionally performed as a metropolis in contrast to Borderlands periphery.

The modifications to the US literary canon came after a decade of so-called "Canon Wars" in the 1980s which in turn also brought a certain degree of incorporation of Chicano/a literature into the mainstream. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, specifically its section of literature after 1945, exemplifies

this process. While the first two editions of *The Norton Anthology* (published in 1979 and 1985) included no writers whatsoever of Mexican American origin, the third 1989 edition included the novelist Denise Chávez and the poets Alberto Ríos and Lorna Dee Cervantes, with the fifth 1998 edition then adding the novelist Sandra Cisneros (see Dalleo, Machado Sáez, 2013: 385–395). The eighth 2012 edition includes Rudolfo Anaya, Gloria Anzaldúa, Alberto Ríos, Lorna Dee Cervantes and Sandra Cisneros, while the most recent ninth edition from 2017 reduces the number of Chicano/a writers to Rudolfo Anaya, Gloria Anzaldúa and Sandra Cisneros. Already by 1990, however, *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* edited by Paul Lauter had been offering a much more inclusive selection of minority literatures.²¹ Over the following decades, pan-ethnic anthologies also appeared such as *The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* published in 2010 under the general editorship of Ilan Stavans; this volume includes writers with Chicano, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican roots as well as writing from other Spanish-speaking countries (Stavans, 2010).²² Three years later *The Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature* was released.

Until the 1970s the general attitude of educated Mexicans to Mexican American culture was characterized by suspicion and rejection. As Tino Villanueva argues, the Chicano Movement took the Mexican heritage as a shield, while the majority of Mexican intellectuals viewed Mexican Americans as disloyal deserters that had given up Mexican culture and language in favor of the US mainstream, with derogative denominations such as *pocho* and *chicano* showing the disdain from *la patria* (see Villanueva, 1994: 45–46). It was not until the 1990s that significant changes came about regarding the reception of Chicano/a literature in Mexico, with a decisive moment coming in 1994 with the translation of Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* by the well-known Mexican writer and social commentator Elena Poniatowska. Describing the reception of the Mexican academy, Marisa Belausteguigoitia Rius and María del Socorro Gutiérrez claim that Chicano/a literature and studies today are now more broadly recognized, but only in “specific and focalized ways,” e.g. through

21 As a comparison, the 2006 edition of *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* includes among its diverse selection authors of Spanish/Novohispanic origin (with the Colonial period represented by Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Francisco Palou and Lorenzo Zavala), of Mexican or Mexican American descent (Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Pío Pico, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton) as well as authors from the Chicano/a literary renaissance and subsequent periods (with literature after 1945 represented by Rolando Hinojosa, Tomás Rivera, Rudolfo A. Anaya, Gloria Anzaldúa, Pat Mora, Gary Soto, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Helena María Viramontes and Sandra Cisneros).

22 Stavans also reflects on the evolution and contemporary status of “Latino” and “Hispanic” identity in his work *The Hispanic Condition* (Stavans, 2001: 181–204).

research centers as well as publication and conference activities at institutions of higher learning such as the prestigious Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Universidad de Colima, Universidad de Guadalajara, El Colegio de México, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana and Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (see Belausteguigoitia Rius, Gutiérrez, 2013: 101–103).

As for Spain, popular and academic indifference to Chicano/a literature (with the exception of the magazine *Triunfo*) only began to change in the 1980s (Villanueva, 1994: 46). Similarly to Mexico, in the 1990s conference activities organized by various universities (Castilla-La Mancha, León, Huelva) brought Latino/a culture to the wider attention of Spanish scholars. According to the German academic Frauke Gewecke, the major work of dissemination in this area was carried out by the biannual conferences on Chicano/a literature organized periodically through the cooperation of Instituto Franklin (University of Alcalá de Henares) with other Spanish universities beginning in 1998 and continuing to the present (see Gewecke, 2013: 109; see also Gurpegui, 2003: 11–13). The Chicano scholar Francisco Lomelí considers José Antonio Gurpegui, the director of the Instituto Franklin, to be the decisive figure leading Spain to the position of “the principal center of Chicano literary and cultural studies outside the United States,” exceeding the accomplishments of Germany, France and even UNAM in Mexico (Lomelí, 2017: xii).²³ In her study “Latino/a literature in Western Europe,” Gewecke offers an overview of Spanish, French, German, British and Belgian scholars dedicated to investigations in this area (Gewecke, 2013: 109–111). It may also be of interest here to mention other European contributions, such as the academic work of the Italian translator of *Borderlands* Paola Zaccaria as well as the Czech scholars Kateřina Březinová and Tereza Kynčlová.²⁴

With regard to translation and editorial activities, Gewecke affirms that the 1990s brought “a kind of mini boom in Latino literature” to Europe (Gewecke, 2013: 113), emphasizing the enthusiastic reception of the Chicana writer Sandra Cisneros. Nevertheless, Gewecke draws attention to the tendency of the European book market to exoticize the works, viewing them for example as merely an extension of Magical Realism. The German scholar thus concurs with the longtime view that the common European reader approaches Latino/a (includ-

23 José Antonio Gurpegui is also the author of *Narrativa chicana. Nuevas propuestas analíticas* (Madrid: Universidad de Alcalá, 2003). In his study “Tendiendo puentes, compartiendo conocimientos: The International Conference on Chicano Literature in Spain (1998–2016),” Julio Cañero traces the history of the biannual conferences organized by the Instituto Franklin (see Cañero, 2017: 109–125).

24 Now publishing as Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová.

ing Chicano/a) poetry, fiction and nonfiction as merely a possibility to imagine foreign worlds rather than considering these works a part of “the (Western) canon of a traditionally conceived Weltliteratur” (Gewecke, 2013: 114).

Finally, two sets of circumstances illustrate the significant changes as well as the constant negotiations involved in the position of Chicano/a writing in relation to the literary periphery. The first context is US-oriented. In 1992, Francisco H. Vázquez warned in his article *Chicanology: a Postmodern Analysis of Meshicano Discourse* against the mainstream academic appropriation of Chicano/a studies. In his opinion, the originally oppositional discourse characteristic of the Chicano/a struggle (identified by Vázquez as “Meshicano”) against the US mainstream ran the risk of being internalized and transformed into a neutralized hegemonic discourse that would in practice reify Anglo domination in a similar way to the discourse described by Edward Said in his landmark work on post-colonialism *Orientalism*. Stripped of its original power, this new discourse was disparaged as mere “Chicanology” by Vázquez (1997: 22–23).²⁵ Two decades later, John Alba Cutler observed a similar situation but evaluated it in a different way. Cutler admits that the political and ideological accent of Chicano/a studies on ethnic identity which was fundamental in the 1970s through the 1980s may have diminished in the following decades. Far from interpreting the emphasis on ethnicity as a threat, however, Cutler claims that this process now enables Chicano/a studies to shift from the formative task of developing cultural capital towards the possibility of achieving an even greater freedom of aesthetic and critical expression (Alba Cutler, 2015: 220–221).

The second set of conditions involves the Mexican context. María-Socorro Tabuenca Córdoba has described an imbalance in the reception of the literatures written on both sides of the Mexican American border, i.e. of Chicano/a literature in the US and of “la literatura de la frontera” in northern Mexico. Tabuenca Córdoba acknowledges the theoretical importance of the border metaphor which received great academic attention right after the publication of *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* and was later developed by Walter D. Mignolo into “border gnosis.” At the same time, however, this scholar from the University of Texas at El Paso calls attention to the differences between the two cultural projects. On the one hand, Chicano/a (or Latino/a) border theory deals more with a textual-theoretical border, with the border metaphor used to “create a multicultural space in the United States” and to bring about the “imaginative return to a metaphorically conceived Mexican/Latin Ameri-

25 A certain parallel has also been drawn by Ilan Stavans between Said’s framework of Orientalism and the situation of the Americans with Hispanic roots (Stavans, 2001, 207).

can cultural tradition which serves as a source of empowerment” (Tabuenca Córdoba, 2013: 455). On the other hand, the regional Mexican “literatura de la frontera” focuses on the real geopolitical border and reflects US immigration policies, the plight of migrants, and the wall along US-Mexico border line (Tabuenca Córdoba, 2013: 455–459). The contrast is also evident if the publishing and translation climate of the authors in northern Mexico is compared to the relatively greater possibilities of Chicano/a authors within the US, largely due to five decades of goal-directed cultural and literary work since the Chicano Renaissance. Tabuenca Córdoba then goes on to argue that in the Mexican American frontier area “US border literature occupies the dominant space, and Mexican border literature falls into a subordinate one” (Tabuenca Córdoba, 2013: 460).

Taking all this into account, a clear double emergence of Chicano/a literature out of a peripheral state can be delineated. As exemplified by the huge impact of Anzaldúa’s writing on border theory (as well as on discourses of feminism and gender), contemporary Chicano/a literature has gained centrality in the Mexican American Borderlands, with Mexican border literature becoming increasingly peripheral to it. Nevertheless, the situation remains exciting in its dynamism, as we have attempted to demonstrate in these pages.

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The Long Journey of Brazilian Literature toward Autonomy: The 19th Century

Eva Batličková

Interrogating Brazilian life and the nature of America, prose writers and poets will find a rich source of inspiration and will put their own face on national thought. This next independence will not be dated on the seventh of September, nor will its port be situated on the banks of the Ipiranga; it will not be done in one day, but slowly, to make it more durable; it will not be the work of one or two generations; many will work for it until it is fully accomplished.¹

MACHADO DE ASSIS, 24/3/1873



Brazil's cultural autonomy and the deperipheralization of its literature have resulted from a long and complex process conditioned by several internal and external factors. The declaration of political independence from Portugal in September 1822 was only the commencement of a deeper transformation of the country. It was not a happy beginning. Built on monarchist foundations represented by King Pedro I, himself the son of the Portuguese sovereign, the putatively independent state fundamentally consolidated and strengthened the conservative forces in Brazilian society which remained elitist and pro-European. Liberal and progressive movements seeking to express and address the concerns of localities and to integrate them into wider social, cultural and linguistic spheres came under intense political pressure from the national government. This inhibition of regional movements slowed down in fundamental

1 “Interrogando a vida brasileira e a natureza americana, prosadores e poetas acharão ali farto manancial de inspiração e irão dando fisionomia própria ao pensamento nacional. Esta outra independência não tem Sete de Setembro nem campo de Ipiranga; não se fará num dia, mas pausadamente, para sair mais duradoura; não será obra de uma geração nem duas; muitas trabalharão para ela até perfazê-la de todo.”

ways the process of emancipation based on European models. Brazilian institutions created during the 19th century came to reflect the tension between pro-European tendencies and forces emphasizing local, centrifugal anchoring. These antagonisms became evident in debates seeking to define the new state's national principles and, relatedly, to influence the normative form of the national language. The literary context of this period was opened up for various authors who were increasingly diverging from the conservative trends of the political scene. Following these trends of decentralization, many writers sought to reflect and express local realities in their texts. Nevertheless, it remained quite difficult for many authors to fully escape axiological positions through which Europe dominated. From today's perspective, the 19th century thus proves to be a period of ebb and flow in which advocates of the metropolis and European universalism were able to create and allocate various resources to maintain their influence over various segments of Brazilian society, while forces favorable to autochthonous cultures (often seeking ideological support from Europe itself) came to oppose such strong influences from the continent. On the other hand, the growing awareness of difference and the positive value of otherness began to occupy more and more space in Brazilian cultural life. The occasional victories that were won in the 1800s helped prepare the ground for the more profound transformation of Brazilian culture that would take place in the 20th century.

The origins of the complicated and ambivalent transition from colonial Brazil to an autonomous country *stricto sensu*, can be found in the history of colonization of Portuguese America, a trajectory very different from that of the Spanish in their American colonies. At the beginning of the Modern Age, the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile experienced a series of affinities as a result of the newly emerging international conjuncture. The conquest of Constantinople by the Turks as well as the ongoing bloody conflicts between Turkish and Christian militaries across Europe necessitated the search for new trade routes to East Asian markets. The new circumstances created a situation in which the geographical location of the Iberian Peninsula became extremely propitious for maritime expeditions. Suddenly the two rivals Spain and Portugal, for many centuries considered the "end of the world," were suddenly at its center.

Since the Portuguese Reconquista (1249) of territory occupied by Muslims was completed almost two hundred and fifty years earlier than that of Spain (1492), Portugal had the advantage of a more centralized government in planning and executing its overseas expeditions, which in consequence meant better internal conditions for strategic investment in maritime expansion. Portuguese colonial expansion began in 1415 with the capture of Ceuta on the north coast of Africa, an important strategic point in the control of the Strait

of Gibraltar, while in comparison the first overseas expeditions financed by Castile were those of Columbus almost 80 years later beginning in 1492. The major material and propagative success of the Columbian journeys, however, finally helped balance the forces of the two naval powers. On 7 June 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas was signed, sealing the fate of the southern part of the American continent even before it was officially acknowledged to have been found.² The treaty divided the oceanic world—as seen from a European perspective—into two dominions: one belonging to the Portuguese Crown, the other to the Kingdom of Castile. When the Portuguese expedition reached the shores of Brazil in 1500, its commanders already knew that they could advance into the depths of the territory as far as 370 nautical miles from the eastern headland of the Cape Verde archipelago. The rest of the newly “discovered” continent was claimed by the Castilian Crown, with ideological discourses related to the spread of Christianity associated with the efforts of both countries.

Even with regard to the very beginnings of the colonization of the South American continent, two fundamental and interrelated factors are useful in explaining the developmental differences between Portuguese and Spanish America. The first is related to the degree of complexity of the social, economic and military structure of the native populations and the societies encountered by the two colonial powers; the second is linked to the strategies of the colonial administration of the territory. While in all areas of their eventual dominion the Castilians faced civilized societies with a developed structure, the Portuguese encountered natives who in comparison had not manifested a high degree of social complexity. The Castilians were thus forced to set up a strategy that would guarantee the permanent victory of their culture over established indigenous structures and institutions. The solution chosen was the division of the colony into a series of viceroalties which operated on a federal principle. Each of these regions enjoyed a relatively large degree of autonomy, and each was endowed with fundamental state institutions, including universities. The first conventual institution of higher education was established in Spanish America in 1538 in Santo Domingo (today, the Dominican Republic), with the first two European-style universities founded in 1551 in Peru and Mexico.

2 Given the policy of secrecy with regard to overseas discoveries at the time, debates persist among historians about the possible dates of the first voyages to the South American continent before the official date of 1500, the year associated with Portuguese explorers reaching Brazil. In particular, evidence is disputed in terms of the long (and furtive) boundary negotiations with Castile after the “discovery” by the Portuguese of a further 270 nautical miles to the west, essentially the territory of today’s Brazil (not including the Amazon region, which was colonized following the Treaty of Madrid signed in 1750).

During Spanish colonization, a total of 32 universities were established on the South American continent. The spread of the Spanish tertiary education was bolstered by the fact that Castile had already established twelve universities in Spain at the time of their discovery of what became the Americas, while only one had been founded in Portugal. Spain was thus able to take advantage of the opportunity to bring more highly-trained university educators and administrators to the colonies without causing serious harm to the educational institutions of the metropolis (Pereira, 2008: 55–56).

The situation in Portuguese America was quite different. Higher education institutions were scattered among the most important cities of the colony through isolated colleges. Courses were given in philosophy and theology only, with both disciplines subject to the control of the Catholic Church, still heavily influenced by Scholasticism and with curriculum based on authors such as Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. The situation changed during what was called the Pombal period (1750–1777),³ when the spirit of the Enlightenment belatedly emerged in Portugal and the Jesuit order was banned not only in the metropolis but also in the colonies in 1759. In Brazil, the Jesuit colleges were replaced by new so-called royal institutions, the *Aulas Régias*, but these were as isolated and dispersed as had been the previous Jesuit schools. Only with the transfer of the Portuguese royal court to Brazil in 1808 did the new situation favor the establishment of other higher education institutions such as the Military and Naval Academies along with the Faculties of Medicine at Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. During this period, higher education followed the French model, which was focused on training in professional activities. In the case of Brazil this was mainly comprised of the education of military officers and engineers (Pereira, 2008: 60–64). Law schools followed in 1827 (Olinda and São Paulo), five years after the declaration of independence. The first university founded as a state institution dedicated to scientific research was established only in 1934 (Universidade de São Paulo).

During the colonial period, the Portuguese Crown ensured that the Brazilian elites would study in Europe, primarily at the University of Coimbra, in order to strengthen the colony's links to European cultural values. Yet, paradoxically, despite this extended contact with the continent during the politically and culturally tumultuous 19th century, the broad goals of the political leaders of the

3 The Pombal period refers to the time when the Marquis de Pombal (Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo) served in various ministerial positions until 1777 as the chief advisor to King José I. The government of enlightened absolutism dominated by Pombal introduced a series of political, administrative, economic, cultural and educational reforms that aimed to lift the country's declining fortunes to the level of other European powers.

already independent country were not greatly affected, with pro-European tendencies prevailing in Brazilian society remaining conservative.

1 The Tortuous Road to Independence

A pivotal moment in Brazil's road to independence was the move of the Portuguese royal court to Rio de Janeiro in 1808. Local antecedents to such a dramatic development had come much earlier, however, for example with the decline of the mining of precious stones and gold in the second half of the 18th century.

With the discovery of gold in the late 17th century, mining in Brazil generated on the one hand great wealth for the Portuguese metropolis, while on the other it exacerbated the difficulties of administering a colony the size of Brazil from a distance. Even the tightening supervision of the royal administrators could not hinder the ingenuity of the smuggling networks and the growth of tax fraud. One example emerged in the vast Brazilian province of Minas Gerais, which takes its name from its extensive gold and diamond deposits; the area transformed in a few decades from a wilderness inhabited only by Indians into one of the most economically powerful areas of the colony.

Seduced by the opportunity to become rich, the vast number of newcomers to Minas Gerais demanded an infrastructure to serve them. On the road between São Paulo and Vila Rica, and later also between Rio de Janeiro and Vila Rica, numerous small towns sprang up, and with them many *fazendas* (plantations and ranches) to feed the local inhabitants. The owners of these large estates were not content for very long to merely grow crops and raise cattle, and the buildings in these areas were soon large enough to shelter hundreds of traders and their goods. The local population often lived off trade and introduced a new phenomenon into Brazilian society: the emergence of a sizeable middle class. The lifestyles, principles, and values of this new social strata were fundamentally different from what had characterized the traditional agrarian oligarchy and its associated auxiliaries. An intense ethnic mixing of the population came about, mainly due to the mixing of former slaves into the general population. Frequent release programs and the widespread incidence of slaves whose freedom was purchased (often by themselves) also contributed to a more liberal atmosphere within the region, with the growing urban environment allowing for spontaneous encounters and social blending among a wide variety of people (Schwartz, Starling, 2018: 123–126).

In the portentous year of 1789 a revolt called *Inconfidência Mineira* (the Minas Gerais Conspiracy) erupted in the south-east in an uprising which has

been called “the most important anti-colonialist movement in Portuguese America: it challenged the very principle of the colonial system and indicated the intention of a distinctly republican form of government in the province of Minas Gerais” (Schwartz, Starling, 2018: 129).⁴ It is worth noting that three of the most important poets of Brazilian Arcadianism participated in this movement: Cláudio Manuel da Costa, Inácio José de Alvarenga Peixoto and Tomás Antônio Gonzaga. All three were arrested after the conspiracy had been revealed. Cláudio Manuel was found dead in his cell (with historians debating the cause of death even today) and the other two were exiled to Africa.

The Minas Gerais Conspiracy was far from an isolated movement. On the contrary, a series of revolts and riots had already been erupting in Brazil since the second half of the 17th century until the proclamation of independence in various regions of the colony: Rio de Janeiro (1660), Pernambuco (1666, 1710), Sergipe (1671), Maranhão (1684), Bahia (1711), Minas Gerais (1720). The discontent that sparked these rebellions usually focused on high taxes, governors who excessively exploited the region, or the corruption of the king’s administrators. While only the Pernambuco uprising of 1710 challenged the authority of the Crown itself, the Minas Gerais Conspiracy (1789) articulated the ideas of political autonomy and republicanism more clearly and attempted to disseminate them more widely than was the case with other uprisings in the colony. Nevertheless, although all the revolts were violently repressed, Brazil’s spirit of independence was already established.

When Portugal’s Prince Regent Dom João and 15,000 Portuguese subjects who had accompanied him in his humiliating flight from Napoleon’s troops in 1808 settled in the Brazilian territory, the country’s tortuous but inevitable drive toward independence gathered strength. With the arrival of royalty, the prestige of Brazil grew vertiginously around the world practically overnight. Its ports were immediately opened to international trade, fulfilling the longed-for dream of the Brazilian elite to end the commercial monopoly of the metropolis. In a few weeks, Rio de Janeiro became the seat of the Portuguese Empire and underwent an accelerated process of urbanization, becoming the center of several institutions, including the Bank of Brazil, Royal Museum, Royal Theater, National School of Fine Arts, and Royal Press. As early as 1808, the first two institutes of directed professional higher education were founded: the Medical-Surgical School at Rio de Janeiro’s Military Hospital and the Engineering program at the Royal Military Academy.

4 “[...] o mais relevante movimento anticolonial da América portuguesa: põs em dúvida o próprio sistema e adaptou para Minas um projeto e poder de natureza nitidamente republicana.”

During the stay of the royal court, the population of Rio de Janeiro doubled from 50,000 to 100,000 and fundamentally diversified. The new seat of the Portuguese empire attracted Europeans from various countries who had diverse objectives and worked at numerous vocations, from doctors and teachers to tailors and cooks. Besides the experienced and qualified labor, diplomats also disembarked in the city. Brazil's prestige within the Portuguese empire was sealed by an event in 1815, when on the occasion of the birthday of the "Louca" ("Mad") Queen of Portugal Maria I, Prince Regent Dom João declared the country of his residence a full part of his kingdom, proclaiming the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves. Brazil thus legally ceased to be a colony. Although after Napoleon's defeat there was no longer any imminent danger to the crown, Prince Dom João delayed in returning to Portugal. After the death of his mother, he even organized his own coronation with all due pomp and ceremony in Rio de Janeiro in 1818.

Brazil, however, paid dearly for all these gifts from the Portuguese Crown. The need to sustain the Empire's bureaucratic apparatus forced tax increases throughout the country and reinforced the centralization of power structures. The presence of the Court decisively strengthened the conservative layers of Brazilian society that fed on the country's colonial structure by which they held on to power. This era would prove decisive for developing political, social and cultural events in independent Brazil in the following decades.

2 Books, Libraries, Printing Houses

The cultural autonomy of any country is unthinkable without the creation of adequate cultural market infrastructure. The book market in Brazil was stimulated by the opening of its ports to international trade in 1808. Various works of many types began to flow into the country, albeit often illegally.

In colonial Brazil, books were viewed with great suspicion, often as tools of heretics and political rebels. Libraries were housed only in monasteries and religious schools. In the late 18th century, private libraries began to appear, although the importation of books unapproved by government / religious censors was clandestine and dangerous. Forbidden books found in the homes of the Minas Gerais conspirators were an aggravating factor in their criminal convictions and sentencing. Nevertheless, the very presence of heterodox books in the country and their proliferation demonstrates that they were already being traded at that time. Works by authors such as Condillac, Montesquieu, Mably, Voltaire, as well as the French *Encyclopédie*, were seized in the houses of the Minas Gerais conspirators. Tiradentes, the most famous promoter of the con-

piracy and the subsequent independence movement, possessed a collection of the Constitutional Laws of the United States in French translation. The influence of French ideas was strong at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, with Enlightenment universalism influencing opinion especially among the Brazilian elites. Many books came from Portugal, as exemplified by the numerous copies of the French Constitution, some of the 12,000 copies of which destined for Portugal arrived in Brazil. The governmental police inspected printed material with the same zeal in the colony as in the metropolis. With the opening of the Brazilian ports, French books began to enter the country to such an extent that after only a few months, on 14 October 1808, the King issued a decree forbidding high custom officials to dispatch or allow the unloading of books or printed papers without royal permission—*Desembargo do Paço*. From 1809 onwards, all pamphlets and advertisements for books, whether foreign or domestic, could only be published with police permission (Sodré, 1999: 11–14).

Between 1807 and 1817, there were only four bookstores in Rio de Janeiro, establishments which according to contemporary witnesses appeared more like antiquarian sellers, offering only old translations of French and English books and a number of titles by the store's main customers. In Recife, the situation was even worse: in 1815, there was only one bookstore in the largest city in Pernambuco, with this shop offering only religious literature. Gradually the situation improved, however, and by 1821 there were eight sellers of books to the public in Rio, although these stores did not specialize only in literature and marketed other merchandise as well. Besides the bookstores, the owners of private residences sometimes offered books both for sale and to borrow. Their customers were recruited among travelers, merchants as well as sailors. News about this kind of activity has been preserved not only in Rio de Janeiro but also, among other locations, in Minas Gerais and Pernambuco (Candido 1, 2000: 219).

In 1814 the Royal Library of Rio was opened to the public. The books and other printed materials transferred there from Lisbon to Rio by Prince Regent Don João were enriched by other collections, and by 1820 it had 60,000 titles. Contemporary testimonies report that, although the library was not very up-to-date or organized, it featured a comfortable reading room and was used extensively, especially by clergymen (Candido 1, 2000: 220).

Based on the information available, we know that reading was not a common leisure activity at that time, although some international authors were widely known. Private libraries were full of works by d'Alembert, Buffon, Adam Smith, and Thomas Paine. Among the works of domestic authors, the poems of Tomás Antônio Gonzaga, one of the Mineiro conspirators as well as the 18th-century epic poem *Caramuru* by José de Santa Rita Durão were appreciated.

Another widely-read work was Rousseau's essay *Du Contrat Social*. The popular public loved stories set in the time of the Emperor Charlemagne (Candido 1, 2000: 220).

The introduction of the printing press in colonial Brazil faced the same suspicion as had books and was perceived as a grave danger to the Empire. Before the Royal Printing House was established in Rio de Janeiro in 1808, we have references to two attempts at installing printing equipment in the country. In 1706, a small workshop was set up in Recife for the "printing of bills of exchange and pious prayers." Despite the permission of the province governor, it was abolished by royal decree the same year; a second, more significant attempt was doomed to the same failure. The Lisbon printer Antônio Isidoro da Fonseca—again with the governor's authorization—established a small printing shop in Rio de Janeiro with equipment he had brought from his home base in Portugal. By the time he had managed to print only a few titles the reaction of the Crown was swift: an official letter ordered the destruction by burning of the typography devices to prevent the spread of ideas that were contrary to the interests of the state (Sodré, 1999: 17).

In keeping with the orthodoxy, the first royally authorized typography workplace was established in the back of the house of one of the kingdom's administrators who had come along with the court of the Prince Regent Dom João. The equipment was intended to serve the needs of the imperial government exclusively. On September 10, 1808, the first newspaper in Brazilian territory, the *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro*, was printed. This four-page weekly contained official and officially sanctioned information and proved unattractive to the public.

At this time, other newspapers focused on the colony were appearing, but due to censorship in Brazil the most popular publication emerged from beyond Brazil's borders, *Correio Brasiliense*, the first issue of which was published in London three months before the *Gazeta*, on June 1, 1808. Its founder, Hipólito da Costa, born in Brazil, studied at Coimbra University, but had to take refuge from Portugal to England in 1805, as he was trying to evade the Portuguese inquisition because of his Masonic ideas. When the Joanine Court settled in Rio de Janeiro, Costa decided to create a newspaper more doctrinaire than informative in his determination to help his fellow Brazilians prepare the ground for liberal institutions and otherwise raise political awareness, although the newspaper had a moralizing rather than a revolutionary focus. Typically issued in an monthly edition over a hundred pages long and relatively expensive, the format of *Correio* was entirely different from that of official state periodicals.

The first issues of *Correio Brasiliense* reached the country without the slightest problem, but by March 1809, the periodical had been banned. Despite these

difficulties, copies continued to circulate, mainly in the hands of the younger generation of Brazilians. After the Liberal Revolution in Porto in 1820, the monthly was allowed to be distributed again both in the colony and in the metropolis, finally ending publication in the year independence was declared in 1822 (Sodré, 1999: 19–28). Although Costa's initiative was openly anticolonial and in favor of Brazilian emancipation from the metropolis, the fact that the journal was printed in England was essential to its content. Costa was able to criticize Portuguese colonialism from an English perspective, thus the first Brazilian opposition newspaper was not the result of an American experience, but a reflection, a vision offered by the Old Continent. Costa's opposition promoted the principles of the modern European state against the imperial colonial model in Brazil at the time.

3 Independence, Yes, but with Moderation

As in other parts of the American continent, the ideas related to a new local identity were manifested in divergent political forces. In the Brazilian context, the tension was between the conservative tendencies represented by the Portuguese Party, which sought a monarchist establishment, and more or less radical liberal tendencies represented by the Brazilian Party. Generally the more liberal politicians came mainly from the urban middle classes.

Brazil's political autonomy was closely linked to events in the European metropolis. The Liberal Revolution of Porto (1820) had strong repercussions in the colony. While on an ideological level this event strengthened the liberal forces in Brazil, on a practical level it was responsible for the return of the King to Portugal. When João VI submitted to the Portuguese Legislative Cortes re-established in Lisbon, Brazilian independence became imminent for all political forces in the country. The local oligarchy feared that a commercial monopoly would be re-established in Portugal, while the liberals yearned for a more modern political structure. What divided the two groups was the debate over how the new state would be formed and what relations it would have with Portugal. Although the conservative right was open to a definitive separation from the metropolis, it did not entirely reject the possibility of an administrative union with Portugal as long as Brazil was guaranteed equal status. What Brazil sought most of all to preserve, however, was the colonial structure of a country governed under monarchy. The progressive left, in turn, was openly in favor of a republican system, demanding unconditional separation from the Portuguese Crown as well as changes in the colonial structures and the political system.

This juncture in 1821 initiated a short-lived period of relatively unmitigated freedom of the press, in institution which became important in arousing public opinion in support of the new independent status of Brazil. Newspapers were founded in several places around the country: in Recife, the *Aurora Pernambucana* (27.3. 1821), followed by the *Diário do Rio de Janeiro* (1.6. 1821) and the Bahian *Diário Constitucional* (4.8. 1821) (Sodré, 1999: 40–46). As early as January 1822, however, the Council of State which had been constituted by Prince Regent Pedro, son of King João VI of Portugal, along with representatives and ministers of the various provinces, produced legislation designed to putatively defend the new State and preserve it “from incendiary and subversive doctrines. [...] Original [texts] were to be signed and the typographical proofs submitted to the procurator of the Crown” (Sodré, 1999: 42).⁵ The Declaration of Independence sealed the irreversible victory of the conservative forces on 7 September 1822 with the swift coronation of Prince Regent Pedro as the new Emperor Pedro I of Brazil.

Except for a brief period of regency governments (from the abdication of Pedro I in 1831 until the politically motivated declaration of the fourteen-year-old Pedro II as an adult in 1840), the European-oriented conservatives held political power in their hands. This contingent now controlled decision-making with regard to the issues of the new state, for example by seizing control of the censorship and instituting strict control of the book market. The continuing influence of the conservatives was inspired by the French Enlightenment, for instance the conditioning of the general populace with the idea of a Brazilian nation based on white elites as well as the normative shaping of the national language to remain in line with Lusitanian conventions. This situation began to change only in 1869 after the long and bloody Paraguayan War (1864–1870), which had emptied the state coffers and damaged the emperor’s reputation irreparably, freeing up space for more progressive tendencies.

4 The Role of Newspapers and Magazines in the Dissemination of Literary Texts during the Brazilian Imperial Period

In the second half of the 19th century, a broader reading audience emerged whose tastes and preferences began to take shape. Nevertheless, Brazilian publishers continued to print their books abroad, primarily in Portugal, France,

5 “das doutrinas incendiárias e subversivas. [...] Os originais deviam ser assinados e as provas tipográficas submetidas ao procurador da Coroa.”

and Germany, with book publishing in Brazil still rare in the early 20th century. As was the case on both sides of the Atlantic, the publication of literary texts was a feature of most newspapers of the time, and the Brazilian reading public was won over mainly through feuilletons inspired by the European fashion of French Romanticism (Sodré, 1999: 242–243). Thanks to their popularity with readers, short entertaining texts printed in supplements came to take up more space in newspapers and magazines, with the best works of fiction of the time serialized chapter by chapter. The Rio de Janeiro newspaper *Correio Mercantil* (1848–1868) published texts by Manuel Antônio de Almeida (*Memórias de um sargento de milícias*, 1852–1853) and Joaquim Manuel de Macedo, as well as for the feuilletons of José de Alencar, who collaborated with the magazine for a year (1854–1855). Alencar then received an offer from the *Diário do Rio de Janeiro* to become its editor-in-chief. In 1857 Alencar published his novel *O Guarani*, one of the essential Indianist works, with *A Viúvinha* (*The Little Widow*) issued three years later. In the Northeast, the weekly *Semanário Maranhense* was published with the collaboration of Joaquim Serra, one of the most important 19th century writers of the province of Maranhão. In São Paulo, the *Revista Popular* played the same role for local literature writers. Sixteen-year-old Machado de Assis, then a printer's apprentice who enjoyed the personal protection of the renowned novelist Antônio de Almeida, made his debut in the Rio de Janeiro periodical *Marmora*. In 1860, de Assis, then a language proof-reader and editor of the revived *Diário do Rio de Janeiro*, was sent as a young reporter to cover the Senate. There he met colleagues from other editorial offices, including the renowned novelist and poet Bernardo Guimarães (Sodré, 1999: 190–192). The periodicals of the time show how closely the autonomization of literature is intertwined with public action and the steady growth of a readership.

The development of the country by the expansion of urban centers as well as the emergence of a middle class stirred up cultural life in various parts of Brazil, opening up an ever greater space for literature and journalism. In January 1870, the first republican newspaper *A República* was founded in Rio de Janeiro, with more than twenty periodicals of this type appearing over the next two years. *A República* brought together the most widely-known names in literature and the press such as Joaquim Nabuco and the aforementioned luminaries José de Alencar and Machado de Assis (Sodré, 1999: 206–214). Another periodical, *Revista Brasileira*, re-established and raised to a higher level of content by editor Nicolau Midosi, launched between March and December of 1880 one of the greatest novels by Machado and of Brazilian literature itself: *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas* (the first of several translations into English coming in 1952 as *Epitaph of a Small Winner*; in 1997 as *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*;

two major translations were issued in 2020). The reader could also find in the monthly issues of *Revista Brasileira* poems by Fagundes Varela later published in the collection *O diário de Lázaro* (1880) as well as Sílvio Romero's *Introdução à história da literatura brasileira* (1881), later used as the basis for his masterpiece *História da literatura brasileira* (1888).

Despite this undeniable cultural progress, only a tiny proportion of the population was able to read these formative works, as illiteracy persisted in Brazil in the second half of the 19th century. In 1872, for example, 84% of the population could not read and write, and only 17% of school-age children were enrolled in educational institutions; among women, a mere 11% were literate (Lajolo, Zilberman, 1996, in: Coelho, Monguilhott, Severo, 2014: 41).

The conservative forces that dominated the Brazilian political scene in the 19th century had a significant impact on shaping the national literature and creating the linguistic norm of Brazilian Portuguese. This period was vital, following Pascale Casanova's explication of how politics, language and literature are closely intertwined in newly established states undergoing the process of formation and consolidation. The connection between nation and literature is established through language, which simultaneously legitimizes both of these constitutive phenomena (Casanova, 2004: 34, 35).

5 The Constitution of the Brazilian Portuguese Standard

Since its beginning, the standardization of Brazilian Portuguese had been subordinated to the Enlightenment principles of elitism and universalism. The first document in which Portuguese acquires the status of the official language of the colony is the *Diretório dos Índios*, a set of conventions published in 1755 by Mendonça Furtado, governor of the Brazilian provinces of Grão-Pará and Maranhão as well as brother of the powerful Portuguese minister Marquis de Pombal. In 1758, a royal law that remained in force for the next forty years was instituted compelling the *Diretório* as the language standard. This was an unequivocal assertion of the privileged status of the language of the metropolis demonstrating a clear political objective concerning the administration of the territory inhabited by Indian tribes. The measure aimed to protect the borders of Portuguese colony threatened by the presence of the Spaniards in the Amazonian plain. According to the Treaty of Madrid (1750), which replaced the Treaty of Tordesillas, the right to the territory should belong to whoever succeeded in occupying it. It was therefore necessary to transform the indigenous peoples into Portuguese vassals in the shortest possible time by imposing the Portuguese language and culture on them (Coelho, Monguilhott, Severo, 2014:

15–18). These efforts had an impact above all on educational policy: “the teaching of the Portuguese language served, among other things, the political and cultural purpose of Lusitanization and the formation of a ‘civilized’ identity according to the ‘schools of civilized nations’” (Coelho, Monguilhott, Severo, 2014: 18).⁶ The *Directorio* further deepened the existing social divisions between native Africans and Indians, as the former could officially be enslaved, while Indians were integrated into the Lusitanian culture and their own culture was eradicated.

Nevertheless, over the centuries both African and indigenous languages significantly influenced the oral form of Portuguese. Between 1550 and 1855, roughly 4 million slaves were imported to Brazil from various parts of Africa. These mostly belonged to two major ethnolinguistic groups: Sudanese and Bantu. “Such an aspect generated a great diversity of African languages both in contact with each other and in contact with Portuguese and with Brazilian indigenous languages” (Coelho, Monguilhott, Severo, 2014: 19).⁷ The policy of the Portuguese Crown also conditioned the influence of indigenous languages on the Brazilian variant of Portuguese. For two long periods at the beginning and at the end of colonization governors encouraged intermarriage and the mixing of races in general, with these two phases interrupted by a long interlude during which the dominance of Catholic norms condemning polygamy common among the natives prevailed, and thus their mixing with other ethnic groups was severely impeded. Due to the abundance of mixed marriages along with mixed communities with an indigenous presence, Portuguese naturally absorbed the linguistic features of indigenous languages.

The Brazilian form of Portuguese expanded through the territory’s interior mainly thanks to Africans and indigenous Brazilian natives, i.e. by speakers for whom Portuguese was not a mother tongue but a foreign language, usually not well-mastered. In this context, several creolization theories have been put forward, for example by the linguists Lucchesi, Baxter and Ribeiro in their book *O Português Afro-Brasileiro* (Lucchesi, Baxter, Ribeiro, Salvador, 2009). For these linguists, the formation of Brazilian Portuguese, especially its vernacular form, has resulted from a partial process of creolization that European Portuguese underwent within an environment of native Africans who did not fully master

6 “Nota-se, com isso, que o ensino de língua portuguesa serviu, ente outros aspectos, a uma finalidade política e cultural de lusitanização e construção de uma identidade ‘civilizada’ aos moldes das ‘escolas das nações civilizadas.’”

7 “Tal aspecto gerou uma grande diversidade de línguas africanas em contrato entre si, em contato com a língua portuguesa e com línguas indígenas no Brasil.”

it. Other theories, however, do not acknowledge to such a degree the process of creolization and, on the contrary, defend the natural, historical process of transforming the Portuguese language in the Brazilian territory as stemming from the contact of many people who learned Portuguese as a foreign language (Coelho, Monguilhott, Severo, 2014: 21–22).

In the formation and standardization of Brazilian Portuguese, it is necessary to consider two wide linguistic varieties, spoken Portuguese and so-called *português educado*. This language dichotomy somehow coexisted and permeated over the centuries within four different speaking communities: Afro-Brazilian rural communities, other rural communities, “popular” urban communities, and urban elites (Coelho, Monguilhott, Severo, 2014: 23).

The stratifications of Brazilian Portuguese are due mainly to the heterogeneity of the country’s geographic, political and economic realities, creating differences between the countryside and the city as well as between the north and the south. Moreover, since only the elite—a small part of the population—had access to schooling and, therefore, to the cultivated form of the language, it developed solely in the urban milieu as practiced by the literate population only. Most prominent among these centers are the cities of Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, which housed the almost all of elite population such as lawyers and other highly educated professionals.

The schism between the popular and the cultured linguistic standards thus emerged with the formation of Brazilian elites. Intellectuals became divided between those who defended the Brazilian norm, in which vernacular elements were increasingly penetrating, and those who supported an unadulterated Lusitanian standard. As E.G. Pagotto reveals, during the 19th century the purists met with such success that the linguistic norm of the second Brazilian Constitution in 1891 (already outlining a republican government) was closer to the Lusitanian standard than had been the first Constitution of 1824, the drafting of which Emperor Pedro I had supervised personally (Pagotto, 1999: 49–68).

The 19th century saw the establishment of two types of discourses and attitudes towards the use of the Portuguese language, both of which survive to some extent to this day: the conservatives who demand the maintenance of a rigid norm far removed from actual usage are uncompromisingly critical of vernacular variants, while professional linguists (and much of the general public) advocate the formation of a norm based on empirical research into linguistic tendencies, even in discursive genres considered erudite.

6 National Language: Neither Portuguese nor Brazilian

In the first documents written after the conquest of independence from Portugal, the Brazilian variety of Portuguese already appears as the National Language, the concept of which likely refers as much to the spirit of decolonization as to the image of cultivated aristocratic use. In October 1827, a law determined the principles of teaching the national language in the spirit of the “linguistic colonization” of the country (Dias, 2019: 75–94).

The first grammar published in independent Brazil was *Compendio da Grammatica da Lingua Nacional* by Antônio Alvarez Pedro Coruja in 1835. His *Compendio* is a normative grammar textbook entirely in line with the imperial decree of 1827. Loyalty to the imperial ideology is in fact confirmed in the first pages of the work by an inscription of a favorable assessment by the royal censor.

Only with Júlio Ribeiro’s 1881 work *Grammatica Portuguesa* does the scientific phase of Brazilian philology begin, signalling a period in which innovative tendencies prevail, sealing an adherence to historical-comparative methods. The conception is thus no longer of normative grammar, but an effort to methodically represent putative linguistic facts. Furthermore, Ribeiro applied the principle of biological evolutionism (based on the American linguist W.D. Whitney), through which he sought to achieve the scientific precision of the natural sciences in the linguistic area. Despite the attempted scientific rigor, Ribeiro’s *Grammatica* attracted strong criticism from traditionalists, since it was the first Brazilian publication that managed to eliminate the influence of *Grammatica Geral*, composed by the esteemed Portuguese linguist Jerónimo Soares Barbosa (1737–1816) (Dias, 2019: 75–94).

It is worth remembering that the Brazilian Academy of Philology was not founded until 1944 in Rio, and *Nomenclatura Gramatical Brasileira* (NGB) was published only in 1958.

7 Nation-Building and a New Literary Canon

The white elites, who held power in independent Brazil as successfully as they had during the colonial period, conditioned the formation of a national identity by defining and institutionalizing the idea of the nation according to their vision of the world. In this sense, the most important institution was *Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* (IHGB), founded in 1838. The key position of the Institute was straightforward: following the establishment of the national state, it was necessary to outline a profile for the Brazilian nation that should guar-

antee its own identity in the context of 19th-century conceptions of the nation. Furthermore, it was to manage the production of a homogenized vision of Brazil among the Brazilian elites. Following an Enlightenment-inspired model, the population at the capstone of the social pyramid would be in charge of edifying the rest of the society below.

The European model indeed inspired the Brazilian Institute, but in a way that had little to do with the European context. While in Europe, historiography had been an established academic field since the late 17th century, in Brazil the field was still profoundly marked by an elitism that found its ideological legitimacy in Enlightenment movements which had peaked more than a century earlier. These types of discourse would play a decisive role in Brazil “in shaping a particular historiography and the points of view and interpretations that would inspire debates on the national question” (Guimarães, 1988: 5).⁸ The Institute began its work during the Regency period, when conservative elites were returning to the political scene in full force with the goal of transferring full political power in the country to the second emperor Pedro II. In this context, it is not surprising that

the construction of the concept of nation is not based on an opposition to the old Portuguese metropolis; quite the contrary, the new Brazilian nation recognizes itself as continuing a specific civilizing task started by Portuguese colonization. Consequently, nation, state and imperial Crown appear as one entity within historiographical discussions regarding the national problem. This is therefore quite a different picture than the European example in which nation and state are conceived as two distinct spheres.

GUIMARÃES, 1988: 6⁹

By basing the definition of the Brazilian nation on the idea of civilizing *Novo Mundo*, those not deemed bearers of this civilization, i.e. Indians and Africans, were excluded, with the concept of the Brazilian nation limited to the white population:

8 “[...] na construção de uma certa historiografia e das visões e interpretações que ela proporá na discussão da questão nacional.”

9 “[...] a construção da ideia do conceito de Nação não se assenta sobre uma oposição à antiga metrópole portuguesa; muito ao contrário, a nova Nação brasileira se reconhece enquanto continuadora de uma certa tarefa civilizadora iniciada pela colonização portuguesa. Nação, Estado e Coroa aparecem enquanto uma unidade no interior da discussão historiográfica relativa ao problema nacional. Quadro bastante diverso, portanto, do exemplo europeu, em que Nação e Estado são pensados em esferas distintas.”

Built within the limited field of the academy of scholars, the Brazilian nation carries with it a strong exclusionary mark, loaded with derogatory images of the “other,” whose power of reproduction and action extrapolates beyond the precise historical moment of its construction.

GUIMARÃES, 1988: 7¹⁰

In this perspective, the state, the monarchy and the nation form a unified whole. This political dogma also provided the Brazilian nation external enemies to battle against in the form of the neighboring Latin American republics. The possibility of establishing a kinship with the Lusitanian metropolis was far more immediate and conceivable than affiliating with neighboring republics with political structures standing in such complete opposition. This interpretation of national identification was also fundamental in shaping the foreign policy of the second Brazilian empire as well as shaping its future international relations in the region.

Nevertheless, the institutional exclusion of Indigenous and African peoples from the Brazilian nation had an unfortunate impact on the country’s internal dynamics. As mentioned, the relationship of the various governments with each of these two ethnic groups had been very different from the very beginning of colonization. While Indigenous peoples were to be converted to the Catholicism and turned into loyal subjects in order to legitimize Portugal’s expansionist policy through a goal based ideologically on the spread of Christianity, Africans were brought to Brazil as mere tools of labor and often treated as animals which from a religious point of view had no soul. This difference in attitude justified the enslavement of the latter and the state protection of the former. This same principle guided the church, many of whose leaders fought for indigenous rights but saw no problem with maintaining and even profiting from the system of Black servitude. As literary Romanticism gained strength in Brazilian literature in the mid-19th century, and as authors sought national roots in the history of their country and its indigenous population, these writers were able to identify foundational myths quite successfully in the figure of the Indian. The population of African descent was once again wholly left out of the national context, as it was considered an alien, non-indigenous element. In addition, at the end of the 19th century, new evolutionist and deterministic theories came to the fore, opening up space for scientific racism and reifying the presumption of the biological inferiority of the Black race. No wonder

10 “Construída no campo limitado da academia de letrados, a nação brasileira traz consigo forte marca excludente, carregada de imagens depreciativas do ‘outro,’ cujo poder de reprodução e ação extrapola o momento histórico preciso de sua construção.”

that in Brazil, with a predominantly mixed-race population including a large degree of Black miscegenation, certain elites felt the nation to be “civilisationally” retarded because of its high number of “degenerate individuals.” For that reason, the process of race-mixing and the concept of “*sangue branco puro*” was also reinterpreted: the idea was that an increased Caucasian reproduction could purify primitive African blood and thus create a homogeneous population. This would mean that, although Brazilian society was composed largely of mixed-race people, the nation had the possibility of becoming increasingly white over time, not only in the sense of skin color but also in terms of European culture. Brazil would thus gradually become a civilized country. Many authors subscribed to this theory, including those who openly opposed slavery (Euclides da Cunha, Sílvio Romero, Paulo Prado, etc.). Related to this was the official promotion of immigration from Europe, a program which began in 1818 and was significantly intensified after the proclamation of the Republic in 1889. This attitude is documented in photographs and illustrations of famous mulattoes, whose images were whitened to make them more acceptable to mainstream society. Perhaps the most notable example of this literal “whitening” can be found in the portraits of the writer Machado de Assis, the grandson of freed slaves (Oliveira, 2008: 7–11).

Despite the undeniable dominance of conservative forces in imperial Brazil, heterogeneity was manifested both in the political and cultural fields. In the cultural sphere, a tension emerged between the “old” and the “new” in the Herderian sense: the former, as defenders of classical, pure forms, looked to Lusitanian norms; the latter, the “modern,” were influenced by romantic ideas and highly valued everything that seemed unique and proper to their country. If we delve deeper into this issue, however, this binary opposition proves too simplistic. Pascale Casanova prefers the idea of a continuum in which opposition, competition and multiple forms of domination prevent the creation of an image of linear hierarchy (Casanova, 2004: 83, 84). The renowned Brazilian literary critic Antonio Candido takes a similar position on his country’s literary history, refusing to acknowledge Romanticism in Brazilian literature as revolutionary in the sense of shaping a new national identity. For Candido, the aesthetic rupture between classical and romantic styles is based, first of all, on a dialectical process which itself provides continuity and unity to Brazilian literature, and thus stands out as its constitutive element. Romanticism developed in the atmosphere of Brazil’s integration into Western literature during a time of its own differentiation in the context of local literature, just as all colonial literatures did. In this dialectical maturation process, new aspects emerged that differentiated the national literature from the literature of the metropolis (Candido, 1969: 16).

Since the beginning of the 17th century, Brazilian literature was attended by the fusion of the European literary tradition with the local environment, which brought formal refinement on the one hand, while on the other greater freedom in the choice of themes. This feature is quite typical of the first phase of cultural emancipation. The satirical baroque poems of Gregório de Matos known as “Boca do Inferno” which depict the colony’s reality in all its rawness may serve as evidence for this synthesis. Another excellent example is the poem *À Ilha de Maré* by his contemporary Manuel Botelho de Oliveira, in which the richness of Brazilian fruits and vegetables are praised (and named). Gregório de Matos and Antônio de Moraes Silva are credited with the first official *brasiliadades* (“Brazilianisms”)—Portuguese words with origins in Brazil—listed in their *Diccionario da língua portuguesa* (1789). Perhaps we may sense here the very first inklings of what would (potentially) become Brazilian literary autonomy.

Decades later, the intellectuals of Romanticism sought recognition for the Brazilian literary tradition through a search for and definition of the cultural specifics of their country upon which they sought to build the foundations of a true national literature. To this end, a catalog of Brazilian authors from previous centuries was drawn up, with these writers placed alongside authors of their own time. This cognoscenti believed that literature was a historical phenomenon fully capable of expressing the spirit of a nation. Therefore, if Brazil intended to establish itself as a nation (with the act of proclaiming Independence demonstrating this will), it also needed to manifest its spirit through literary works (Candido I, 2000: 281). A Herderian national spirit dominated Brazilian Romantic literature and, along with it, Nativism, an uncritical praise of the native land. Along with this came the prevalence of local themes: descriptions of customs, landscape, actualities and feelings charged with significance for Brazil. This adaptation of the principle of national individualization corresponded with the aesthetic principles of Romanticism (Candido II, 2000: 11).

The most successful romantic tendency was Indianism (*indianismo*), which reached its peak between the 1840s and the 1860s. Among the works of this movement, the epic poem *I-Juca-Pirama* (1851) by Gonçalves Dias, the novels of José de Alencar such as *O Guarani* (1857), along with the Indian legends *Iracema* (1865) and *Ubirajara* (1874) stand out. As mentioned, the roots of Indianism lie in the search for an authentic Brazilian identity. The use of the figure of the Indian not only conjured a specific mythical and legendary past, but also facilitated narratives that created a historical space projected to correspond to the European Middle Ages. Historical sources consisted of the first chroniclers’ testimonies as well as detailed accounts of the newly discovered and

colonized land. Emphasis was also placed on the poetic potential of the natives and the aesthetic aspects of their customs. The Indian soon became an allegory of the newly independent state, rivaling legendary European figures. Romantic Indianism had precursors in the 18th century, when the Indian figure was first portrayed in heroic colors, for instance in the epic poems *O Uruguai* by Basílio da Gama (1769) and *Caramuru. Poema Épico do Descobrimento da Bahia* (1781) by Santa Rita Durão, with the latter work dedicated to the discovery of Bahia, the first region colonized in Brazil.

In addition to Indianism, Romanticism also appears in regionalist tendencies which focused on the specificities of various areas of the country and its population, especially the rural Brazilian Northeast. The origins of Regionalism reflect the dynamics of the colonization process, which took place in divergent ways in several independent centers, each with distinct tracks of development. In a view which would mesh well with a number of the literary-critical paradigms of today, certain literary critics of the time saw Brazilian culture not as one homogeneous whole, but as divided into more or less autonomous cultural islands, each with marked differences from each other (e.g. Viana Moog, see Candido II, 2000: 267).

One of the most radical advocates of literary separatism was Franklin Távora (1842–1888). His regionalist work rests on three pillars that, roughly speaking, remain valid for Regionalism even today: sensibility for the land/location and landscape that conditions life in the region and its historical development; regional patriotism (for example, pride in victorious battles with the Dutch in the early 17th century, ancient patriarchal sugarcane plantations, nativist uprisings, etc.); polemical efforts to demonstrate that the north of the country is more Brazilian than the south since it has not suffered as much from foreign influence, thus preserves more of its original character. One significant contribution of romantic Regionalism was in the discovery of the importance of contact with the (constructed) reality of one specific time and space for the benefit of literary fiction. In this sense, Regionalism emerged as a kind of realist corrective to Romanticism (Candido II, 2000: 268–271).

Similar to the case of some Local Color literature of the United States, Literary Realism in Brazil need not necessarily be understood in opposition to Romanticism, and we can conceive of the two styles as complementary. What they have in common is a strategy that aims to attract a broad reading audience. Despite the limited number of literate individuals in Brazil at the time, reading was becoming fashionable, and for wider acceptance it was necessary for authors to attract new social groups that had not previously been targeted:

Romanticism and Realism are both in their basis and form the same bourgeois style, one characterized by the denial of the fiction it produces. By becoming dependent on a consumer audience in their attempt to attract a less knowledgeable reader, both styles pretend not to create fiction but to “tell the truth”—in the case of the romantics, this truth is usually found in letters from an old chest; in the case of the realists, it is revealed through scientific methods of observation and description.

KRAUSE, 2011:12¹¹

This new “truthful” strategy manifested itself in a transformation of the author’s relationship to the audience and to language itself. When José de Alencar—usually called the father of the Brazilian romantic novel and the creator of the “Brazilian language”—defends himself against the linguistic purists who attack his use of (indigenous) Tupinisms and Brazilianisms as well as grammatical constructions fundamentally different from received forms, he argues precisely for the need for sheer intelligibility: “If we national writers want the people to understand us, we must speak to them in their language” (Alencar, 1874, in: Coelho, Monguilhott, Severo, 2014: 31).¹² In the controversies published in newspapers of the time, one of his defenders was de Assis, known as Brazil’s greatest realist author. Machado de Assis emphasized Alencar’s knowledge of the various layers of Brazilian Portuguese as well as his linguistic vernacular. Machado himself articulated his idea of a national literature in his 1873 essay *Notícia da actual literatura brasileira: Instinto de nacionalidade* (Report on current Brazilian literature: the nationality instinct):

There is no doubt that any literature, especially nascent literature, should primarily feed on the topics that its region offers; but let us not establish doctrines so absolute as to impoverish it. What should be required of the

11 “Romantismo e realismo são no fundo e na forma o mesmo estilo burguês, que se caracteriza por tentar denegar a ficção que pratica. Ambos os estilos, buscando seduzir o leitor menos refinado, já que passam a depender de um público consumidor, fingem que não fazem ficção mas sim que ‘dizem a verdade’—no caso dos românticos, essa verdade é normalmente encontrada nas cartas de um baú antigo; no caso dos realistas, essa verdade é normalmente encontrada através da aplicação de métodos científicos de observação e descrição.”

12 “Nós, os escritores nacionais, se quisermos ser entendidos de nosso povo, havemos de falar-lhes em sua língua.”

writer, first of all, is a certain intimate feeling which makes him a man of his time and country even when he is dealing with subjects remote in time and space.

M. DE ASSIS, 1994: 3¹³

With all the various, sometimes contradictory attempts over time to capture the particularities of Machado's Realism, fewer and fewer scholars can agree today that his work should even be labeled as realist at all. In his comprehensive 2000 tome *Formação da literatura brasileira*, Antonio Candido describes the impasse:

If we turn our attention to Machado de Assis, we understand that this venerable master was thoroughly imbued with the works of his predecessors. His evolutionary line shows a highly conscious writer who understood what was right and definite in Macedo's description of customs and morals, Manuel Antônio de Almeida's vigorous and colorful Realism, and José de Alencar's analytical vocation. He presupposes the existence of predecessors, which is one of the reasons for his greatness: a literature in which in each generation the best start over *da capo* and only the mediocre continue the past, he applied his genius to assimilating, deepening, fertilizing the positive legacy of previous experiences. This is the secret of his independence from his European contemporaries, of his aloofness from the literary trends of Portugal and France. This is the reason so few critics knew how to classify it.

CANDIDO II, 2000: 104¹⁴

13 "Não há dúvida que uma literatura, sobretudo uma literatura nascente, deve principalmente alimentar-se dos assuntos que lhe oferece a sua região; mas não estabeleçamos doutrinas tão absolutas que a empobrecam. O que se deve exigir do escritor antes de tudo, é certo sentimento íntimo, que o torne homem do seu tempo e do seu país, ainda quando trate de assuntos remotos no tempo e no espaço."

14 "Se voltarmos porém as vistas para Machado de Assis, veremos que esse mestre admirável se embebeu meticulosamente da obra dos predecessores. A sua linha evolutiva mostra o escritor altamente consciente, que compreendeu o que havia de certo, de definitivo, na orientação de Macedo para a descrição de costumes, no realismo sadio e colorido de Manuel Antônio de Almeida, na vocação analítica de José de Alencar. Ele pressupõe a existência dos predecessores, e esta é uma das razões da sua grandeza: uma literatura em que, a cada geração, os melhores recomeçam *da capo* e só os mediócrs continuam o passado, ele aplicou o seu gênio em assimilar, aprofundar, fecundar o legado positivo das experiências anteriores. Este é o segredo da sua independência em relação aos contemporâneos europeus, do seu alheamento às modas literárias de Portugal e França. Esta, a razão de não terem muitos críticos sabido onde classificá-lo."

Let us add that both in his date of birth (1831) and the years of publication of his work (1852–1853), the satirist Manuel de Almeida, mentioned in the cited passage above as a realist author and an inspiration to Machado, should also be placed in the first generation of romantic authors. Thus we face the question of what an exact definition of literary Realism could be in the Brazilian context.

Naturalism, in turn, also found fertile soil in Brazil. In 1881, Aluísio Azevedo inaugurated the era of Brazilian Naturalism with his novel *O Mulato*, scandalizing society by bluntly exposing its racial prejudices. In doing so, Azevedo enters into a debate about the racism ingrained in Brazilian thought, which in a broader context is also related to the anti-slavery campaign that had divided Brazilian society since the mid-19th century. Still, Azevedo was neither the first nor the last to examine for the reading public the amorality and untenability of “scientific” assumptions used to justify racial prejudice and the prolonged agony of the slave system. After all, this theme had already proved strongly appealing to purveyors of Romanticism. In poetry, the most resounding voice against slavery was Castro Alves (*O Navio Negreiro, Os Escravos*), in prose Bernardo Guimarães with his novel about the slave Isaura (*A Escrava Isaura*, 1875). Significantly, both the Naturalist Aluísio Azevedo and the romantic Bernardo Guimarães felt they had to resort to the same strategy to sensitize Brazilian society with regard to the racial and abolitionist issues—adapting their characters in certain ways to the norms of the educated white population. The slave girl Isaura is not only beautiful, but she is fair-skinned, with her Caucasian features inherited from her Portuguese father, and educated in the mold of girls from good families of the time, including playing the piano, with her master’s wife compensating for the fact that she has no daughter of her own. The mulatto Raimundo in Aluísio Azevedo’s novel is indeed dark-skinned, yet we meet him at the moment he is returning to his homeland Brazil after years of study in Portugal, during which he earned a doctorate in law from the University of Coimbra.

In 1897, inspired by the French Academy, the Brazilian Academy of Letters was founded, granting Brazil its own institution governing literary and linguistic norms. Although Machado de Assis, an undeniably innovative author, became its first president, the Academy was a predominantly conservative and elitist body. It had 40 active members, many of whom defended a linguistic orthodoxy based on the Lusitanian norm (Rui Barbosa, Joaquim Nabuco, Olavo Bilac). The Academy privileged elitist and bourgeois literature over popular, mass-oriented works. For the next twenty years, this institution took on the role of the highest authority in imposing and enforcing the aesthetic and linguistic standards for literary texts produced in the country. Only with the first

modernist generation in the 1920s was Brazilian literature able to fully break free from its influence.

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The Search for the Singularity of Brazilian Literature in the 20th Century

Zuzana Burianová

The truth of ethnocentric colonizing universality is doubtlessly to be found in the metropolis, whereas, as Anthropology shows us, the paradoxical truth of differential universality is located in peripheral cultures

SANTIAGO, 2001C: 63.¹



1 Introduction

The development of literary deperipheralization in the 20th century in Brazil can be closely linked to the historical dependence on aesthetic and ideological models that originated in the culturally advanced countries of Europe and, later, North America. Evidence for this dependence can be found in the nature of Portuguese colonization, which despite intense intermarriage with Indian populations, African slaves and other ethnic groups was based not only on economic exploitation but also on cultural oppression. In addition, after the proclamation of independence in 1822 the process of forging a new nation was accompanied by a systematic implantation of broader European values, schools of thought and institutions. As a result, Brazil was seen as a kind of “a prolongation of the west” (Gomes, 1997: 263),² a vision granting the Brazilian elite the feeling of living on the periphery of Western civilization, remaining “exiles in [their] own land” (Holanda, 2012: 1).³ This sense of cultural inferior-

1 “A verdade da universalidade colonizadora e etnocêntrica está na metrópole, não há dúvida; a verdade da universalidade diferencial, como estamos vendo com a ajuda da Antropologia, está nas culturas periféricas” (Santiago, 1982: 24).

2 “prolongamento do Ocidente” (Gomes, 1996: 89).

3 “desterrados em nossa terra” (Holanda, 1995: 31).

ity at the end of the 19th century was well captured in the 1900 autobiography of the writer and politician Joaquim Nabuco, a leading supporter of the movement to abolish slavery in Brazil:

I am not implying that there are two humanities, a higher and a lower, and that we belong to the latter. Perhaps some day humankind will renew itself through its American branches, but in the present century the *human spirit*—of which there is only one and which is terribly centralist—is located on the other side of the Atlantic [...]

NABUCO, 2012: 29⁴

The effort to break free of dependence on foreign models was generally marked by fluctuations between the local and the universal, the national and the cosmopolitan, throughout the 20th century. The emphasis on local issues led to periodic returns of regionalist prose. The paths of Regionalism were different than those in the previous century, however, evolving and moving towards a universalist dimension in the most influential authors of the second half of the 1900s. Similarly, during the periods in which Brazilian authors were heavily inspired by foreign works, often in search of new aesthetic starting points (Modernism in the 1920s, poetry and prose after 1945, Postmodernism in the 1980s), the valorization of local culture and its connection with models from elsewhere can also be traced.

Thus one of the characteristics and de facto strengths of 20th century Brazilian literature is precisely its capacity for hybridity through the blending of seemingly disparate thematic, expressive and genre elements. As the Brazilian essayist Silviano Santiago has said, “the major contribution of Latin America to Western culture is to be found in its systematic destruction of the concepts of *unity* and *purity*” (Santiago, 2001b: 30).⁵ Another characteristic feature of Brazilian literary production is what Santiago has called its “amphibious” (“anfíbio”) character (Santiago, 2005, 2004), in the sense of combining an aesthetic function with social and political engagement. Although the heteronomous conception of production recedes into the background in certain periods (1920s Modernism, neo-parnassianist poetry after 1945, etc.), the social-critical charge

4 “Não quero dizer que haja duas humanidades, a alta e a baixa, e que nós sejamos desta última; talvez a humanidade se renove um dia pelos seus galhos americanos; mas, no século em que vivemos, o *espírito humano*, que é um só e terrivelmente centralista, está do outro lado do Atlântico [...]” (Nabuco, 1998: 59).

5 “A maior contribuição da América Latina para a cultura ocidental vem da destruição sistemática dos conceitos de *unidade* e de *pureza*” (Santiago, 2000b: 16).

is a constant in most works of the Brazilian literary canon of the 20th century. The drive to achieve literary autonomy in Brazil is also related to linguistic emancipation, the aim of which especially in the first decades was to liberate the literary language from European Portuguese and to fully exploit the potential of the diastatic and diatopic varieties of Brazilian Portuguese. The first modernist generation as well as the authors of the post-war generation, notably in prose João Guimarães Rosa, were instrumental in this.

Out of the variety of approaches that have been put forth in literary-theoretical debates on Brazilian literary identity, basically two main, somewhat contradictory tendencies can be distinguished. The first interprets literary development as conditioned by the economic and socio-political context, emphasizing the persistent dependence of Brazilian culture on foreign models and linking its literary autonomy to economic decolonization. The second tendency does not consider the above conditionality as highly relevant, emphasizing the traditional capacity of Brazilian culture to assimilate and enrich foreign models in an original way. These two lines of thought have intersected with each other over the 20th century and confrontations based on their opposition continue even today.

Regarding the territorial delimitation of literary events, it should be emphasized that Brazil is a country of vast territory with an unevenly distributed population and with various levels of economic and cultural development within distinct regions. We can trace polarities such as that of between the north and the south, which until the 18th century were also governed by different political administrations, as well as between the rural interior and the urbanized coast. These differences have increasingly deepened throughout history, for example due to changes in terms of population distribution.⁶ As a result of the discovery of gold at the end of the 17th century and continuing afterwards, cultural activity in the interior was concentrated in Minas Gerais, particularly in the cities of Vila Rica (today's Ouro Preto) and later Belo Horizonte, founded during the *Belle Époque* (1870s–1914), when the rubber rush in the Amazon also led to the great flowering of the city of Manaus, called “Paris of the Tropics”. The general cultural hegemony of the eastern coast was then disrupted in the 1960s with the construction of the new capital Brasília in the Central-West highlands, leading to a series of events which launched the “march west” to populate the interior.

In the coastal belt, the historic cultural centers of Salvador, Recife and especially the national capital Rio de Janeiro faced competition from new centers such as Belém, which experienced a cultural boom during the rubber rush,

6 Currently around 60% of the country's population lives in coastal areas.

and especially the flourishing, cosmopolitan São Paulo, which as a result of domestic and foreign immigration became not only an industrial metropolis but also an important cultural center in the country after the 1920s. The influx of immigrants also led to the cultural development of the southern states and their capitals, particularly Porto Alegre. The industrial boom of the 1950s and 1960s also boosted cultural activity in other large cities, making Brazil a polycentric space over the course of the 20th century. Nevertheless, two imaginary dividing lines persisted, one running between the interior and the coast, the other between the north (i.e. the macroregions of the North, Northeast and Central-West) and the south (the Southeast, South and Federal District). The South-Central region represents the economic and cultural locus of Brazil, with the cities of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília often described as the most important hubs of activity.

If cultural development can be understood as a fluctuation between change and continuity, in postcolonial countries this can be characterized as an oscillation between forces “leading to national autonomy and emancipation” and those “reproducing and renewing dependence” (Reis, 2006: 14).⁷ Through this perspective, several phases of 20th-century Brazilian literary production can be delineated. The first two decades were marked by reverberations within the continuity of tradition as well as the germination of the changes brought about by Modernism in the 1920s. In addition to a radical break with previous aesthetic norms, the modernist movement brought new interpretations of national writing in relation to European literatures. The concept of artistic autonomy came to be redefined through the influential notion of cultural anthropophagy which would be taken up by writers in the following periods. Although the generation of the 1930s represented a departure from a cosmopolitan understanding of creativity and a return to local issues and heteronomous art, the works on regional themes from this period met with an international response that testifies to the distinctive character of Brazilian literary production. This artistic singularity came to be affirmed by the post-war generation, which, freed from the need for a national and / or ideological commitment to art, was freely inspired by domestic traditions as well as foreign works. These processes produced exceptional works that have secured a permanent place in the canon of world literature.

A significant turning point in literary development occurred with the establishment of the military dictatorship (1964–1985), which brought on the one

7 “que produzem a autonomia e a emancipação nacional, [...] que reproduzem e renovam a dependência”.

hand a decline in domestic production and, on the other led to international exchanges of cultural and spiritual capital through Brazilian exiles in Europe, North America and Latin American countries. The intellectual debate of this period took the form of the critique of Brazil's neocolonial dependence on the culturally advanced countries of Western Europe and the United States. At the same time, some artists revived the modernist concept of anthropophagy, i.e. cultural cannibalism, emphasizing the qualities and contributions of Brazilian literary production. The cultural revival after the fall of the dictatorship, continuing today under the Constitution of 1988, has been accompanied by the emergence of new trends, including in particular the committed production of social, ethnic and other minorities. Their works often highlight the persistent peripheralization of these groups in Brazilian society as well as the not-so-democratic character of the domestic literary canon in general. The process of globalization of literary production has also brought greater penetration of Brazilian authors into international book markets in recent decades. Nevertheless, it should be noted that for several reasons, including the lack of national cultural policies, Brazilian literature is still often seen as of minor importance in the international context.

2 Critique of Cultural Transplantation

As Antonio Candido has shown, the idea of "the new country" (Candido, 1995: 119)⁸ with an unfulfilled potential dominated reflections on Brazil until about the 1930s. This view was based in part on a conception of the Americas as a privileged space, a perspective which has led to various visions of utopia since the discovery of the Americas by Europeans. While in colonial writing this ideal was manifested through the celebration of the natural wealth of the land and the putative "bon sauvage" innocence of the indigenous inhabitants, in works of Romanticism this euphoria was translated into the construction of a national identity based on the idea of the singularity of a particular natural environment and the human types that inhabit it. The result in Brazil was a literature that "compensated for material backwardness and the weakness of institutions by an overvaluation of regional features, making exoticism a reason for social optimism" (Candido, 1995: 120).⁹

8 "país novo" (Candido, 1989a: 140).

9 "que compensava o atraso material e a debilidade das instituições por meio da supervalorização dos aspectos regionais, fazendo do exotismo razão de otimismo social" (Candido, 1989a: 140).

In the last decades of the 19th century, this optimistic view underwent a transformation, a change related mainly to the significant influence of Positivism and Social Darwinism, the spread of which in Brazil came through the Recife School (*Escola de Recife*), an intellectual and cultural movement centered around the philosopher Tobias Barreto. In their discussions of the possibilities of civilization in the tropics, intellectuals such as Sílvio Romero, Nina Rodrigues and Oliveira Viana considered elements of race and climate as the main obstacles. Critics like these saw a mixed-race society as inherently backward and incapable of progress, envisioning the development of the country as possible only through a gradual process of the “branqueamento” (whitening) of the Brazilian population mediated through European immigration.

The consciousness of the violent transplantation of European models into Brazilian reality came to dominate reflections on the national culture. The alienation of native artists who had turned away from local reality and sought inspiration in the culture of the old continent, especially France, was now criticized. The generally accepted prejudices regarding the tropical environment and the racial origins of the Brazilian nation were also reflected in literature, leading to the widespread belief that Brazilian writers were incapable of innovative thinking and independent production. In his *História da literatura brasileira* (*History of Brazilian Literature*, 2 vols., 1888, rev. ed. 1902), leading literary critic Sílvio Romero criticizes contemporary authors for their lack of originality, imitation of European models and little interest in local themes. He also sees the reasons for this in the poor and generally Eurocentric education of the Brazilian elite which was based on mere erudition along with the adoption of archaic aesthetic forms. A number of writers joined the Republican government’s educational campaign to reduce illiteracy in a movement which led to the production of didactic and nationalist writings with the aim of awakening a sense of patriotism in the population, such as Afonso Celso’s essay *Por que me ufano do meu país* (*Why Am I Proud of My Country*, 1900).¹⁰

At the beginning of the 20th century, signs of new interpretations of Brazil began to emerge, reflecting the social changes the country was undergoing which would further exacerbate the uneven development among the regions. The sugar-producing northeastern region, the former economic and cultural center of the colony with its centers in Salvador and Recife, continued to decline, while the north of Brazil was experiencing a temporary boom thanks

10 From this title would later derive the term *ufanismo* (pride), which would become synonymous with the exuberant patriotism and uncritical celebration of all Brazilian things, often resorted to by 20th-century authoritarian regimes.

to rubber mining. This led to the modernization of the cities of Manaus and Belém, which would become important cosmopolitan centers of the country at the turn of the century. The southeastern and southern states were also undergoing a massive boom during the *Belle Époque*. Under the positivist slogan of “Order and Progress,” the Republican government, seeking to develop the country along European lines, encouraged mass immigration, mainly from Europe, in order to provide cheap labor for the southeastern coffee plantations and to contribute to the “racial refinement” of the mixed-race population. Many of the new arrivals settled in the cities, leading to the growth and modernization of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo as well as the development of other centers such as Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre.

As a result of the social transformations and political instability that accompanied the Old Republic period, literary production of the early part of the century turned to the present state of Brazil and its problems such as the peripheralization of the northeast, social and religious unrest, immigration, clientelism, the corruption and isolation of the ruling elites, and the transformation of urban society. Looking for a way to capture these new realities, authors basically took two paths:

On the one hand, conscious of the inevitability of incorporation into the modern world, literature sets out to map the hitherto geographically and socially hidden forms of contemporary Brazil, seeking an expression that can capture them. On the other, as the “smile of society,” it confines itself to the fashionable world of the Rio de Janeiro *Belle Époque*, which necessarily includes a certain degree of culture, however superficial.

GRAUOVÁ, 2018: 303

With its social criticism and attempts to capture specific environments and their inhabitants in an almost scientific manner, regionalist prose in particular was undergoing a transformation which would distinguish it from the Regionalism of previous decades. Paradigmatic protagonists emerged such as the *sertanejo*, the inhabitant of the northeastern interior plagued by drought, lawlessness, and religious fanaticism; the *caboclo*, the mixed-race Amerindian of the wild Amazon; the *gaúcho*, the wrangler of the southern pampas; and the *caipira*, the progress-defying southeastern rustic. The regionalist prose of the early part of the century depicts and interprets the Brazilian within the historical, cultural, and geographical space that shapes and conditions the individual.

Regionalism, which Brazilian critic Lúcia Chiappini understands not as an aesthetically and ideologically backward current, but as “the necessary antithesis of the urbanization and modernization of the countryside and the city

under capitalism” (Chiappini, 1995: 156),¹¹ can be seen in the history of Brazilian literature as a response to the uneven development of particular regions. The duality of the “north” and the “south” and the resulting need for specific literary production from each region had already been pointed out by the Romantic novelist Franklin Távora, who highlighted the authenticity of northern literature as opposed to southern literature, which continued to copy European models. During Romanticism, Sertanismo emerged as a space for the search for national identity by celebrating the pure character of the hinterland as opposed to the Europeanised coast. However, at the beginning of the century this celebration gave way to pessimistic depictions of the forgotten parts of the country, as poverty and backwardness came to be perceived as major obstacles to progress.

Brazilian literature of this period continued to employ analytical frameworks as well as aesthetic devices drawn from European models. Nevertheless, authors such as Euclides da Cunha, Lima Barreto, Graça Aranha and Monteiro Lobato developed a new, critical approach to the existing literary academicism and pointed to the problems of the modernization process. The originality of the perspective of these writers lies not only in their interest in domestic issues, but also in the way they captured these matters in their works. In the words of the literary historian Luciana Stegagno Picchio, “in the first two decades of the 20th century, the Brazilian author became increasingly aware of what Machado de Assis called the instinct of nationality, and what concerns how this or that topic is treated rather than the subject matter itself” (Stegagno Picchio, 2004: 381).¹² The local started to be thought in relation to the universal. As Lima Barreto masterfully showed in his novel *Triste fim do Policarpo Quaresma* (1915, Eng. trans. *The Sad End of Policarpo Quaresma*, 2014), the country’s problem resided not only in the alienation of Brazilian elites, who despised popular culture and uncritically admired everything European, but also in strained patriotism and nationalism.

The gradual transformation of the intellectual climate is also evident in theoretical reflections on the period, as evidenced for example by the works of the historian Capistrano de Abreu, the founder of the new Brazilian historiography (see especially *Capítulos da história colonial | Chapters of Colonial History*,

11 “contraponto necessário da urbanização e da modernização do campo e da cidade sob o capitalismo”.

12 “No primeiro vintênio do século xx, cada vez mais se acentua no escritor brasileiro a conscientização daquilo que Machado de Assis chamara de instinto de nacionalidade: que, mais do que ao tema, está ligado aos modos com os quais esse tema, qualquer que ele seja, é tratado.”

1907). Abreu turned away from the glorification of the Luso-Brazilian past and highlighted the potential of the multiracial population. Also an occasional literary critic and essayist, he appealed to the necessity for Brazilian writers to break free from the stranglehold of foreign models. Abreu stressed in particular the impossibility of cultural independence without economic emancipation and the development of education.¹³

3 Anthropophagy as a Metaphor for Cultural Subversion

The modernist movement represents a fundamental attempt to redefine Brazilian culture and its relation to European models and domestic traditions. Unlike Hispanic Modernism, which took place during the late 19th and early 20th-centuries, Modernism in Brazil emerged in the 1920s and is usually divided into two phases, 1922–1930 and 1930–1945.

It is no coincidence that this movement was born in the cosmopolitan environment of São Paulo, which was undergoing unprecedented economic and demographic development at the beginning of the century. By the end of the 1920s, the city already had over a million inhabitants, only slightly less than Rio de Janeiro. Rio, which had been the political, economic and cultural center of the country since its elevation to capital in 1763, became for a time the center of the Portuguese colonial empire after the arrival of the royal family of Portugal. During the 19th century, Rio acquired an almost wholly European character, with the majority of the writers in Brazil living and working here. In 1896 the Brazilian Academy of Letters (*Academia Brasileira de Letras*) was founded in Rio following the model of the French Academy of Fine Arts.¹⁴ Still, São Paulo, which had transformed itself from a regional center into an industrial metropolis during the Old Republic, came to rival Rio in the cultural sphere. Thanks to the modernist movement, São Paulo also became an important cultural center in its own right during the 1920s.

The beginnings of Modernism were marked by intense international exchanges, as São Paulo's intellectual and artistic elite, mostly from traditional bourgeois families, maintained close contacts with the cultural movement in

13 Brazilian historian José Carlos Reis considers Abreu the initiator of the “rediscovery of Brazil” (“redescoberta do Brasil”) (Reis, 2006: 95–97).

14 Candido targets the Academy as an example of servile imitation of foreign models: not only is it housed in a building that is a replica of Versailles' Petit Trianon palace, but it also has 40 lifetime elected members who call themselves “immortals” and dress in embroidered uniforms (Candido, 1989a: 157).

Europe, and many European artists also settled in Brazil. Just as less than a century earlier students from Brazil had published in Paris the journal *Niterói* (1836), a precursor to Romanticism, Brazilian artists in Europe were now introduced to avant-garde art, which upon their return they promoted in their homeland.¹⁵ In February 1922 (symbolically, the year Brazil celebrated its centenary of independence), these artists officially subscribed to the new movement with Modern Art Week, a multi-day series of provocative artistic performances in which they introduced new artistic breakthroughs to conservative audiences at the São Paulo Municipal Theatre. In its first phase, Modernism was concentrated primarily in the southeast, although São Paulo artists were soon joined by those from Rio, and the experimental styles eventually spread to other cities.

The intellectual and creative diversity of the modernist movement reflects contradictory ideological tendencies of the time present in Brazilian society. Under the banner of Modernism, several programs, manifestos, magazines, groups and artistic personalities emerged, ranging from the most radical (Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade) to the conservative (Cassiano Ricardo, Menotti del Picchia). The common goal of all was to “liberate” themselves, first from the remnants of Portuguese cultural colonialism, then from all European influences. This goal, however, resulted in entirely contradictory manifestations, from nativist reinterpretations of foreign models (Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade), to programs of strained nationalism (Menotti del Picchia, Cassiano Ricardo), and a Catholic integralism influenced by Fascism (Plínio Salgado).

Influenced mainly by Italian and Russian Futurism and German Expressionism, in its initial phase Modernism took on a distinctly international dimension, with for example many international artists contributing to the São Paulo magazine *Klaxon* (1922–1923; Guillermo de la Torre, António Ferro, Charles Baudouin, Claudius Caligaris). As Mário de Andrade noted perhaps overly self-critically twenty years later, the influence of European models was pivotal at the time: “We not only imported techniques and styles, but we did it only after they had become well established in Europe, and most often academicised.

15 Influenced by Futurism and Cubism, in 1912 Oswald de Andrade returned from Europe; a year later the Russian Expressionist painter Lasar Segall settled in São Paulo; in 1914 upon returning from Germany Anita Malfatti presented her artworks. The unofficial beginning of Modernism in Brazil is considered to be 1917, the year Malfatti held an exhibition of her work which was influenced on Futurism, Expressionism and Cubism as well as when the emerging modernist poets published their first works (Mário de Andrade, Manuel Bandeira, Menotti del Picchia, Guilherme de Almeida).

[...] that academic mentality was not moving towards any liberation or towards its own forms of expression” (Andrade, 2008: 110).¹⁶ Brazilian artists, however, never fully identified with Futurist models, referring to themselves from the outset simply as “modernists.”

Indeed, very early on, paradoxically following the example of the European Avant-garde itself, São Paulo artists came to reject the cultural heritage of Europe and began to seek inspiration in ancestral, mythical spaces as well as the anthropophagic thinking of the Indigenous peoples (M. de Andrade—*Macunaíma*, R. Bopp—*Cobra Norato*, C. Ricardo—*Martim Cererê*). This indigenism was often playfully combined with the image of a dynamic and industrial present. The dilemma in the form of “the painful choice of all colonial peoples—either a technological future or an Indigenous past” (Bosi, 2003: 221)¹⁷ was resolved by the modernists by evading the choice altogether by combining technology with mythology.

Proclaiming a return to Indigenous culture and thought, the *Manifesto da poesia pau-brasil* (*Manifesto of Brazilwood Poetry*, 1924) called for the creation of a “poetry of export, no more of import” (O. de Andrade, in: Stegagno Picchio, 2004: 479).¹⁸ These authors would write in natural, colloquial language without archaisms, a style with which Brazil would enrich Europe just as it had supplied European markets with precious timber in the sixteenth century. Although the inspiration of “primitivism” again came from Europe (see below Parisian Black Art and Négritude movement, Part 2, Chapter 12), its conception in Brazil was different, as Oswald de Andrade would later point out: “Primitivism, which appeared as exoticism in France, represented a real primitivism for us in Brazil” (O. de Andrade, in: Stegagno Picchio, 2004: 479).¹⁹

This tendency then culminates in the *Manifesto antropófago* (*Anthropophagus Manifesto*, 1928), the message of which completely rejects the value hierarchy of the original-copy relationship. Instead, it proclaims the irreverent absorption of foreign cultural models (from which, after all, it is impossible to escape in a postcolonial society), the assimilation of foreign virtues, as well as the consequent playful, often parodic, transformation of these models into

16 “Não só importávamos técnicas e estéticas, como só as importávamos depois de certa estabilização na Europa, e a maioria das vezes já acadêmicas. [...] esse espírito acadêmico não tendia para nenhuma libertação e para uma expressão própria.” M. de Andrade, lecture “O movimento modernista,” 30. 4. 1942 (Andrade, 1974: 249).

17 “a alternativa sofrida por todos os povos coloniais—ou o futuro tecnológico ou o passado aborígene”.

18 “uma poesia de exportação e não mais de importação”.

19 “O primitivismo, que na França aparecia como exotismo, era para nós no Brasil autêntico primitivismo.”

artifacts that are by their hybrid nature purely Brazilian. If the first generation of Romantics sought national identity in local spaces through the inversion of value signs in the center-periphery dichotomy, the modernists abolished this dichotomy and found “Brazilianness” (*brasildade*) in the synthesis of various local elements with universal concepts, as for example expressed in the pun “Tupi or not tupi, that is the question.”²⁰

However different the critics’ views on the contribution of the first generation of Modernism are, the consensus is that it was a movement that “performed a necessary surgical operation” in Brazilian culture (Di Cavalcanti, in: Sodré, 1995: 526).²¹ The rupture affected not only literature, but also other fields, especially the visual arts and music as well as general views on art as reflected in criticism and essays. Literary Modernism was not only an effort to define new themes and forms that could more truthfully grasp Brazilian reality, but also an attempt to re/discover Brazil in relation to the world.

All this would not have been possible without a revolution in expression. For a long time the process of literary deperipheralization in relation to the Portuguese metropolis in Brazil was related to the question of language, that is, the assertion of Brazilian Portuguese as a language of literature. Like other European languages on the American continent, during its historical development Brazilian Portuguese has taken on a different form than European Portuguese. The literature of the colonial period was written by authors and scholars who had studied at European universities, especially in Coimbra, thus it was composed with European standards. In contrast, the authors of Brazilian Romanticism were both seeking to break with the Lusitanian tradition as well as attempting emancipation in the linguistic field. In the case of José Alencar’s Indianist novels,²² we witness an attempt to create “a Brazilian language” (Stegagno Picchio, 2004: 205),²³ one that uses a different lexicon and seeks to express the mindset of the indigenous people. Nevertheless, the efforts of the Romantics did not create a full break, and the subsequent development of literary language in Brazil followed a more conservative path. It was not until Modernism that the “flight from Parnassus” was completed, i.e. the transformation of a post-naturalist and post-symbolist language that had become stuck

20 The Tupi were one of the numerous indigenous tribes of pre-colonial Brazil. Through this reinscribing of the Hamlet dilemma, this most famous aphorism of the *Manifesto antropófago* expresses the central question of the movement, that is the relationship of Brazilian culture—which draws on indigenous elements—to wider Western culture. The manifesto calls for the interconnection of the two.

21 “Foi o movimento da operação cirúrgica necessária.”

22 *O Guarani* (1857), *Iracema* (1865) a *Ubirajara* (1874).

23 “uma língua brasileira”.

in formalist academicism and had distanced itself from common speech. As expressed by Mário de Andrade, who studied for years the characteristics of Brazilian Portuguese,²⁴ Modernism represented, after Romanticism, “the second attempt to nationalize the language” (Andrade, 2008: 111).²⁵

4 Return to Local Issues and Heteronomous Conceptions of Production

While the center of the modernist movement of the 1920s was in southeastern Brazil, the following decade saw the constitution of an important literary group in the northeastern region, the principal cities of which, Salvador and Recife, had been undergoing a cultural revival since the establishment of university faculties there after independence. Like the Romantic authors of the northeast (Sousândrade, Franklin Távora, Castro Alves), the representatives of Recife Positivism (Tobias Barreto, Sílvio Romero, Capistrano de Abreu) and the members of the literary group called *Padaria Espiritual* (Spiritual Bakery), which was active at the turn of the century in Fortaleza, this group significantly undermined the cultural hegemony of the southeastern capitals. Smaller literary hotbeds were also created in other parts of the country such as the city of Porto Alegre, where the notable southern novelist Érico Veríssimo was active.

In 1926 the Pernambuco sociologist Gilberto Freyre spoke in Recife at the First Regionalist Congress of the Northeast, denouncing the “wave of failed cosmopolitanism and false modernism” (Freyre, 1996: 11)²⁶ coming from São Paulo and Rio in his *Manifesto regionalista* (1952 ed.). Freyre called on northeastern artists to turn their attention to their own region in order to rehabilitate each location’s culture, values and traditions. This manifesto influenced a generation of writers and literary scholars, as did Freyre’s seminal sociological work, *Casa-grande & senzala* (1933, def. ed. 1980, Eng. trans. *The Masters and the Slaves*, 1946), the first part of a trilogy devoted to the development of Brazilian society (*Sobrados e mocambos*, 1936, Eng. trans. *The Mansions and the Shanties*, 1963; *Ordem e progresso*, 1959, Eng. trans. *Order and Progress*, 1970).

Casa-grande & senzala is probably the best-known Brazilian-written study offering a social scientific interpretation of the country. Inspired by Max Weber,

24 The collected manuscripts of M. de Andrade have been published by Pinto, Edith Pimentel (ed.). *A gramatiquinha de Mário de Andrade: texto e contexto*. São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1990.

25 “a segunda tentativa de nacionalização de linguagem” (Andrade, 1974: 250).

26 “uma onda de mau cosmopolitismo e de falso modernismo”.

Franz Boas as well as the Anglo-Saxon-influenced sociological thought he encountered during his studies in the United States, Freyre departs from the traditional positivist line of interpreting history. The development of Brazilian society is elucidated on the basis of the process of miscegenation among three main ethnic groups: the Portuguese, who had previously been open to miscegenation through contact with Arab and African peoples and adapted quickly in a tropical environment, the Indigenous population, and slaves brought from Africa. Like the historian Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen in the previous century as well as Oliveira Viana in the early 20th century, Freyre idealizes the colonial past, and although he does not refer to, as does Viana, superior and inferior races, Freyre glorifies the Luso-Brazilian patriarchal elites in whom he sees the bearers of civilization and progress. At a time when the oligarchic system was finally collapsing with the advent of Vargas's New Republic in 1930, Freyre, himself a descendant of a traditional latifundist family, turned nostalgically to the colonial slave society of the northeast. Freyre's *Casa-grande & senzala* attempts to smooth over the tensions and violence that had marked relations between masters and slaves by portraying a harmonious view of the miscegenation that laid the foundations of the Brazilian nation.

Later theorists criticized Freyre as a defender of the myth of Brazilian "racial democracy," although he never used this term himself. He is also associated with the concept of *lusotropicalismo*, in which Portuguese colonialism is depicted as more humane and democratic compared to that of other nations, and which in a simplified form became, among other concepts, the ideological basis for the defense of the Portuguese colonial empire under Salazar. Despite his conservative outlook, however, Freyre was one of the first to reject racial theses that regarded miscegenation negatively, reflecting ideas which had persisted in Brazilian society despite the modernist valorization of indigenous cultures.²⁷ Freyre had a vision of Brazil as a unique tropical civilization that could set an example for other nations in terms of racial coexistence.

Freyre's ideas inspired a generation of authors in the 1930s and 1940s, especially novelists who were turning their attention to the problems of the northeast such as José Lins do Rego, Raquel de Queirós, Graciliano Ramos and Jorge Amado. Influenced by social changes, these writers followed the path of regionalist and socially engaged writing that Candido has termed "problematic

27 One example of this rejection of miscegenation is Paulo Prado's study *Retrato do Brasil* (*Portrait of Brazil*, 1928), subtitled *Ensaio sobre a tristeza brasileira* (*An Essay on Brazilian Sadness*). In it, the author offers a pessimistic view of Brazilian society, made up of "three sad races," and sees mixing of the races as one of the country's main problems.

regionalism" (Candido, 1995: 138).²⁸ Their works demythologize the rural man and offer a new view of Brazil which emphasizes its underdevelopment and the postcolonial heritage as opposed to the concept of "the new country" with great potential.

Although these authors are today commonly referred to as the second modernist generation, it should be emphasized that they took a sharp stand against the generation of the 1920s, as Graciliano Ramos affirmed in an interview during which he described the work of the southeastern authors of the previous period as a "dishonest camouflage" ("tapação desonesta"; Senna, 1996). The northeastern authors of the 1930s and 1940s not only brought about the decentralization of Brazilian literary production, but also fostered a rethinking of the concept of a national literature. After the iconoclastic, experimental and cosmopolitan work of the 1920s generation, these authors returned to local concerns and de facto realist narrative techniques. They did so, however, in a style which benefitted greatly from and was highly influenced by the previous linguistic revolution. Commenting on this generation, Gilberto Freyre observed: "The northeast thus absorbed the modern movement in its most serious aspects. We wanted to be from Brazil in a way that we would increasingly belong to Paraíba, Recife, Alagoas and Ceará." (Freyre, in Stegagno Picchio, 2004: 524)²⁹ While the authors of the 1920s Modernism rejected Regionalism and sought national identity in the synthesis of diverse cultural elements, Freyre and the northeastern authors were convinced that the only way to be national was to remain regional. Although in the relationship between the local and the universal both groups ultimately came to the same paradoxical conclusion, namely that the universal could only be achieved through the national and the local,³⁰ their practices diverged: while the first modernists were openly inspired by the European avant-garde, the second generation criticized the importation of foreign customs and values, preferring to focus on preserving local traditions.

Judging by the international reception, we can say that the way chosen by the northeastern writers of the 1930s and 1940s has not been proven wrong in terms of spreading their ideas both across the country and abroad. Their work not

28 "o regionalismo problemático" (Candido, 1989a: 159).

29 "Por este modo o Nordeste absorvia o movimento moderno, no que este tinha de mais sério. Queríamos ser do Brasil, sendo cada vez mais da Paraíba, de Recife, de Alagoas, do Ceará."

30 See Mário de Andrade: "And so we will be universal because we will be national." ("E então seremos universais, porque nacionais.") (Andrade, 1988: 31). Similarly, Gilberto Freyre calls for the "association of the regional with the universal" ("associar [...] o regional ao universal" (Freyre, 1996: 11).

only became popular at home (Candido, 1989c: 187), but also crossed national borders and became an essential reference, especially for other Lusophone writers. It was the emphasis on local elements that brought these authors to the attention of national audiences, as evidenced by Graciliano Ramos's novels set in the *sertão* (hinterlands), Jose Lins do Rego's works which took place in sugar plantations, or the Bahian novel saga of Jorge Amado, who became for a long time the best known and most translated Brazilian writer. These works influenced Portuguese neorealists as well as Portuguese-language African writers. Artists such as those of the Brazilian committed cinema of the 1960s also found inspiration in these works, especially the creators of the *Cinema Novo* movement, who managed to break into the international arena with films dealing with the themes from the Northeast region.

The Revolution of 1930 shook the power system of the Old Republic system of "café com leite" ("coffee with milk")—a term designating the established political-economic coalition of the southeastern oligarchies. The social and political changes led to the need for a new theoretical interpretation of Brazil, with the main contribution being the development of social studies in a framework partly inspired by the European thought of Simmel, Weber, Marx and Boas. The Brazilian theorists sought to adapt social studies to the analysis of the country's specific problems, the most pressing of which was the inclusion of socially and racially marginalized sectors of society. The historian and sociologist Sérgio Buarque de Holanda undertook this goal in his seminal study *Raízes do Brasil* (1936, Eng. trans. *Roots of Brazil*, 2012), one of the most influential Brazilian books of the 20th century. Holanda reflects on the process of the formation of the national identity and culture from a new perspective. Unlike Freyre, Holanda is critical of the colonial past, as in his view the material and ideological structures associated with it prevented the creation of an advanced democratic society. Moreover, these structures continue to influence the present, for example by the reification of a skeptical attitude towards systematic manual labor and capitalist accumulation of profit as well as the concomitant entrenched social, racial and cultural hierarchization. Through the influential concept of the "cordial man" (*homem cordial*), Holanda shows that cordiality as a characteristic feature of the Brazilian people prevents the separation of the public and private sphere necessary for the development of a modern capitalist society. Unlike the nostalgic Freyre, the gaze of Holanda is fixed on the future and calls for emancipation from the remnants of colonial structures.

5 The Autonomization of Art and Cosmopolitan Aspirations

The question of the country finding its own way within the international space became relevant again in Brazil in the post-war period when the authoritarian regime of Getúlio Vargas ended in 1945 and the society gradually began to democratize. With the desire to break out of the economic dependence on Western European countries and the USA in particular, the question of national development came to be emphasized. The government invested mainly in the industrial sector in order to increase self-sufficiency, and Brazil experienced a period of economic growth which gained momentum especially in the second half of the 1950s under the presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek. In the 1960s, due to the intense urbanization of the previous decades, Brazil shifted from a rural to a predominantly urban society. The building of an ultra-modern capital city “on green turf,” the creation of new jobs in industry and commerce, an increase in consumption and the modernization of everyday life led to optimism and faith in future prosperity.

In this time of political relaxation, art and literature was taking off in a multitude of directions, now free from the primary need for ideological engagement. Above all, artists were turning to form and language itself—literary, theatrical, cinematic, visual—and were inspired by modern technology. Again, there was a marked tendency to combine local elements with foreign ones and the traditional with the modern, leading in the 1950s to the creation of exceptional works that become the “art for export” promoted in the 1920s by Oswald de Andrade. In the field of music, bossa nova, which mixes the rhythm of samba with elements of jazz and other musical genres, became commercially successful, especially in the USA. In architecture, the city of Brasília is a case in point, with its layout plan that can simultaneously denote the shape of an airplane and that of a flying arrow. Thanks to the visionary work of Oscar Niemeyer, a pupil of Le Corbusier, the principles of European Functionalism were combined with other European styles as well as with elements based on local realities. The modern Brazilian architecture of the time reflected an international context and influenced many international creators.

Literary production after 1945 was also characterized by a search for new themes and forms and, as in the 1920s, opened itself up to creativity from outside Brazil. The poetry of the so-called Generation of 1945, which tended towards polished expression and universal themes, was inspired by European literature such as works by Pessoa, Rilke, Guillén, Machado, and Ungaretti. From the Anglo-American context writers such as Eliot and Pound also served as new models. Nevertheless, the authors of this generation also drew widely on domestic models, e.g. the most essential poet of the era João Cabral de Melo

Neto followed the formal innovations of the poets of the second modernist period (Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Murilo Mendes), themselves having drawn on the work of authors of the 1920s who had been influenced by the European avant-garde. As Candido intimated, “an internal causality” (Candido, 1995: 131)³¹ was forged which can be seen as a further stage in overcoming literary dependence: artists were no longer being inspired only by foreign models, but also by domestic traditions, which in this case paradoxically led to an even more fruitful use of borrowings from other cultures.

The Generation of 1945 was followed by Brazilian Concretism, which can be considered a prime example of international art of the period. Inspired by the world avant-garde (Pound, Max Bense, Max Bill, Le Corbusier, etc.), the movement took root in São Paulo in the 1950s around the poets associated with the magazine *Noigandres* (Décio Pignatari, Haroldo de Campos and Augusto de Campos). Concretism also influenced artists from other cities, especially Rio. After the 1960s the movement began to spread beyond the country’s borders, with Brazilian concretists presenting their poetry in Germany and Italy as well as coming in contact with Austrians, Belgians, French, Czech and Japanese poets and artists. Concretism was of great importance for the development of Brazilian culture, although it did not really penetrate to a broader audience inside the country at the time. The concretists laid the foundations for new poetic movements such as Neoconcretism (*neoconcretismo*), Poetry-praxis (*poesia-práxis*), Poem-process (*poema-processo*) and other schools, and it also influenced the visual arts, sculpture, architecture and applied arts.

Examples of post-war “export” prose that, albeit with some delay, secured a firm place in world literature can be found in the work of Clarice Lispector and João Guimarães Rosa. Although both authors were inspired by European and other models (Anglo-Saxon Modernism, Existentialism, and, in Rosa’s case, medieval and Renaissance prose), they created an autonomous body of work that influenced other domestic and international artists. Rosa, moreover, represents a notable instance of a writer who absorbed the influences of both Western and Eastern cultures, a strategy he used in his depiction of his native land—the Minas Gerais hinterland. His work de facto combines the principles of both modernist generations: as the first modernists demanded, he absorbs international and native elements and revives the literary language to capture Brazilian reality in a new way, while at the same time he turns his attention, like the second generation of modernists, to the underdeveloped rural space.

31 “causalidade interna” (Candido, 1989a: 153).

In his monumental novel, *Grande sertão: veredas* (1956; Eng. trans. *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, 1963), as well as in his short stories, Rosa elevates Regionalism to the level of what Candido termed “superregionalism” (Candido, 1995: 139).³² Absorbing the practices of both turn-of-the-century descriptive Regionalism and the socially critical Regionalism of the of the 1930s, Rosa deepens the poetic, philosophical-spiritual as well as intertextual dimensions of his stories elevating them to an archetypal and universal level. He achieves this hybrid, “third” way, so often sought in 20th-century Latin American culture by subtly blurring dichotomies and replacing the binary *logos-mythos* schema characteristic of predominantly rational cultures with a triadic perspective to capture the unique reality of his region. In the field of prose, Rosa can also be seen as completing the linguistic revolution begun by the modernists of the 1920s. His “linguistic anthropophagy,” a system based on the unfettered use of expressions and linguistic structures from European, Amerindian, African and Asian languages, as well as from the different layers of the Portuguese language (archaisms, neologisms, dialectisms, etc.), brings the process of the linguistic independence of Brazilian literary Portuguese to its zenith.³³

Nevertheless, it should be noted that, although the work of Guimarães Rosa and Clarice Lispector is now part of the world literary canon thanks to translations into many languages, their texts are still not as well known today to international readers, as for example is the work of Hispanic authors. As Antonio Candido has pointed out, within the Latin American Boom the work of Brazilian authors had but a somewhat symbolic representation. This is true not only from the perspective of reception outside of Brazil but also inside. Brazilians generally did not consider themselves part of this movement, a attitude which likely stemmed from the traditional separation of Hispanic and Brazilian cultural spaces (Candido, 1989b).

6 Critiques of Neocolonial Dependency and the Export of Cultural Capital

In contrast to the optimism and belief in the country’s rapid development that prevailed in the 1950s, the next decade saw the emergence of a clear self-awareness of Brazilians of their own backwardness and their persistent eco-

32 “super-regionalismo” (Candido, 1989a: 161).

33 See the “dictionary” of neologisms which appear in Rosa’s works, compiled by Nilce Sant’Anna Martins: *O léxico de Guimarães Rosa*. São Paulo: Edusp, 2001.

nomic and cultural dependence on more developed countries, especially the USA. This pessimistic vision of the current situation led to the emergence of movements calling for political and social reforms. Ideological issues were also permeating the cultural sphere, with heteronomous art once again coming to the fore. In its most radical form, promoted for example by the Popular Center of Culture (*Centro Popular de Cultura*, CPC), this valuation of heteronomy rejected both the hermeticism of the avant-garde practices of the Concretists as well as the mass culture of consumer society, opposing these paradigms to popular revolutionary creativity.

Many artists, however, continued to build on the experimental work of the previous decade and took inspiration from the concept of anthropophagy, with the ideological and aesthetic absorption of foreign models in works which often expressed protest and resistance to Brazil's neocolonial dependence. These anthropophagic ideas were revived in various cultural sectors: in music (Caetano Veloso and the Tropicália movement), in cinema (the 1969 film adaptation of the novel *Macunaíma* directed by Joaquim Pedro de Andrade), in theatre (the 1967 production of the play *O rei da vela* / *The Candle King*, by Oswald de Andrade at the Oficina Theatre, SP) as well as in visual arts (Hélio Oiticica, Rubem Valetim).

In the politically charged climate of the 1960s, Brazilian intellectuals and artists increasingly worked through questions of the relationship between center and periphery on a global scale in the context of developing countries. International affairs began to resonate in Brazil such as the Cold War, decolonization in Africa and Asia, the war in Vietnam, and especially the Cuban Revolution, which became a great model for the Brazilian left of the "Latin American way" of transforming capitalist society. The literary production of this period thus must be seen in close connection with reflections in other fields such as history, sociology, anthropology, and political economy.

The year 1964 marked a significant turning point in the development of Brazilian society: a military dictatorship was established, creating a situation which also radically affected cultural development for two decades. Although for some time literature responding to the events of the time was still able to develop, after the hard line taken by the regime in 1968 harsh persecution and censorship were imposed, forcing many cultural and intellectual figures to go into exile, whether in Latin America, Europe or North America. The emergence of the Brazilian diaspora led to increased international interactions which soon became one of the essential landmarks in the process of deperipheralization of Brazilian thought and culture. The work of Brazilian artists reached beyond the country's borders, receiving new impulses and gaining international acclaim with such examples as the architect Oscar Niemeyer,

the musicians Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and Chico Buarque, the directors Glauber Rocha and Augusto Boal, as well as the writers Ferreira Gullar and Fernando Gabeira.

Recognition was also shown to several Brazilian intellectuals working in exile whose theories inspired further research in Europe and North America. Darcy Ribeiro (1922–1997) came to be acknowledged as a world's leading expert on the Indigenous cultures of Brazil. Ribeiro worked as an Indigenist activist and became an anthropologist and reformer of higher education in Brazil as well as in other Latin American countries in which he lived. In his works such as *Estudos de antropologia da civilização* (*Studies of the Anthropology of Civilization*, 5 vols., 1968–1972) and *O povo brasileiro: a formação e o sentido do Brasil* (1995, Eng. trans. *The Brazilian People: The Formation and Meaning of Brazil*, 2000), Ribeiro rethinks the concept of national identity, examining it against a far more extensive historical and cultural background. In the context of Latin American civilizations, he characterizes Brazilian society, like that of Cuba and Venezuela, as having been created by an admixture of ethnic groups that have departed from their "original" way of life. He characterizes Brazilian cultural identity as pluralistic, historically fluid and constantly evolving as a result of centuries-long processes of violent relations based on domination. Unlike Freyre, who believed that miscegenation in Brazil contributed heavily to the abatement of social tensions, Ribeiro is much more pragmatic (and pessimistic) in pointing to the persistence of colonial structures based on racial and social segregation and on the dehumanization of labor relations. He also creatively rendered his insights from anthropology and sociology in his own works of fiction, such as his 1976 novel *Maíra*, which deals with the tragic impact of assimilationist policies on the Amerindian population in the Brazilian rainforest.

Also making a name for himself abroad was the sociologist and later Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who together with the Chilean sociologist Enzo Faletto developed what was termed the dependency theory. This paradigm, also developed by Celso Furtado and Ruy Mauro Marini in exile, came to resonate throughout Latin America in the 1960s after the failure of post-war modernization theory. Other figures whose ideas penetrated the international space include Paulo Freire (critical pedagogy), Hélder Câmara (liberation theology), Josué de Castro (activism against world hunger), Florestan Fernandes (critical sociology), and Caio Prado Júnior (Marxist historiography).

7 Emancipation within Dependency

In the 1970s, a number of prominent literary theorists contributed to debates on cultural dependency. Despite their divergent views, the scholars were united by their critique of the generally Eurocentric approach in viewing Brazilian and Latin American literary production. In their reflections we can distinguish two lines of interpretation. The adherents of sociological literary criticism perceive literature in relation to a given context, pointing to the cultural dependence of Latin American countries on the world's hegemonic centers. On the other hand, another group of theorists consider the question of economic dependence irrelevant in the cultural sphere. Their views follow the ideological legacy of modernist anthropophagy which dehierarchizes the value relationship between the center and the periphery; Latin American literary production as such must thus be valued as a fully-fledged part of world literature.

The leading figure of the first group is the sociologist and literary critic Antonio Candido, who had already made a name for himself in the 1950s with his seminal work *Formação da literatura brasileira: momentos decisivos* (*The Development of Brazilian Literature: Decisive Moments*, 2 vols., 1959). In this book Candido traces the formation of the national literature from the mid-18th century to the 1880s, examining this process as a gradual emancipation from dependence on European models. He sees the first conditions for the emergence of an authentic Brazilian literature in the period of Arcadianism in the late 18th century during which colonial Brazil produced nativist works influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution, and created the structures for the functioning of a literary system. Candido understands these structures not as a random plurality of independent writers from a given period, but as a coherent system of authors, works and readers. According to him, such a realization was fully achieved in the Romantic period.

Candido addresses the question of cultural derivation in particular in his essay "Literatura e subdesenvolvimento" (1973, ed. 1987, Eng. trans. "Literature and Underdevelopment", 1995), in which Brazilian literary production is situated within a Latin American context. He stresses that Latin American literatures, just as those of North America, "are basically branches of the literature of a mother country" (Candido, 1995: 129).³⁴ Candido reminds us how cultural dependence was transferred to other European countries, especially France, after the independence of the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries of Latin America, and he points to the currently increasing influence of North

34 "são basicamente galhos das metropolitanas" (Candido, 1989a: 151).

American culture. Nevertheless, Candido sees this dependence as sociologically conditioned and inevitable. He considers the attempt to suppress foreign influences and inspirations understandable in the early stages of nation-building, but nonsensical in later periods. He observes that international influences can also have a positive effect in the fight against dependency: in the 1920s, for example, the European avant-gardes not only brought about a liberation of the means of expression, but also promoted self-awareness and the quest for literary autonomy in Latin American literatures.

Candido acknowledges that Latin America has never really created its own literary forms in terms of movements or genres, and that none of the nativist movements challenged imported forms. However, the adopted tools on the new continent underwent “a refining” (Candido, 1995: 130)³⁵ that is, adaptations and transformations that also resonated back in Europe. The poetry of Rubén Darío at the turn of the 20th century which influenced the European avant-garde is mentioned as one example, with another being the work of the Brazilian novelists of the 1930s and 1940s which inspired the Portuguese neorealists. Candido cites the work of Jorge Luis Borges as the most significant case of the influence of the Latin American periphery on the European centers. In this context, however, Candido also highlights qualities of the work of Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, whom Candido considers to be as original as Borges in terms of aesthetics, and much more complex in portraying the human condition. Nevertheless, despite the tremendous significance of Machado de Assis in the Brazilian context, his work was written in “an unknown language, in a country then completely unimportant” (Candido, 1995: 132),³⁶ thus it remained unread in Europe at the time.

According to Candido, the Latin American writer always adapted cultural borrowings to his own uses to portray and comment on the problems of his own country. This is not imitation or perfunctory reproduction, however, but “participation in resources that have become common through the state of dependency, contributing to turn it into an interdependency” (Candido, 1995: 134).³⁷ Characterized by this interdependency, the current situation in Latin America stimulates the production of mature and inspiring works, which become in turn assimilated by the cultures of former metropolises as well as other countries. These reflections on cultural dependence thus lead Candido to the

35 “afinamento” (Candido, 1989a: 152).

36 “uma língua desconhecida, num país então completamente sem importância” (Candido, 1989a: 153).

37 “participação nos recursos que se tornaram bem comum através do estado de dependência, contribuindo para fazer deste uma interdependência” (Candido, 1989a: 155).

idea of “transnational integration, since what was imitation increasingly turns into reciprocal assimilation” (Candido, 1995: 133).³⁸ From this perspective, Latin American literature need not be seen (strictly) in terms of dependence, but rather in terms of its contributions to the transnational cultural universe of which it is a part.

Candido points out some of the persistent problems of Latin American literature, including the high degree of illiteracy in most countries, which he characterizes along with other “manifestations of cultural weakness” (Candido, 1995: 121)³⁹ such as the lack of domestic publishing houses, libraries and literary periodicals; poor conditions for professionalization of the writing career; as well as a limited readership which is more interested in mass cultural artifacts than in erudite literature. Candido also points to the sparse contacts between Brazilian and Hispanic writers as well as to the fact that the mediations among these groups often occur in Europe and the United States.

The major successor to Candido was the literary critic and essayist Roberto Schwarz, who similarly applies a complex sociological and historical perspective in his interpretation of cultural production. In his literary study *Ao vencedor as batatas: forma literária e processo social nos inícios do romance brasileiro* (1977, Eng. trans. *To the Victor, the Potatoes!: Literary Form and Social Process in the Beginnings of the Brazilian Novel*, 2020), which is devoted to the fiction of José de Alencar and Machado de Assis, Schwarz introduced the concept of “misplaced ideas” (“ideias fora do lugar”). This model represents the persistent dependence of Brazilian thought and cultural production on European models, as well as the fact that foreign models have frequently been adapted in Brazil in a specific way and have taken forms different from the original ones. Here Schwarz draws attention to the incongruous interplay between European genres and Brazilian reality. This dissonance is particularly evident in the 19th-century Indianist and regionalist prose as well as the urban novel, in which there is an anachronistic symbiosis of liberal bourgeois values with a patriarchal, slave-owning order.

In his study *Um mestre na periferia do capitalismo: Machado de Assis* (1990, Eng. trans. *A Master on the Periphery of Capitalism: Machado de Assis*, 2001) Schwarz highlights the originality of the fiction of the second phase of the novelist’s career. Schwarz shows that although de Assis starts with European models and deals with seemingly universal themes, he subtly comes to transform these models in terms of form and thought, for example, by his specific

38 “integração transnacional, pois o que era imitação vai cada vez mais virando assimilação recíproca” (1989a: 155).

39 “manifestações de debilidade cultural” (Candido, 1989a: 143).

uses of the subconscious as well as by his precisely ironic depictions of the contradiction between the individual free will and the postcolonial system based on relations of domination.

Schwarz also addresses the question of dependency in his essay “Nacional por subtração” (1987, Eng. trans. “Nationalism by Elimination”, 2004), in which he speaks out not only against cultural epigonism but also against the revival of the message of the modernist manifestos proclaimed by the Concretists as well as, more recently, by postmodernist theory: “It is not sufficient, however, to give up loans in order to think and live more authentically. Besides, one cannot so much as conceive of giving them up. Nor is the problem eliminated by a philosophical deconstruction of the concept of copy” (Schwarz, 2004: 240).⁴⁰

By emphasizing the disparity between the use of foreign concepts, thought and form and reshaping these tools according to local content, Schwarz inspired many theorists, among them Franco Moretti in terms of his concept of “world literature” (Moretti, 2000).

8 Anthropophagy as Transvaluation and Cultural Resistance

The second camp of interpreters of Latin American cultures, who reject the notion of economic dependence of cultural production, includes the poet and translator Haroldo de Campos, a leading figure of post-war Concretism. In the essay entitled *Ruptura dos gêneros na literatura latino-americana* (*Rupture of Genres in Latin American Literature*, 1977),⁴¹ Campos called for a critical approach in viewing Latin American literatures, as they were entering into the international arena, and called for a reassessment of their contribution to the world literature. In the Brazilian context, he rehabilitated in particular the work of the Romantic poet Sousândrade, whom Campos considered the initiator of Latin American modernity, comparable to Mallarmé and working even earlier than Rubén Darío. However, because of Sousândrade’s linguistic innovations and unusual subject matter—the dangers of the expanding North American capitalism symbolized by Wall Street—this poet remained in the shadow of his contemporaries, whom Campos considers to be mere epigones of European Romanticism.

40 “Contudo, não basta renunciar ao empréstimo para pensar e viver de modo mais autêntico. Aliás, esta renúncia não é pensável. Por outro lado, a destruição filosófica da noção de cópia tampouco faz desaparecer o problema.” (Schwarz, 1987: 39).

41 The essay was first published in Spanish, in: Moreno, César Fernández (ed.). *América Latina en su literatura*. Paris: Unesco, 1972.

Campos emphasizes the modernist concept of anthropophagy, a framework which he elaborates on particularly in his essay “Da razão antropofágica: diálogo e diferença na cultura brasileira” (1980, ed. 1992, Eng. trans. “Anthropophagous Reason: Dialogue and Difference in Brazilian Culture”, 2007). Here he defines anthropophagy as “transvalorization” (Campos, 2007: 160),⁴² thus expressing its approach to tradition in the sense of “appropriation and of expropriation, of dehierarchization, of deconstruction” (Campos, 2007: 160).⁴³ In opposition to the prevailing sociological literary critique, he rejects the notion that economic development is conditioned by cultural level, describing this idea as “the fallacy of a naive sociologism” (Campos, 2007: 159).⁴⁴ He argues that even, and perhaps even especially, an economically backward and dependent country can offer the world original and valuable artistic creations. As an example he cites the Baroque poet Gregório de Matos, whom his brother Augusto de Campos called the “the first experimental cannibal” in Brazilian poetry (Campos, 2007: 165),⁴⁵ since in his work, Matos absorbed the best of what was born in the Italian and Iberian Baroque of the 17th century. Haroldo de Campos also considers translation, which he understands as a critical creative process and one of the forms by which the world’s cultural heritage can be digested. He does not see the original as a superior text; the translated text is for Campos an independent artifact which possesses its source subject matter.

The writer and essayist Silviano Santiago, a pioneer in the philosophy of deconstruction and theories of Postmodernism in Brazil, follows a similar line of thought to Campos, emphasizing the creative potential of Latin American art in relation to foreign models. In the 1970s, his reflections built on European and North American debates on cultural critique, and de facto anticipated postcolonial thinking on the relationship between center and periphery, original and copy. In his studies published in *Uma literatura nos trópicos: ensaios sobre dependência cultural* (*Literature in the Tropics: Essays on Cultural Dependency*, 1978), he works with concepts such as “third world,” “neocolonialism,” “cultural imperialism” and “hybridity.” In the essay “O entre-lugar do discurso latino-americano” (1971, ed. 1978, Eng. trans. “Latin American Discourse: The Space In-Between,” 2001b), Santiago introduced his core concept of “the space in-between,” further developed in subsequent studies. Through this concept he characterizes the specific position of Latin American culture in the West-

42 “transvalorização” (Campos, 2006: 234).

43 “tanto de apropriação, como de expropriação, desierarquização, desconstrução” (Campos, 2006: 234–235).

44 “falácia de sociologismo ingênuo” (Campos, 2006: 233).

45 “o primeiro antropófago experimental” (Campos 2006: 241).

ern world: Santiago acknowledges a historical dependence on European culture, but emphasizes the hidden resistance and subversive potential of Latin American production, based on tactics of apparent obedience and external acceptance of traditional models, which are then subtly dissolved and gradually reshaped.

Silviano Santiago further contributed to the debate on issues of cultural dependence in his essay “Apesar de dependente, universal” (1980, ed. 1982, Eng. trans. “Universality in Spite of Dependency”, 2001c). While he agrees with Candido’s idea that “compared to the great literary traditions, [Brazilian] literature is poor and feeble” (Candido, in Santiago, 2001c: 60)⁴⁶ and that it is impossible to strive for a production free of foreign influences, in line with Campos he proposes a different perspective from which to view this dependence, highlighting three revolutionary approaches or “antidotes” that Brazilian literature has offered since Modernism: Oswald de Andrade’s concept of “cultural anthropophagy” which incorporated Brazilian literature into world production; Mário de Andrade’s “betrayal of memory” in the sense of forgetting the culture imposed by the metropolis in the form of playful transgression and the rewriting of models; and the idea of a deliberate “radical cut” made by avant-garde movements, especially Concretism (Santiago, 2001c: 61).⁴⁷ None of these approaches deny the influence of European models, yet they do deconstruct the value relationship between center and periphery, original and copy. In contrast to universality as understood in terms of uniformity, Santiago proposes its definition as “a differential game” (Santiago, 2001c: 63)⁴⁸ within a space comprising diverse cultures which accentuates the clashes between dominant and dominated cultures. According to Santiago, the text of a peripheral culture can be richer than its model “because it *contains within itself a representation of the dominant text and a response to that representation within its very fabrication*” (Santiago, 2001c: 63).⁴⁹ As an example, Santiago cites the Portuguese writer Eça de Queirós, who in his novel *O primo Basílio* (1878, Eng. trans. *Cousin Basilio*, 1953, 2003) takes inspiration from Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, but at the same time radically rewrites this canonical work (Santiago, 2000a, 2001a).

The clash between the two general literary-critical approaches mentioned above, which perhaps may be summarized by the sociological and anthro-

46 “Comparada às grandes, a nossa literatura é pobre e fraca” (Candido, in Santiago, 1982: 20).

47 “antropofagia cultural,” “traição da memória,” “corte radical” (Santiago, 1982: 21–22).

48 “jogo diferencial” (Santiago, 1982: 23).

49 “por conter em si uma representação do texto dominante e uma resposta a esta representação no próprio nível da fabulação” (Santiago, 1982: 23).

pophagical views, can be witnessed at the beginning of the new millennium. It is evidenced by the discussion regarding the reception of Machado de Assis's work, which developed on the basis of Michael Wood's article "Master Among the Ruins" (2002). The discussion was joined by Roberto Schwarz (2006), who emphasized the "Brazilianness" of de Assis—i.e. his ability to perfectly depict the space-time in which he lived and worked. The Portuguese Brazilianist Abel Barros Baptista (2009) entered into the conversation by highlighting the universal literary mastery of Machado de Assis, a virtuosity which does not require knowledge of the contemporary context to be understood. As the Brazilian critic Ieda Magri (2019) points out, this dispute has shown that the conflict between "national" and "international" criticism remains relevant in Brazilian literature to this day.

9 The Internal Peripheralization of Contemporary Brazilian Literature and Its Representation on the International Scene

The cultural globalization of recent decades has also penetrated the literary sphere, leading not only to a huge influx of foreign, especially Anglophone, production in the Brazilian book market, but also to the opening up of international space to domestic authors. Since the end of the 1980s when the fall of the military regime (1964–1985) led to a cultural revival, we have witnessed a tendency for Brazilian authors to integrate into the international cultural community (Mata, 2015). This has undoubtedly been successful for Paulo Coelho, whose books, which appeal to a wide readership with their esoteric dimensions, have been translated into more than eighty languages; his novel *Alquimista* (1988, Eng. trans. *The Alchemist*, 1992), for example, has become the biggest Brazilian bestseller of all time. International book fairs (in Europe, especially the Frankfurt Book Fair), literary festivals, congresses and writers' meetings as well as new translations of canonical authors such as Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector in the USA and France have facilitated the penetration of Brazilian literature abroad. The work of contemporary authors such as Moacyr Scliar (1937–2011), Rubem Fonseca (1925–2020), Ferreira Gullar (1930–2016), Bernardo Kucinski (1937–), Nélide Piñon (1937–2022), Chico Buarque (1944–), Ana Miranda (1951–), Milton Hatoum (1952–), Bernardo Carvalho (1960–), Luiz Ruffato (1961–), Martha Batalha (1973–) and others has also met with acclaim abroad in recent decades.

Literary critic Regina Zilberman describes how this internationalization effort has brought about an inevitable break from the national focus of the works, which means that "Brazilian literature, especially prose, has absorbed

into its themes an international setting, non-Brazilian characters, issues of a global nature” (2010: 199).⁵⁰ This is evidenced for example by internationally successful novels such as Chico Buarque’s *Budapeste* (2003, Eng. trans. *Budapest*, 2005) and Bernardo Carvalho’s *Mongólia* (*Mongolia*, 2003), as well as the edition entitled *Confessed Loves* (*Amores Expressos*) published by Companhia das Letras—a project for which contemporary Brazilian writers were enlisted to produce works on themes of love set in world capitals.

Despite these outstanding successes, however, Brazilian literary production in general has been slow to reach foreign book markets and can still be considered of less importance, compared to other literatures. The sample that represents Brazil in the international literary space is not only relatively limited, but also not very representative of the production as a whole. This may be related to what Spivak refers to as the “restricted permeability of global culture,” as well as “the lack of communication within and among the immense heterogeneity of the subaltern cultures of the world” (Spivak, 2003: 16). In other words, Brazilian literary production which manages to penetrate the global space is highly selective and reflects a condition that prevails in Brazil in other social spheres such as politics, media and, to some extent, academia—namely the absence of minority voices.

A research study carried out at the University of Brasília (Dalcastagnè, 2005, 2012), analyzed 258 Brazilian novels by 165 authors published between 1990 and 2004 by the three most prestigious publishing houses at the time (Companhia das Letras, Record, Rocco). It has found that the authors of this production are predominantly male (about 73%),⁵¹ are of the white race (about 94%),⁵² come from middle-class backgrounds from the Southeast or South regions (over 70%),⁵³ and currently live in São Paulo or Rio (over 60%). Further, the profession of these writers primarily involves working with language, for example in academia or the media. The research has also shown that the contemporary Brazilian novel is predominantly oriented to the city: the vast majority of authors live in the capitals of the federated states and depict the urban environment in their work (in over 82% of the novels studied, part or

50 “a literatura brasileira, em especial, sua ficção, absorveu à sua temática cenários internacionais, personagens não-brasileiros, questões de ordem global”.

51 For example, of the 30 winners of the major Brazilian literary prizes (Portugal Telecom, Jabuti, Machado de Assis, São Paulo de Literatura, Passo Fundo Zaffari & Bourbon) awarded between 2006 and 2011, 29 were men and only one a woman (Dalcastagnè, 2012: 14).

52 In other research tracking production up to 2014, this ratio rose to 97.5% (Torres, 2015).

53 Particularly from the States Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais (Dalcastagnè, 2005: 32).

the whole of the plot takes place in a large city, with only about 14% of the settings in the countryside).⁵⁴

While it is clear that many writers who do not (completely) fit this profile are able to publish in small presses or are self-published, for example in internet blogs, it is difficult for these authors to reach a wider audience. Bookstores in Brazil, like booksellers globally, have experienced difficult times in recent years and often struggle to survive; the outlets are dominated by international titles and works by already renowned Brazilian authors, usually published by large corporate houses. As the Brazilian critic and initiator of the above-mentioned research Regina Dalcastagnè points out, the handful of Black authors from urban slums who have managed to get their work put out by prestigious publishers have been able to do so only thanks to foreign financial support.⁵⁵ Most Black writers today publish their work in small presses that focus on Afro-Brazilian production. Conceição Evaristo, an acclaimed Black woman novelist who was denied admission to the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 2018, fits into this paradigm.

In addition to social, racial and gender segregation, Regina Dalcastagnè's research points out the geographical stratification of literary production. In general, it is quite difficult for regional authors who publish in local and smaller presses to reach a wider audience. Therefore, it is not surprising that most of these writers eventually move to big cities, especially in the South region, where they can find more favorable conditions for professionalizing their writing careers. Most of the significant cultural institutions and facilities, libraries, publishing houses, and universities are concentrated in the South-Central region. In recent decades, especially during the first presidential administration (2003–2011) of Inácio Lula da Silva, a number of new higher education institutions were established throughout the country, offering higher education even in remote areas. Still, the prestigious universities, of which the Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp) and

54 This trend reflects the evolution of the Brazilian population, which began changing from largely rural to predominantly urban during the 1960s. As of 2021, more than 87% of the population lives in cities, with the process of urbanization accompanied by metropolization. (World Bank, 2022).

55 For example, Carolina Maria de Jesus published her best-seller diary *Quarto de despejo: diário de uma favelada* (1960; Eng. trans. *Child of the Dark: The Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus*, 1962) with the support of the journalist Audálio Dantas in one of the largest publishing houses, Francisco Alves; Paulo Lins published his novel *Cidade de Deus* (1997, Eng. trans. *City of God*, 2006) as part of an academic sociological project under the auspices of the acclaimed critic Roberto Schwarz in what is now the largest Brazilian publishing house, Companhia das Letras (Rebinski Junior, 2014).

Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) have traditionally been ranked highest, are located in this economically developed region (RUF, 2019). And although Brazil's cultural and intellectual elite cannot be wholly identified with the economically privileged classes, the fact remains that these elites have been historically intertwined. USP itself, which has become a leading center of intellectual production and disseminator of ideas not only in Brazil but also in Latin America, was created to educate the descendants of the São Paulo rural and industrial oligarchy, which was seeking to maintain economic and cultural hegemony after the rise of Getúlio Vargas to power in 1930.⁵⁶

For historical reasons, the Brazilian publishing industry is also concentrated along the Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo axis. Throughout the 19th century, with exceptions such as Recife, publishing activity was concentrated in the capital and focused mainly on printing newspapers, pamphlets and official documents, with most work issued by the Royal Printing House. It was not until the late 19th century when a book industry began to develop that publishing houses began appearing to a limited extent in São Paulo and in other areas. At the beginning of the 20th century, didactic books for primary schools along with sporadic works by some Brazilian authors were published, with the rest of the titles being reissues of imported works. The publishing industry more fully developed after 1945, with the center of gravity gradually shifting to São Paulo, which then became dominant in the 1980s thanks to technological developments. At the beginning of the 21st century, São Paulo's hegemony was partially weakened with the emergence of new publishing houses in Rio and other cities, but still concentrated mainly in the Southeast and South regions.⁵⁷

The above-mentioned research at the University of Brasília has also shown that despite the strong predominance of urban prose, regionalist writing remains relevant in contemporary Brazilian literature. Since the second half of the 20th century, Regionalism is no longer guided by utopian visions and literary agendas; it flows freely in a variety of directions. The work of such authors as João Guimarães Rosa or, more recently, Milton Hatoum demonstrates how Brazilian Regionalism has taken on a universal dimension and has become part of the world's literary heritage. As Antonio Candido argued in the 1970s, while Regionalism has become an anachronistic style in some Latin American countries with a predominantly urban culture (such as Argentina and Uruguay), in Brazilian literature it cannot be understood merely as secondary production

56 See Souza, Jessé. *A elite do atraso: da escravidão a Bolsonaro*. Rio de Janeiro: Estação Brasil, 2019.

57 Overall there were approximately 600 publishing houses in Brazil at the end of the 20th century (Gorini; Castello Branco, 2000: 12).

limited to local reach and significance, but as an essential literary tradition (Candido, 1995: 137). Regionalism in Brazilian literature cannot be expected to disappear in the future; in Candido's words, "it will exist as long as there are conditions of underdevelopment that force writers to thematize rural culture as more or less marginal in relation to urban culture" (2002: 86–87).⁵⁸

Recently, however, it is interesting to observe how regional writing has to some extent passed the baton to the so-called literature from the periphery (*literatura periférica*), the production of authors coming from the slums (*favelas*) of the Brazilian megapolises, especially in the regions of São Paulo and Rio, but also other cities. This trend can be observed since the 1990s, when the voices of social, ethnic, sexual and other minorities began asserting themselves in Brazil in the climate of political and cultural liberation following the fall of the 21-year military dictatorship. These include, for example, Indigenous literature (*literatura indígena*), the literary production of writers claiming Indigenous descent. It represents a crucial politico-cultural phenomenon linked to the Brazilian Indigenous Movement which began to take shape in response to the military government's drastic violation of the rights of Indigenous peoples. Other trends include a surge in the production of Afro-Brazilian authors, related to the new wave of Black activism that emerged in the late 1970s, as well as of the LGBTQ+ community and other minority social groups.

Nevertheless, despite the importance of the works of these social minorities that reflect the heterogeneous nature of contemporary Brazilian literary production, only a fraction of these works ever reach the international space. As Brazilian journalist and publisher Felipe Lindoso notes, the limited representation of Brazilian literature on the international scene is due to structural factors as well as to those related to cultural policy issues (Lindoso, 2017). As a result, notwithstanding its clear potential to enrich the "world republic of literature," a substantial portion of Brazilian writing still remains largely unknown to readers outside of the country.

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58 "existirá enquanto houver condições como as do subdesenvolvimento, que forcem o escritor a focalizar como tema as culturas rústicas mais ou menos à margem da cultura urbana".

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The Shared History of Maghreb Countries

Míla Janišová

The countries of the Maghreb—Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia—were gradually colonized by France and share a similar fate, the wounds of which were difficult to heal, with some persisting to this day.¹ The problematic relationship with language, the ambiguous position vis-à-vis the metropolis as well as the volatile, often inconsistent reception of French-language literature are the most prominent features. These factors influence not only the choice of language in which Maghrebian authors express themselves, but also the cultural policies of each country. Although French-language literature within each of the three countries reflects the specificities of each region, an ambiguous hybrid cultural identity is one shared remnant of the colonial history of the entire space.

It should be remembered that colonization was not a new phenomenon in North Africa as the French came into the region throughout the 19th century. For three millennia, the Maghreb has been subjected to dominant historical forces, always with the same result: the indigenous writer eventually adopted the language of whoever dominated the region for his work, whether it was Latin in antiquity, Arabic from the 7th century onwards, or French twelve centuries later. The consequential legacy is the thorny question of (the) literary language, which weighs down and politicizes any debate to be had about literature.

Given the historical situation, the Maghrebian writer of today finds himself at a linguistic crossroads (Boudraa, 2015). Daily, he encounters four sets of languages in his territory, two of which remained for a very long period only oral—Berber and local Arabic dialects—and two of which also have a written tradition—Classical Arabic and French. Unlike in sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghrebian author has always had at his disposal a written language other than French that has been used in North Africa for centuries. In many cases, however, he prefers the language of the more recent occupier—French—than that

1 The conquest of Algeria began in June 1830, and after years of fierce fighting, the northern territory was annexed to France in 1848, the Sahara and the southern territory in 1902. Tunisia and Morocco became protectorates from 1881 and 1912 respectively.

of the former colonizer—Arabic. This raises the question of the reasons for this choice and how this choice marks the relationship with metropolitan France as a literary center.

Unlike other countries colonized by France, French in the Maghreb entered a space with several long and rich literary heritages. Not only were numerous canonical literary works produced in the region (Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and Saint Augustine's *Confessions* and *City of God* written in Latin; Ibn Battuta's travelogue and Ibn Khaldun's extensive historical work in Arabic), but these literary traditions were continuously maintained by both religious and / or tribal elites who exerted considerable influence on the indigenous population. French colonial authorities soon realized that they would have to mitigate the power of language and literature by removing control from local rulers and scholars. The colonial officials also saw the need to train local administrators to administer the land by creating schools in the territories with education in French. The teaching system, almost identical to the French metropolitan system, would later help maintain the dominance of the new masters-colonizers without regard to native culture.

Until the emergence of the French network of religious schools run by religious orders such as the *Pères Blancs* (*White Fathers*, founded in 1868 by the Algerian Archbishop Charles Lavigerie explicitly to evangelize Africa) and secular institutions run by the colonial administration, education had been provided by Islamic religious schools known as madrasas, a system which had been operating in the Maghreb—as in other Muslim countries—for centuries. In Algeria, which was first subordinated to France directly as a colony and later incorporated into the French departmental system, the madrasa was abolished. Only the Quranic schools for young children survived from the original system alongside French education. On the other hand, in the two French protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco colonial officials proceeded more cautiously, as the introduction of the French educational system encountered problems, especially among settler-colonists, thus the network of madrasas was maintained. Arabic-French bilingualism was common in both countries. Beyond administrative and economic purposes, education in French meant cultural alienation, resulting in the suppression of the identity of the colonized, as Nabil Boudraa explains: “The alienation of the French school, and therefore of the French language, completely cut [the Maghrebian writer] off from his people, his history, and his culture.” (Boudraa, 2015: 22)²

2 “La dépersonnalisation par l'école française donc la langue française l'[écrivain maghrébin] a complètement coupé de son peuple, de son histoire et de sa culture.”

As in other colonized countries, the French school created new elites who were largely acculturated to European institutions. When former students later decided to express themselves as authors, many expressed bitterness about not being able to communicate in writing in their mother tongue. Consequently, any reflection on French-language literature in the Maghreb must begin with the question of who writes and publishes this literature and for whom. Thus the status of the reader is crucial, as this influences the configuration of the literary field, affecting to a great extent the relationships with the centrality of Paris.

1 **Attempts at Autonomy: Reflections on the Position of the Maghreb in Relation to France**

From the very beginning, the French-language literary production of the Maghreb has been deeply self-conscious. Among the numerous texts that address the seriousness of the relationship with French and the emancipation of work in this language, we may note a few that have undeniably influenced the development and emancipating strategies of Maghrebian thought—texts by Albert Memmi, Malek Haddad, Abdelkébir Khatibi and Assia Djebar, to name but a few. At the same time, autonomist tendencies have been present from the very beginning of French-language Maghrebian writing, manifesting themselves in variations of novel and poetic forms as well as in the use and “Maghrebization” of the French language. In the history of this literature, three important periods can be distinguished in terms of the systematization of emancipatory tendencies as well as changes in attitudes to Parisian centrality.

2 **The Birth of French-Language Maghrebian Literature**

Maghrebian literature, that is, texts written by Maghrebian natives, was born in the early 1950s. Authors such as Driss Chraïbi, Ahmed Sefrioui, Kateb Yacine, Albert Memmi and Mouloud Mammeri became powerful voices of liberation and decolonization. Published while colonial rule was still in place, their texts were the first to include local themes in a genre that was not widespread in the literature of the territory: the novel. The choice of language and expression are strongly influenced by instruction in French. The authors of “Generation 54”³

3 The term was introduced by Albert Memmi (Memmi, 2001: 13–20).

found themselves trapped: their knowledge of classical Arabic, the local written language, was hardly sufficient for their literary work. Moreover, as Malek Haddad notes in his essay *Les zéros tournent en rond* (*The Zeros Turn Round in a Circle*, 1961), a considerable obstacle separated the Maghreb author from the local potential reader—illiteracy (Kadri, 2007).⁴ Thus for the first time the question of reception is raised: in the absence of compulsory schooling, who would be interested in literary works produced in the colonies? As late as 1943, only 10% of school-age children were enrolled in school, and obviously only among these children could a potential future readership could be recruited (Kadri, 2007).⁵ As a result of this situation, the Maghreb author turned primarily to the French metropolitan reading population. At the same time, he uses this to emphasize his difference. For example, Kateb Yacine warns his (primarily European) audience that he “writes in French to tell the French that he is not French.”⁶

Although the novels mostly follow the European formal model, readers in the French metropolis discovered in these works an unprecedented variety of themes related to the colonial situation—the suffering of the colonized, humiliation, alienation, despair. In contrast to the exotic themes of the Orientalist novel by Europeans, the reader must come to terms with the stark and painful reality of colonialism. The first Maghrebian authors thus reversed the point of view and distinguished themselves from their metropolitan counterparts by the themes of their poetry and novels.

One work stands out clearly among works reproducing the European novel tradition inspired by canonical school reading as the authors knew it in schools: Kateb Yacine’s *Nedjma* (1956). Torn between the possibilities of French and the inability to express himself in his mother tongue, Yacine’s style is influenced by the spiraling Arabic narrative. In its portrayal of the exceedingly complex reality of his subjugated people, the novel’s fragmented form and chronology creates a mode of expression that breaks with the past. The violent, disjointed prose technique was established in Maghrebian literature as one means of revolt against the center’s norms. In his later career, the question of to whom a work should be addressed remained a pressing one for Yacine, who eventually

4 Kadri quotes Mostafa Lacheraf as saying that 85% of the population was illiterate on the eve of independence. (See Lacheraf, 1965: 313.) He adds that these were potential readers of novels published in the 1950s.

5 According to Kadri, in 1943, of the 1,250,000 Muslim children between the ages of 6 and 14, only 110,000 were enrolled in school, less than 10%.

6 Kateb Yacine’s 1966 statement “j’écris en français pour dire aux Français que je ne suis pas Français” has become simply an accepted truism, having been repeated in several scholarly works without reference to the Algerian.

abandoned the novel to express himself through theatre, a medium in which he could make full use of the Algerian dialect, his everyday language.

The Algerian Malek Haddad, who in the 1960s entered into a lively discourse on language in the work of the Maghreb writer, is affected in a similar way. In the aforementioned essay *Les zéros tournent en rond*, Haddad expresses his inner linguistic strife, as he still feels an exile in French. Algerian writers, he argues, are “filled with nostalgia for a mother tongue from which [...] they have been weaned and of which [they are] bleak orphans” (Haddad, 1961: 32). This tragedy is a consequence of the fact that “Algerian writers of Arab-Berber origin expressing themselves in French are translating specifically Algerian thought [...] only an approximate correspondence between [their] Arabic thought and the French vocabulary” (Haddad, 1961: 33–34).⁷ This contradiction led Haddad to decide to stop writing fiction in French between 1961 and 1967.

3 A New Breath

Notwithstanding the predictions of thinkers such as Haddad and Memmi, decolonization and independence did not lead to the predominance of Arabic literature. Even the massive Arabization of all three Maghreb countries—Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia—could not discontinue the development of French written literature. Yet after the departure of the colonizer, nothing was to prevent intellectual development in Arabic—although independence seemed promising, this cultural flowering did not take place. On the contrary, Arabic literature withered in its rich but unprogressive roots. As the old elites retook the reins, French offered itself as a means of modernity against the seemingly sclerotic tradition.

Founded in Morocco in 1966, the magazine *Souffles* fundamentally changed the space of Maghrebian culture, opening it up to modernity and a new era. This literary and cultural journal fulfilled several roles, from a literary and artistic laboratory to a forum for radical political engagement. Its participants eschewed the established and imitative forms of earlier times, both French and Arab, and thus sought to restore the originality and distinctiveness of their North African home culture. The journal provided a space for debates on the postcolonial and neocolonial situation of the Maghreb. New talents were dis-

7 “plein de nostalgie d’une langue maternelle dont nous avons été sevrés et dont nous sommes les orphelins inconsolables”; “les écrivains algériens d’origine arabo-berbère s’exprimant en français y traduisent une pensée spécifiquement algérienne”; “il n’y a qu’une correspondance approximative entre notre pensée d’Arabe et notre vocabulaire de Français.”

covered, many of whom brought new perspectives to their work while also paying tribute to authors who had earlier taken up the task of transcending colonial culture. The magazine was a veritable hive of innovation where texts on different fields of creation—visual arts, poetry, theatre, film—were brought together. Although the magazine was founded by French-speaking authors, this did not prevent them from entering into a dialogue with Arabic creativity. While some magazines of the time published parallel but separate French and Arabic editions, in 1968 *Souffles* published several bilingual issues, which was quite unusual in the cultural context of the time. According to the poet and writer Mohamed Loakira, a contributor to the magazine, *Souffles* was “the first magazine that dared to even address the language problem by including several languages in one issue, [which] was a break in the practice at the time, a break towards openness” (Sefroui, 2009).⁸

The prominent authors of the magazine were inspired by Frantz Fanon, particularly by *Les Damnés de la Terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961). The prologue of the magazine’s first issue takes the form of a manifesto of the new Maghreb literature and art on the one hand, and anti-colonial and anti-imperialist politics on the other. The editor-in-chief, Abdellatif Laâbi, denounced the older literary practices which had become routine:

The petrified contemplation of the past, the sclerosis of form and content, the scarcely modest imitation and labored borrowings, the vainglory of false talents constitute the adulterated and daily bread with which the press, the periodicals and the avarice of the few publishing houses work. Even leaving aside its multiple prostitutions, literature has become a form of aristocratism, a displayed medal on a lapel, a vulgar display of intellect and opportunism.

LAÂBI, 1966: 3–6⁹

From this scathing critique of the past, the authors sought to forge a path to renewal. Most of these writers were deeply influenced by revolutionary Marxist-Leninist ideology, which they say as the only hope of bringing what

8 “[...] la première qui a osé aussi résoudre la problématique de la langue en en faisant figurer plusieurs dans le même numéro. C’était en rupture avec la pratique de l’époque, une rupture dans le sens de l’ouverture.”

9 “La contemplation pétrifiée du passé, la sclérose des formes et des contenus, l’imitation à peine pudique et les emprunts forcés, la gloriole des faux talents constituent le pain frelaté et quotidien dont nous assomment la presse, les périodiques et l’avarice des rares maisons d’édition. Sans parler de ses multiples prostitutions, la littérature est devenue une forme d’aristocratism, une rosette affichée, un pouvoir de l’intelligence et de la débrouillardise.”

they saw as social justice. According to A. Laâbi, “the work of the authors of the Generation 52¹⁰ fits precisely within the framework of acculturation [to create] a literature that would bear the weight of contemporary reality” (Laâbi, 1966: 3–6).¹¹ This need is to be met by a new literary generation, one whose only organ is to be the magazine *Souffles*. The explicit focus of the young authors—French and Arab—is language. Now it is essential,

that, despite their linguistic uprooting, poets should be able to convey their carnal depths in a language that is imbued with their history, mythology, anger, in short, their own personality [...]. The language of each poet is above all his own language, the one he himself creates and develops in the chaos of language, the way also in which he recomposes the layers of worlds and dynamisms that coexist within him.

LAÂBI, 1966: 3–6¹²

French thus takes on an entirely different value than it had before independence—its modernity opens up space for new local creativity. For all the questions the use of the language raises, it is no longer bookishly rigid, no longer an instrument of acculturation, but to be used as a tool of the poet’s imagination to be shaped by his own desires and experiences. It must also serve “the recovery of a profound personality, the liberation of culture from the modes of thought imposed by colonialism” (Laude, 1966: 3–6).¹³ Almost five decades after the end of colonialization, Kenza Sefrioui reflects a similar sense of ongoing oppression and struggle: “it is necessary to fight against both the former colonizer and his imperialist culture and against all national reactionary forces” (Sefrioui, 2013: 161).¹⁴

10 The term, first used by Albert Memmi and which characterizes his own period, oscillates between “Generation 52” and “Generation 54.”

11 “la production des auteurs de la génération 52 s’inscrivait dans le cadre rigoureux de l’acculturation”; “d’une littérature portant le poids de leurs réalités actuelles.”

12 “[M]algré le dépaysement linguistique, les poètes parviennent à transmettre leurs profondeurs charnelles par l’intermédiaire d’une langue passée au crible de leur histoire, de leur mythologie, de leur colère, bref de leur personnalité propre. [...] La langue d’un poète est d’abord sa propre langue, celle qu’il crée et élabore au sein du chaos linguistique, la manière aussi dont il recompose les placages de mondes et de dynamismes qui coexistent en lui.”

13 “reconquête de la personnalité profonde, libération de la culture, des modes de pensée imposés par le colonialisme.”

14 “[I]l faut lutter à la fois contre l’ancien colonisateur et sa culture impérialiste, mais aussi contre toutes les forces réactionnaires nationales.”

The novelistic impulse seems strong, but the stakes remain: the author's position, formulated in French, is radical both towards the metropolis and its new appropriation of the Maghrebian writer, and towards the writer himself:

Some of our intellectuals, emboldened by the indictment of colonialism and its consequences in the West, where they are welcomed with open arms and “understood,” must not feel obliged to show immediate gratitude at the expense of their lucidity and what is even more urgent for them: the search for their own identity. Often despising the patterns of alienation of the colonial period, these intellectuals have been quick to fall into other traps.

LAÂBI, 1966: 3–6¹⁵

Moreover, equality will not be achieved without the West taking its share of responsibility:

While we proclaim in Europe almost everywhere on the left and on the right the bankruptcy of many Western values, it is necessary for the West not to come to our meeting with rotten eggs—neither today nor tomorrow. It is that our vitality has become very demanding. In any case, we do not have to do for others the clearing out work that we do for ourselves.

LAÂBI, 1966: 3–6¹⁶

If these ideas were criticized by metropolitan intellectuals in France, the sentiments were criticized even more in Morocco, especially in terms of their political significance. Shortly after the arrest and imprisonment of Abdellatif Laâbi, the magazine's inspiration, *Souffles* ceased its activities in 1972. Abdelkébir Khatibi, a former supporter of the magazine, analyzed the cultural situation in the decolonized countries of the Maghreb from 1956 (Tunisia and Morocco)

15 “Il ne faut pas que certains de nos intellectuels, enhardis par le procès intenté au colonialisme et ses séquelles en Occident, reçus là-bas à bras ouverts et ‘compris’, se croient obligés de témoigner tout de suite à son égard des marques de reconnaissance au détriment de leur lucidité et de ce qui est encore plus urgent pour eux: la quête de leur propre identité. Souvent contempteurs des schémas d’aliénation de la période coloniale, ces intellectuels ne tardent pas à tomber dans d’autres panneaux.”

16 “Lorsqu’on proclame en Europe un petit peu partout dans les gauches et les droites la faillite de beaucoup de valeurs occidentales, il est nécessaire pour l’Occident de ne pas venir ni aujourd’hui ni demain à notre rendez-vous avec des œufs pourris. C’est que notre vitalité est devenue très exigeante. Nous n’avons pas en tout cas à faire pour les autres un travail de déblayage que nous faisons pour nous-mêmes.”

and 1962 (Algeria) both in his fictional and philosophical works. Especially in his essay *Maghreb pluriel* (*Plural Maghreb*, 1983), Khatibi attempts to dramatize the debate on identity, which is particularly intense in Morocco and Algeria. Concerning both language and literature, Khatibi contrasts the colonizer-colonized dichotomy, which emphasizes a Franco-Arab polarity, with the plurality within Maghrebian society itself. At the center of his vision is a dialogue with “l’Altérité de l’Autre” (“the Otherness of the Other”), with this discourse replacing the questioning of identity by abandoning the usual categories of nation, race, culture and religion (NDiaye, 2018). Here the crossing of bilingualism and cultural expresses itself in “an idea that would take the universe of beings and things as a palimpsest without parchment, never written—and never erased by anyone—wherever it comes from” (Khatibi, 1983: 210).¹⁷ In *Maghreb pluriel*, Khatibi draws together his ideas to formulate a cultural strategy, one anchored in both the Arab tradition and postmodern philosophy, in which a nomadic hybrid type of thought, culture and identity can be formed. His strategy deconstructs not only systems of Western but also Eastern thought. Referring to the relationship between the East and the West, Khatibi proposes a double critique in the form of the “pensée-autre” (“other-thinking”): “the critique of two metaphysics, their confrontation [which creates] “a sovereign thought, sovereignly orphan” (Kacimi, 2008: 140).¹⁸ Khatibi’s *pensée-autre* brings the complexity of Maghrebian reality without resorting to mere bipolarity.

4 A Frenchness Free of Complexity

In the 1980s, young writers came to an emancipated and complex-free use of French, not least because they no longer had to contend with the identity burden brought on by compulsory colonial schooling. This also marked a new period in the relationship of the author to the metropolis. For the Algerian writer and playwright Mohamed Kacimi, French became the native language of the “I” at the expense of Arabic, “the inalienable colony of Allah,” for “[Arabic] was meant to hide us from ourselves, to hide from us the life that it despises because it is too transient, [Arabic] is only there to see and feel the face of God

17 “d’une pensée qui prendrait l’univers des êtres et des choses pour un palimpseste sans parchemin, jamais écrit—et par personne effacé—d’où qu’elle vienne”.

18 “critique des deux métaphysiques, de leur face à face”; “une pensée souveraine, souverainement orpheline”.

and to fear only this.”¹⁹ In his novel *Zabor ou les psaumes* (*Zabor or The Psalms*, 2017), Kamel Daoud, another Algerian, questions the sacred relationship with language, doing so through French. For him, French, which he taught himself as an autodidact, represents a bodily, living language that can move towards a clearer deciphering of the self.

Among the reasons for this new use of the former colonizer’s language, now taught only as a foreign language in the Maghreb, is a strong reaction to massive Arabization following the departure of the French. Since independence, the Maghreb states have officially declared themselves as Arabic, denying not only the long period of education in French, but above all, the presence of Berber-speaking ethnic groups. Forced Arabization was gradually accompanied by Islamization and censorship, which imposed conservative literary strictures and suppressed complete freedom of expression. Several authors, including Abdellatif Laâbi, Amin Zaoui, Assia Djebar, and Tahar Ben Jelloun, left their native country and went into exile, whether in France or elsewhere, after being threatened and their works labeled “scandalous.”

5 What French to Write in?

One of the most powerful means of emancipation in the literatures of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia is undoubtedly the “Maghrebization” of language and imagination. In general, despite his Francophony, the Maghrebian author remains rooted in the Arab and Berber world. Often choosing French, the writer expresses his inner turmoil, as we have observed in Malek Haddad and his linguistic “drama.” These authors do not treat French in the same way as Europeans do. As described by academic Nabil Boudraa, “they feel the need to dynamize this language from within, to distort it, to transform its syntax. In short, they make this language feel a form of violence” (Boudraa, 2015: 25).²⁰ The text appears as a palimpsest. The author’s mother tongue and the realities experienced by the writers contaminate written French. The rhythm is often pulsating and jerky, distorted by the operations of Arabic syntax. Through word spirals often returning to the starting point of clauses, meaning becomes shaded in metaphor, remaining hidden and mysterious. This mixed poetics

19 “l’inaliénable colonie d’Allah”; “[C]ette langue [arabe] devait nous cacher à nous-mêmes, nous cacher la vie qu’elle méprise parce que trop éphémère, pour que nous soit donné à voir, à sentir, à craindre le seul visage de Dieu.”

20 “Ils ressentent le besoin de dynamiser cette langue de l’intérieur, de la tordre, en transformant la syntaxe. En somme ils exercent une certaine forme de violence sur cette langue.”

characteristic of literatures of originally colonized countries is sometimes self-conscious and conspicuous, sometimes hidden. The dynamics are driven by the need to translate a reality experienced in another language, which in many cases, represents the only way out of the writer's linguistic drama. Take the example of the iconic feminist Algerian-Berber novelist and filmmaker Assia Djebar (1936–2015), who has given her writing the name “francographie”:

For me, writing today is an activity in a language that I did not initially choose, and writing in French has distanced me from writing in Arabic as well as from my mother tongue; this results, for me, not in my voice on paper, but rather in an inner struggle with its silence as the bearer of contradictions and which gradually or immediately becomes part of the thickness of a language, the lightest, the liveliest or whatever! It is simply made available; in my case, French. I will end by affirming that, as a writer in the French language, I surely practice a Francography.

DJEBAR, 1999: 28²¹

Like Malek Haddad and Kateb Yacine, in search of her voice and struggling with the contradictions of writing in French, Assia Djebar took a break for ten years, during which she devoted herself to experimental documentary filmmaking. Her writing impulse returned only with her autobiographical novel *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985; Eng. trans. *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, 1985), in which the narrative structure transverses several temporal planes, demonstrating the complexity of thought and experience. The third part of the novel evolves into a reflective commentary on French and the autobiographical writing of an Algerian woman in a foreign language: although speaking about herself in a language that separates her from her origins is hurtful, the author is aware that Arabic would not tolerate such reflection. At the same time, the language must allow for the expression of Algerian reality and it must give voice to women

21 “L’écriture se fait aujourd’hui, pour moi, dans une langue, au départ, non choisie, dans un écrit français qui a éloigné de fait l’écrit arabe de la langue maternelle; cela aboutit, pour moi, non pas à ma voix déposée sur papier, plutôt à une lutte intérieure avec son silence porteur de contradictions et qui s’inscrit peu à peu ou d’emblée dans l’épaisseur d’une langue, la plus légère, la plus vive ou n’importe laquelle! Simplement mise à disposition; dans mon cas, le français. Je terminerai en affirmant que, écrivain en langue française, je pratique sûrement une *franco-graphie*.” Djebar was the first writer from the Maghreb to be elected to the Académie française, on 16 June 2005.

“sitting on the side of the road, in the dust.” Assia Djébar’s literary work often reflects on the weight of language, which she felt as “Nessus’s cloak” (Djébar, 1985, 302):²²

Many voices besiege me—the voices of the characters in my fictions—I hear them mainly in Arabic, in Arabic dialect, or even in Berber, which I do not understand well, but whose hoarse breath and panting have inhabited me since time immemorial.

DJEBAR, 1999: 29²³

French along with other languages resonate in Assia Djébar’s body as it does in her work, which itself expresses a deepening and extension of Khatib’s conception of plurality. This mix of French with other languages, this bilingualism, as Abdelkebir Khatibi has termed it, gives way to a hybrid, mixed language poetics, as it does not respect the Parisian norm and shows all the imprints of the languages it contains, here Arabic and several Berber dialects. This multiplicity is strikingly visible in the texts of a number of the authors discussed here:

Prison dans oasis, le collège côtoie, par chatoïement, illisible à coup sûr, si l’on balaie les quartiers massifs, le collège côtoie un jardin à n’en plus finir; le mur s’arrachait, partout le rouge et la mémoire chaude, je tombais de l’autre côté. Défilaient les palmiers dans le jardin, histoire de m’embrouiller dans la cour, j’avais et j’avais de la nostalgie quand, faisant la sieste au soleil, je quittais, pour un moment, le sifflet du pion, la chaise. Un abricotier à la fin du printemps, volé, rendu à la bouche, mot qu’on lâchait, ne demandez point la convoitise amère, ainsi se dépouillait l’arbre, agressé par notre somnolence, plomplom, tu me donnes et je te donne, la fête entre une heure et deux heures, à la fin du printemps. J’étais malheureux.

KHATIBI, 1971: 71²⁴

22 “assises sur le bord de la route, dans la poussière”; “tunique de Nessus”.

23 “Les multiples voix qui m’assiègent—celles de mes personnages dans mes textes de fiction—je les entends, pour la plupart, en arabe, un arabe dialectal, ou même un berbère que je comprends mal, mais dont la respiration rauque et le souffle m’habitent d’une façon immémoriale.”

24 “Like a prison in an oasis, the dormitory is near—a shifting gloss, unreadable, to be sure, when one looks around at the massive buildings—the dormitory is adjacent to an endless garden; the wall was crumbling—all red paint and hot memory everywhere—I fell on the other side. Palm trees wound their way through the garden, only to confuse me in the schoolyard; I felt, felt nostalgic as, dozing in the sun, I left—the whistle of the dorm

Signs of traditional orality can be detected in the dynamics and rhythm of the text, especially when read aloud. All the relations in the text, all the valences are in motion, the structure is dense, elliptical, omitting conjugated verb forms. One can observe the visual structure, the repetition of syllables, and the extreme concentration of definite articles in French.

6 Questions of the Day

If there is a term “Maghrebian literature in French,” it goes without saying that there must be Maghrebian literature written in other languages. Today Maghreb residents write in countless languages, thus the opposition between Arabic and French, so strong in the past, is now less pronounced.

Berber has recently become an official language in Morocco (2011) and Algeria (2016) and has an alphabet called Tifinagh (ⵜⴰⴳⴷⵓⴷⴰⵢⵜ or ⵜⴰⵎⴻⵔⴰⵢⵜ) which was artificially created based on the ancient script of the Tuareg, the Berber nomads of the Sahara. Many texts are also written in other Arabic dialects, which in recent years have overcome the putative stigma of being only a spoken and therefore inferior language, and are increasingly used for literary works. The expansion of the range of written languages as well as the emergence of English are changing the tension between Arabic and French.

Whereas in earlier times the question of the legitimacy, efficiency and pragmatism of the use of French was more important to the Maghreb's inhabitants, scholars are now more concerned with bilingualism and diglossia, that is, traces of the presence of one language in the other (Valat, 2005). Moreover, the debate on languages is highly ideologized. Kamel Daoud refers to what he calls the fetishization of language, as in his view freedom and the right to choose a language are not sufficiently considered. Tahar Bekri, a Tunisian poet who expresses himself in both French and Arabic, points out that the language question impedes dispassionate discussions on what constitutes a literary work in general. Given all these caveats, the Maghreb region is becoming more pluralistic, with the spectrum of languages expanding.

warden—my chair for a moment. An apricot graft at the end of spring, stolen, returned to the mouth, a misspoken word, don't ask for bitter lust, and so the tree our slumber attacked was harvested, plop, you to me and I to you, a glorious day off between one and two o'clock, at the end of spring. I was unhappy.”

7 Cultural Politics and the Institutionalization of Literary Production

Despite the limited history of the literature in question and the relatively small corpus, we must draw attention to processes of institutionalization. Already in the pre-war period, from the 1920s onwards, long before the first works by indigenous authors, numerous literary circles and salons, societies and magazines had emerged in the regions. The authors of the so-called *École d'Alger* published in French in their own country beginning in the 1930s; the bookstore and publishing house *Les Vraies Richesses*, where Albert Camus published his first texts, was founded and run for almost thirty years by Edmond Charlot. Interest in this period was revived thanks to the novel *Nos richesses* (*Our Riches*, 2017) by contemporary Algerian author Kaouther Adimi.

Several magazines have been published in the three Maghreb countries, notably the aforementioned *Souffles* (1966–1972), the flagship journal of the second literary generation after independence. The French-language press continues to hold an undeniable position in the region. In 1995 more than fifty French-language weeklies and dailies were being published in the Maghreb, Egypt and Lebanon (*Cahiers de documentation*, 1995), while as of 2023 many newspapers and magazines, some with long histories, continue to be published across North Africa (Wikipédia, “Presse francophone en Afrique”). Although the factors involved in the endurance of French writing have not yet been widely explored academically, it is safe to say that it can hardly be explained by the former colonial presence alone. Most of these newspapers and magazines also contain a literary and cultural section with current trends.

After independence, national publishing houses were set up, such as the *Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion* (SNED) in Algeria, the *Société marocaine d'édition et de radiodiffusion* (SMER) and Eddif in Morocco, and the *Société tunisienne de diffusion* in Tunisia. Despite some efforts by each of the countries to support publishers, the literary market continues to face economic and political problems. In 2010, 80% of publishing houses in Algeria were private.²⁵ Out of the 270 publishing houses across the Maghreb listed by Kaoutar Harchi (2016) and Tristan Leperlier (2018), only 20% are currently operating in Tunisia.²⁶ The self-publication of books and other works has become common practice. The economic crisis in the Maghreb countries leads to publishing difficulties, compounded by the fact that publication in a Parisian or other French

25 <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/199062/culture/edition-alg-rienne-entre-d-che-et-d-brouille/>

26 <https://publiersonlivre.fr/publier-livre/publier-un-livre-en-tunisie/>

publishing house always guarantees more recognition and a greater possibility for international exposure than does producing works locally (Harchi, 2016; Leperlier, 2018). As in earlier times, production in French is generally aimed at the local intellectual elite and European readers.

From an institutional point of view, as is the case elsewhere, production in French is largely influenced by literary prizes awarded since the 1920s throughout the French colonial empire, such as the *Association des Écrivains de Langue Française* (ADELF).²⁷ Initially, prize committees tended to award (or reward) authors who wrote admiringly of France, but gradually the awards have become more autonomous. Currently, the ADELFF awards approximately ten prizes, three of which are relevant to our study: the *Prix de la Première Œuvre littéraire Francophone*, awarded in collaboration with the *Association des Membres de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques*, the *Prix Maghreb–Afrique méditerranéenne*, and the *Grand Prix de la Mer*. In addition, each Maghreb country confers its own awards. As in other literary fields, in the Arabic-speaking world literary prizes represent a kind of legitimacy and a sanctification of the literary values of the prize-winning works. In the postcolonial context, however, prizes carry an ambiguous value: very often, works that have been awarded a French literary prize or have been recognized in other ways in France are somehow under suspicion or even repudiated. Moreover, many of the prize-winning books are published only in French versions and publish in French publishers, as is the case with Tahar Ben Jelloun, Maïssa Bey, Kamel Daoud and many others.

8 Conclusion

Despite the dire predictions of its imminent demise, French-language Maghrebian literature has come of age and continues to flourish. Although questions remain about the relationship between Paris as a literary center and the periphery in the southern Mediterranean, the debate about the written language and its relationship to the center (France) has calmed down, losing its edge and bias to a certain extent. Tunisia has managed to establish a more harmonious and less conflictual relationship with the French language and culture. In Algeria, which is still struggling with laws introducing Arabic as the only official language of expression and the only language of higher education, French represents a form of rebellion against the abuse of the language in the support of religious ideology. Morocco seems to have the closest political, economic

27 <http://adelf.info/qui-sommes-nous/>

and cultural relations with metropolitan France, which may be why it is showing signs of becoming a new center in the North African region. In all three countries, literature receives some state funding in the form of state-supported publishing houses as well as financing for the organization of various literary conferences and events. At the same time, private and free market institutions are becoming more prominent in the cultural sector, especially after the recent economic crises.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting the apparent contradiction between official cultural policy and the views of certain cultural critics, particularly in Morocco. Authors such as Tahar Ben Jelloun and Leïla Slimani are both renowned in France as representatives of Moroccan literature and are praised by official critics in Morocco, but their works are criticized in literary circles independent of official structures as authors who write about Morocco, not for Morocco, avoiding serious local issues and problems.

The question of the language of expression, once a painful one, is fading away, giving way to the question of who exactly *is* the Maghrebian writer today. Should it be someone who remains in his country and continues to publish in local publishing houses? Or one who has spent most of his creative life outside his homeland, publishing exclusively in French publishing houses in a language other than his mother tongue, as in the case of Tahar Ben Jelloun?

Despite the controversies, in all the Maghreb countries, as in other areas of the former French colonie there is a tendency to question or even break the close relationship between language and identity. Asked why he writes in French as an Algerian writer, Kamel Daoud replies ironically, "Because I feel like it." An increasing number of writers geographically linked to the Maghreb reject being limited strictly to their country of origin, preferring to be seen simply as authors working in the contemporary world. The emancipation of French-language literature has paradoxically also come with the arrival of other languages in the territory. The tension has been relativized and in many cases even turned into a creative advantage.

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French Africa: A Colonial Victory or a Moral One?

Vojtěch Šarše

After independence, new sub-Saharan countries which had been French colonies struggled with cultural alienation and postcolonial identity theft. Narratives concerning the newly formed nations had to be redefined, or, rather, recovered and sometimes completely re-created. This task fell mainly to the sub-Saharan elites who had been molded by the French educational system imported into the colonies. Thus the basic framework of the newly created states was in turn based on a Western or French understanding of the general society as well as the components that make it up. Since “in the colonial period, the political interests of the moment legitimized the silence of Africans” (Kane, in: Diallo, 1985: iii),¹ after decolonization the inhabitants of the former colonies were faced with the task of creating new narratives separate from that of the previous homogenizing context of outside oppression. It was necessary to redefine how to be and how to belong within these newly emerging social contexts. The ambivalence of colonial “silence” and the various manifestations and legacies of the colonial policies of France came to be problematized in sociopolitical systems as well as in literature.

[...] Cameroonian identity. It is not very clear, whether this is really a self-definition or rather a view of looking at oneself imposed on Cameroonians through the national building and national unity rhetoric of their governments. Although government has set a whole team of intellectuals at work to design a national cultural policy and identity [...].

BREITINGER, 1993: 153

While this description does not explicitly refer to the colonial situation that gave rise to French-speaking sub-Saharan literatures in the pre-independence period, it does describe the consequences of an assimilation policy (Loschak, 2015) applied largely through education based on French spiritual, cultural, geographical, historical and political contexts. It was the French orientation

1 “pendant la période coloniale où les préoccupations politiques du moment légitimaient le silence des Africains”.

of schooling that sought to decontextualize the knowledge transmitted to the colonized and to thus subject them in a long and systematic way to a complex process of peripheralization dominated by the centrality of the Parisian metropolis. The corollary to this goal was of course the suppression of everything related to what had been the world(s) of the colonized, especially their customs and rituals, languages, history, etc. Here we will try to elucidate both sides of the issue of peripheralization/autonomization: on the one hand by linking it to the colonial metropolis, related to French centralization at various levels, and on the other by outlining processes of decentralization attempted by French-speaking sub-Saharan writers.

With a few exceptions, the authors discussed in this chapter were published in Paris. They were regularly referred to as Francophone or French-language writers (*auteurs francophones, d'expression française, de la langue française*), or simply as Black writers or Blacks (*nègres, noirs*).² Only rarely was the generic appellation “French author” applied to them. Emphasizing race in naming these authors (i.e. exoticizing them) meant that sub-Saharan African production was kept at a (safe) distance from the literary field of authors from France itself. Thus, while African writers were attached to the metropolis that welcomed them, the space reserved for them there remained on the margins, defined and limited by the origins and social status of these authors. The reactions of authors, publishers and readers to this putative marginalization played a significant role in the peripheralization of sub-Saharan literary production.

1 Colonial Education and the Ideology of Francophilia

And you will see photographs of those light-soaked classrooms and the animated faces of Black schoolchildren fixed on the teacher. We brought light into the darkness.³



2 Through reversal, appellations such as “Black author” were later reclaimed by these writers themselves in defiance of the restrictive and implicitly prejudicial meaning of such labels.

3 Opening speech by Minister for the Colonies Paul Reynaud at the 1931 Colonial Exhibition in Paris: “Et vous verrez les photographies de ces classes claires où sont braqués vers le maître les petits visages éveillés des écoliers noirs. Nous avons apporté la lumière dans les ténèbres.”

In modern societies, identity is shaped in part by the educational system through which an individual passes. The vocabulary learned is often the only means by which the student understands his surroundings and can communicate information about them. In the case of French colonial schools, the lexis taught was at odds with the environment in which the education was taking place. The schools systematically established on the African continent from the second half of the 19th century onwards can be broadly divided into two categories: secular and missionary.⁴ According to the research and overall mindset of the time, or at least the way they were presented to the Western public, the aim of both of these types of institutions was to civilize the indigenous inhabitants so that they would acquire the basic intellectual and moral skills to integrate into the modern world. The following excerpt is taken from the introduction of the first issue of the *Bulletin de l'enseignement de l'Afrique-Occidentale Française* and thus represents the official position of the French colonial policy.

We are not dealing with a country with an ancient civilization, where the school is an institution as old as the roads, where all pedagogical systems

4 The first French colonial school was opened in 1817 in Saint-Louis, Senegal. The founder of the school Jean Dard was the author of the first French-Wolof dictionary as well as the first written grammar of the Wolof language. Several other French colonial schools representative of the system presented in this article should be noted here. In 1855, Governor Faidherbe founded the *École des otages* (School of Hostages), also in Saint-Louis. The name reflects the ambiguity and the hidden violence of this institution, intended for the children of the chiefs of the local tribes. The school was established with the goal of educating a new generation of the colonized who would love France and speak its language, although in the event of a revolt by the natives, these students—children from the most educated and most powerful families in the area—would be turned into literal hostages. The *École normale William-Ponty* was founded in 1903, also in Saint-Louis. The school was best known for its journal *Cahiers de Ponty* in which its students published anthropological papers on their homes, villages, regions, ethnic groups, etc. Graduates of the school in its prestigious era included the future presidents of the African republics after independence, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Modibo Keita and Abdoulaye Wade as well as the future authors Bernard Dadié, Fily Dabo Sissoko and Boubou Hama. Although it was founded in Paris, another noteworthy colonial school was the *École nationale de la France d'Outre-Mer*, established under the name *École Cambodgienne*, later *École Coloniale*. In 1934 the institution was renamed the *École Nationale de la France d'Outre-Mer*, later transformed into the *Institut des Hautes Etudes d'Outre-Mer* in 1959. Seven years later, this establishment was renamed the *Institut international d'administration publique*, which became part of the *École nationale d'administration* in 2002. The school was designed for colonial administrators, but it also became the alma mater of future African presidents Paul Biya, Hamani Diori, Abdou Diouf and Philibert Tsiranana, as well as literati such as Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Pierre Randrianarisoa. These are, of course, just a few examples of the various schools throughout the regions.

have been attempted, and where teaching methods are easily adapted to predisposed minds. We are entering an unploughed field [...].

HARDY, 1913: 2⁵

It was necessary to demonstrate to the general public in the colonies (as well as in Europe) that the colonized unquestionably needed the colonizer and his knowledge. With this rational and moral justification, it would be far easier for the indigenous population to be convinced to embrace modern society and progress, in this case in the form of the French *école* as a legitimate public institution. Colonial propaganda emphasized the cultural exceptionalism of the French nation, an ideology that French institutions also attempted to spread throughout Europe.

The real purpose of the schools was, if not hidden, at least not widely acknowledged by the French elites who guided this policy. In order to assert French domination, it was necessary first to impose on the colonized the image of the metropolis as the only historical and geopolitical reference point and the one source of valid culture. This view of a monolithic French culture was considered universal throughout the empire and applied as such. The second purpose was the practical education of native officials to accept a subaltern position, creating an indigenous subelite who was to become indispensable for the administration of non-French-speaking areas (see Caille). The colonial education system thus attached great importance to acquisition of the French language to achieve this end. This linguistic influence was closely related to another imbalance between the French and the colonial worlds in terms of the intellectual and spiritual capacities of the colonized, which had long been considered inferior. Justifications for the superiority of the colonizers were elaborated upon in great detail:

We do not teach everything that can be learned, but only what we cannot ignore. We do not want to make our students into poets and prose writers; we only want to provide them with the means to express themselves clearly, simply, and precisely.

DAVESNE, 1930: 21⁶

5 "Nous n'avons pas affaire à un pays d'antique civilisation, où l'école est une institution aussi vieille que les chemins, où tous les systèmes pédagogiques ont été tentés, où les méthodes d'enseignement s'adaptent sans peine à des esprits prédisposés. Nous taillons dans le neuf [...]."

6 "[N]ous n'enseignons pas tout ce qu'il est possible d'apprendre, mais seulement ce qu'il n'est pas permis d'ignorer. Nous ne voulons pas faire de nos élèves des poètes et des romanciers; nous souhaitons seulement leur donner les moyens de s'exprimer avec clarté, avec simplicité, avec précision."

This was the strategy of French writer and teacher André Davesne (1898–1978), the superintendent of elementary education in Dahomey. In his articles and books, Davesne describes a universal colonial school policy designed and operated on one assumption considered an unimpeachable truth: the colonized are predisposed to only a particular type of knowledge, the limited scope of which is a consequence of their weak cognitive capacity.⁷

Another common denominator of education in the French colonies was what became the permanent institution of French as the official mode of expression: “French is the only language used in schools. Teachers are forbidden to speak to pupils in the native idioms of the country.”⁸ In the eyes of the colonial administration, it was necessary to educate the new African elites to build a French-speaking and, if possible, Francophile political regime. In other words, it was necessary to shape the self-image of the educated through the language of the colonizer:

The primary purpose of education is to spread the French language among the masses in order to create an awareness of national belonging. It is thus necessary to ensure that the native is provided with a minimum of general, necessary knowledge to attain better material living conditions and to open his mind to French culture and Western civilization.

MERLIN 1921⁹

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- 7 A few years after decolonization officially ended, Denise Bouche described a two-tiered educational system in the African part of the former French colonial empire, one for the French remaining on the African continent, another for the so-called natives. The strategy is outlined by Bouche in the 1968 article *Autrefois, notre pays s'appelait la Gaule ... Remarques sur l'adaptation de l'enseignement au Sénégal de 1817 à 1960*. (Our country was once called Gaul ... Notes on the adaptation of education to Senegal from 1817 to 1960) Available online: https://www.persee.fr/doc/cea_0008--0055_1968_num_8_29_3126 In the 2010 article *La crise de l'enseignement en Afrique occidentale française (1944–1950)*, Harry Gamble adds that there were even two types of diplomas, for the children of Africans, another for those of Europeans. Available online: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/224091359.pdf> For more on the bifurcated school policy, see Carole Reynaud Paligot, “Usages coloniaux des représentations raciales: l'exemple de la politique scolaire.” (“Colonial Uses of Racial Representations: The Example of School Policy.”) Available online: <https://books.openedition.org/pur/104408> According to Reynaud Paligot, as late as 2019 this system continued to adapt and abridge the knowledge taught to African children, who were perceived to be incapable of taking in more sophisticated information.
- 8 Decree of the French Government of 10 May 1924, Article 64: “Le français est seul en usage dans les écoles. Il est interdit aux maîtres de se servir avec leurs élèves des idiomes du pays.”
- 9 “L'enseignement se propose avant tout de répandre dans la masse la langue française afin de fixer la nationalité. Il doit tendre ensuite à doter l'indigène d'un minimum de connais-

This statement of purpose represents a deliberate misinterpretation of the practical needs of the native population as well as the inadequacy of an education of Africans focused solely on Western values and customs. The calculated neglect of African languages and culture demonstrates the colonizer's belief in the superiority and indispensability of his own: "No school can function unless it teaches French. This provision needs no justification. There will only be a strong link between the natives and us if the natives are initiated into our language."¹⁰ The traditional ways of transmitting knowledge, the histories of ethnic groups, their languages, their cultural artefacts were constantly being marginalized and displaced by the information required by the modern Western world as represented by the colonizer. Modern Africa, a new space whose history began with the arrival of Europeans, is thus separated from pre-colonial Africa, which is forgotten or understood as figuratively (and often literally) mythical. On the other hand, despite the official mandates, the acquisition and even the accessibility to French knowledge and culture was in general incomplete and limited for the native inhabitants.

As noted, the entrenchment of the French language in the African colonies was seen as necessary and even beneficial for the natives. The senior civil servant and history teacher George Hardy projected such tenets: "I believe we are only at the dawn of the influence of our language among these races of inferior civilization, but you see with what tenacity we multiply our efforts." (Hardy, 1913: 21–22)¹¹ Hardy's presupposition reflects the dominant narrative that the French mission in the African colonies was indispensable in its modernizing and civilizing influence.

In the Francophone world, mastery of the French language represented a real possibility for social ascendancy: "The most intelligent and most valued pupils are those who know French best. Is this not—along with praising the spirit of our language—a justification of the superior role I wish to give to the spirit of our language?" (Hardy, 1913: 24)¹² The language of the colonizer can

sances générales mais indispensables, afin de lui assurer des conditions matérielles d'existence meilleures, d'ouvrir son esprit à la culture française, à la civilisation occidentale."

10 Government circular of 8 December 1921: "Nulle école ne peut fonctionner si l'enseignement n'y est donné en français. Cette disposition n'a pas besoin de justification. Entre les indigènes et nous, n'existera un lien solide que par l'initiation des indigènes à notre langue."

11 "Je considère que nous ne sommes encore qu'à l'aube du rayonnement de notre langue parmi ces races de civilisation inférieure, mais vous voyez avec quelle volonté tenace nous multiplions nos efforts".

12 "Les élèves les plus intelligents et les plus appréciés sont ceux qui parlent le mieux le français. N'est-ce pas là, en même temps que faire l'éloge du génie de notre langue, présenter la justification du rôle supérieur que je désire lui voir attribuer?"

serve as a metonym for the projected fidelity of the learned student to the system, a tool to establish an intellectual and professional hierarchy among the colonized.

In light of the above, it is easy to characterize the hypocrisy underlying the rhetoric of “civilizing mission” expressed by the colonizers. In fact, the goal was precisely the systematic deprivation of the individual of his own cultures, languages, religions, etc. These “inferior” markers of belonging were to be replaced with those of a member of the French colonial empire. On the other hand, this modern individual was not to identify as a European, but as an African:

France is not asking for the mass production of counterfeit Europeans. To serve her and to love her, she needs people who have not been stripped of their very being, and who come to her language, to her thought, to her genius less by suppressing themselves than by freeing themselves [...]. Let it be that each child born under your flag, while remaining the man of his continent, of his island, of his nature, be a *true Frenchman of language, spirit, vocation!*

GAUTIER, 1931: 291–293¹³

The system of complementary processes (separate schools, Eurocentric education, regimented French administration), so often praised and celebrated in Europe at the time, was conceived to bring about the transformation of the colonized into the “perfect man,” or at least as perfect as an African could be. In practice, the cognitive dissonance necessary to maintain such a liminal position was producing disoriented individuals. Educated individuals sought in vain for a place that had supposedly been created for them in the new society, but such a space existed only in the posters and films of colonial propaganda. The unspoken goal was the complete submission of the most intellectually competent natives to a system that was intended to create division and ambivalence within the colonized territories. The Senegalese headmaster of a school in the town of Saldéan may provide an eloquent example of the internalization of an African of such colonial subjugation: “The French, our civilizers and our greatest benefactors, being unwilling to accept such a state of affairs

13 “La France ne demande pas qu'on lui procure en série des contrefaçons d'Européens. Elle a besoin pour la servir et pour l'aimer d'être qu'on ait pas dépouillés de leur être même et qui viennent à sa langue, à sa pensée, à son génie moins en se supprimant qu'en se dégageant [...] Faites que chaque enfant, né sous votre drapeau, tout en restant l'homme de son continent, de son île, de sa nature soit *un vrai Français de langue, d'esprit, de vocation!*”

which inevitably must lead to the misery and the ruin of the country, first of all enacted very severe regulations against the players of silver [gamblers].” (Cissé, 1914: 311)¹⁴ We cannot know the motivations of M. Cissé, or why he wrote these lines. Still, the fact that they appear in an official national bulletin reporting on the efforts of colonial teachers echoes the redemptive rhetoric of the so-called civilizing mission of the French.

2 European-African Literature Regaining Its Africanness

Understanding colonial education is a necessary step in understanding the dual status of the first generations of French-language sub-Saharan writers who expressed a desire to grasp Africanness itself in its complexity as well as in relation to the metropole. The two sub-Saharan literary movements that made French-writing Black authors visible—the international *Négritude* movement and an informal group of writers of anti-colonial novels—were preceded by the first generation of African authors who, initially following the example of Western ethnologists and anthropologists, focused on African societies and their workings. This important turn took place in Paris in the 1930s, when the first sub-Saharan ethnologists took on the role of observers and published anthropological or sociological studies on African cultures and societies from their own perspective (see below Part 2, Chapter 12). The ethnologist and writer Dim Delobsom (1897–1940), originally from Upper Volta (today Burkina Faso), may be mentioned in this regard. Delobsom was the author of *L’Empire du Mogho-Naba, coutumes des Mossi de Haute-Volta* (*The Mogho-Naba Empire, Mossi Customs in Upper-Volta*, 1932), a work in which he describes the Mossi ethnic group, especially its political system. Another representative is the Dahomey writer and politician Maximilien Quénum (1911–1988), whose work *Au Pays des Fons: Us et Coutumes de Dahomey* (*Land of the Fons: Customs of Dahomey* 1936) uses an ethnological methodology and won the 1938 French Academy Prize for the French language. Considered a pillar of sub-Saharan literature, the historical novel *Dogucimi* (1938) by Benin’s Paul Hazoumé with a foreword by the aforementioned Georges Hardy was also awarded this prize. The Sudanese Fily Dabo Sissoko began publishing his ethnological essays on education in Africa as well as on Bambara and Sudanese culture in the 1920s. These authors followed the example of Jean Price-Mars (1876–1969), the well-known Haitian ethnologist

14 “Les Français, nos civilisateurs et nos plus grands bienfaiteurs, ne pouvant admettre un pareil état de choses qui, fatalement, doit conduire à la misère et à la ruine du pays, ont tout d’abord édicté des règlements très sévères contre les joueurs d’argent.”

who in his text *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (*Thus Spoke the Uncle*, 1928) refuted many of the stereotypes propagated by uninformed and prejudiced Western observers. The aforementioned African scholars and researchers challenged these fossilized views as well as the dismissive pseudo-subjectivity of most ethnologists from the metropolises of colonial empires. Then in the 1950s came arguably the most famous of sub-Saharan ethnologists, the Senegalese Cheikh Anta Diop, who presented his revolutionary theories on the Negro origins of Egyptian civilization in *Nations nègres et culture: de l'Antiquité nègre égyptienne aux problèmes culturels de l'Afrique noire d'aujourd'hui* (*Negro Peoples and Culture: from Ancient Egyptian Negroes to the Cultural Problems of Black Africa Today*, 1954).

In the late 1930s, the political, cultural and philosophical movement known as Négritude emerged at the Sorbonne, one of the most traditional universities in the Western world. The founders of the movement included the Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906–2001) and Birago Diop (1906–1989), the Guyanese Léon-Gontran Damas (1912–1978), and the Martinican Aimé Césaire (1913–2008). These authors accentuated Africanness, that is, their texts present original work from and about the continent that valorizes the uniqueness of the many forms of African history and culture. These writers emphasized the beauty of everything related to Africa, celebrating African art (oral literature, so-called primitive art, etc.) and voicing grievances against colonial powers. Négritude asserted its visions in the 1940s, a decade generally not known for being rich in ethnological and novel production,¹⁵ but significant for the emergence of sub-Saharan literature. The journal *Présence africaine* was founded in 1947 and two years later a publishing house of the same name was established thanks mainly to the Senegalese Alioun Diop (1910–1980). These institutions played a key role in the emancipation of authors who had come from the French colonies in Africa. The journal and publishing house created (and still provides) a space for literary critics, authors and academics whose work focuses on Africa. Still, it should be noted that the *Présence africaine* was founded in Paris and remains there to this day. The de-metropolization of sub-Saharan literature by these institutions, therefore, remains only partial.

Although the Négritude writers pioneered the recognition of African roots as the cornerstone of every African's personality, a premise repeatedly subverted by colonizers, the leaders of the movement soon became the target of harsh criticism from other sub-Saharan writers who thought that Négritude

15 One of the few exceptions is Paul Lomami-Tshibamba, an author from the former Belgian Congo who is not associated with Paris but with another colonial metropolis, Brussels, where he published his first book, *Ngango le Crocodile* (*The Crocodile Ngango*, 1948).

had not gone far enough. Some critics pointed out the issue that the (re)discovered Africanness of the Négritude authors was still being expressed within a Western field of reference. For example, the aforementioned Alioune Diop was repeatedly referred to (somewhat disparagingly) as the “Black Socrates” by Léopold Sedar Senghor. Senghor ascribed the intellectual significance of Diop solely to the generally accepted knowledge and values of Western European culture.¹⁶ Senghor’s critical evaluation of the dependence of Négritude on European institutions remains a key perspective which can help place the movement within a broader context.

In 1976, the Cameroonian Mongo Beti (1932–2001) published an article entitled *La Négritude: une façon de nous blanchir* (Négritude: a way to whiten us) in which he expressed the idea that for him “the planetary division of labor is unacceptable: reason as Hellenic (science, technology, industry are Western), but intuition as a Negro domain (the task of Third World nations being to provide raw materials)” (Beti, 1976: 18–19).¹⁷ Beti thus refers to the temptation of the founders of Négritude to separate sub-Saharan authors from other writers by emphasizing their origins, cultural basis and ethnic identity markers. Beti can perhaps be seen as hypocritical for publishing his provocative article in a French journal and in French, thus taking advantage of his colonial training. Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that at the time Beti was living in France as a political refugee, unable to return to Cameroon because of the political regime of Presidents Ahidjo and Biya. In terms of language, throughout his

16 Léopold Sédar Senghor was a strong advocate of the idea and institutions of what came to be called *francophonie*, a term often criticized today even by those who (somewhat) embrace it. To quote the Chadian author Ben Djangrang Nimrod: “Africa is in ruins and so the politicians speak in our place. Francophony is not just another exoticism in relation to French, it is now a kind of reserve where neo-colonial states continue to confiscate the French language. Belonging to the French space is the result of a choice that people may freely choose, although in a historical context that is certainly colonial. What does this epithet Francophone mean to them? In political terms, they are rather ‘integrated.’” / “L’Afrique est en ruine; aussi les politiques parlent-ils à notre place. La francophonie n’est pas seulement un exotisme de plus par rapport au français, elle n’est désormais plus qu’une manière de réserve où des États néocoloniaux continuent de confisquer la parole française. L’appartenance à l’espace français relève du choix que des hommes, par le truchement d’un contexte historique certes colonial, ont su opérer souverainement. Que veut bien dire l’épithète francophone pour eux? En termes politiques, ce sont plutôt des ‘intégrés.’” (La francophonie, un ‘exotisme’ de plus?. *Le Monde*, 2003. https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2003/03/13/la-francophonie-un-exotisme-de-plus_312805_1819218.html).

17 “une inacceptable répartition planétaire des tâches: la raison est hellène (la science, la technique, l’industrie sont occidentales), mais l’intuition est nègre (la fonction des peuples du tiers-monde doit être de fournir les matières premières brutes)”.

writing and activist life, Beti distinguished between the French language, which he saw merely as a tool for communication, and French culture, which he considered an alienating chimera:

But above it all is Culture with a capital C, an aggressive and exclusive discourse, a megalomaniacal symptom of elitist paranoia, a Culture that in France undoubtedly began in the salons of *précieux* and *précieuses* with their Map of Love and all the rest, and that continues before our eyes in the esoteric logomachy of Malraux: it is nothing but the rhetoric of domination, the ridiculous face of the will to power.

BETI, 1976: 18–19¹⁸

It is clear that Beti is criticizing the contextual schizophrenia that French culture has brought and continues to bring to the former colonies, while (the) language itself does not bear this burden. This view, however, is countered by writers and intellectual contemporaries of Beti's such as the Kenyan professor and author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1938) and the Senegalese novelist Boubacar Boris Diop (1946), both of whom reject the language of the colonizer precisely because it was imposed as a tool of subjugation. Despite this criticism of the movement, Négritude remains the first step towards liberating sub-Saharan literary expression, even if only from the literary tradition of the West and not its language.

Another emancipatory genre which marked the 1950s can be defined as the anti-colonial novel inspired by Socialist Realism which describes the everyday situation in the French colonies in Africa. This decade saw the emergence of sub-Saharan writers who produced works which became benchmarks of French-language sub-Saharan literature. Nevertheless, like their predecessors, all of these authors continued to publish in Paris, whether by choice or (more often) by necessity. These novelists represent the first generation of sub-Saharan writers who systematically portray the relationship between colonizers and colonized through a bond in which a strictly categorical, unbalanced European cultural, political and economic hegemony reigns supreme and comes to erode fundamental African (read *universal*) human values. Important authors of this key period include Bernard Binlin Dadié (1916–2019)

18 "Mais au-dessus il y a la Culture avec un grand C, discours agressif et exclusif, symptôme mégalomaniacal d'une paranoïa élitare, la Culture qui, en France, a sans doute débuté dans les salons des Précieux et Précieuses avec la carte du Tendre et tout le tralala et qui se poursuit sous nos yeux avec la logomachie ésotérique d'un Malraux: celle-là n'est que la rhétorique de la domination, la face riante de la volonté de puissance."

and Aké Loba (1927–2012) from Côte d'Ivoire, the Senegalese Ousmane Sembène (1923–2007) and Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1928), and Guinean Camara Laye (1928–1980) as well as the two Cameroonians Ferdinand Oyono (1929–2010) and the aforementioned Mongo Beti (1932–2001). Although all of these authors are not of the same generation, each of their first novels were written and published in the decade before the decolonization of the 1960s.¹⁹ Moreover, these novelists all received their university education in France (except Ousmane Sembène, who studied in Moscow), and they all learned French in colonial schools, thus these authors all experienced first-hand the cultural intersections that became the central theme of their anti-colonial works.

In these novels, the problems of their particular nation's oppression by European imperial expansion are portrayed. The colonial world is reconstructed with all its maladies along with the consequences of cultural alienation caused by the imposition of the shining model of France and the accoutrement that comes with it. This attitude regarding the reproduction of social conditions was described by the Tunisian fiction and non-fiction author Albert Memmi (1920–2020): “The writer is irreplaceable in his specific role: he is the expression of society's anxiety, its doubts, and even its struggle against itself, its negativity.” (Memmi, 1967–1968: 26–27)²⁰ The novels and other works of these authors represent the expression of an exasperated and incandescent dissention explicitly manifested.²¹ The works are dedicated to the physical and psychological suffering of the oppressed and the alienated, but also to the adopted subordination of the acquiescent colonized who accept France as their center. The fictional worlds of these novels reflect the reality of subaltern identity and cultural dependence on the colonial metropolis, all expressed within a space into which the novelists project their status as peripheral authors dependent on French publishing houses. Whether by choice or unwillingly, these authors were drawn into the gravitational field of the metropolis, despite the fact that the themes represented were not (directly) related to it. The works exposed sociological, cultural and political issues about which the French public—the center—was ill-informed. As mentioned, the colonial propaganda of the time

19 Cheikh Hamidou Kane's novel *L'Aventure ambiguë* (*Ambiguous Adventure*) was published in 1961 but written in the first half of the previous decade.

20 “Rien ne peut remplacer l'écrivain dans son rôle spécifique.”

21 In the context of literary commitment, the Kenyan novelist, playwright, poet and essayist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o should be mentioned. Ngũgĩ has described his position: “I am not in art because of politics; I am in politics because of my artistic calling.” (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1998: 5) Such statements highlight the inevitability of the link between art and politics, at least in the sub-Saharan African context.

(including short films and feature documentaries)²² as well as the colonial exhibitions reproduced a theatrical and otherwise artificial version of the daily life of the so-called natives in the colonies. In response to these images, anti-colonial authors sought to comment upon and otherwise draw attention to the deplorable, ultimately unsustainable situation of both *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957), the title of the best-known non-fiction work by Albert Memmi which is discussed in the following chapter.

It must be made clear here that political engagement was not the only motif presented in the sub-Saharan literature of the 1950s, as other authors also dealt with themes other than French colonization in their works. In his only novel *Le fils du fétiche* (*Son of a Fétiche* 1955), the Togolese writer David Ananou (1917–2000) depicts the personal relationships within a sub-Saharan village without explicitly mentioning colonization at all. The first novel by the Beninese Olympe Bhêly-Quénou *Un piège sans fin* (*The Endless Trap*, 1960) describes interactions among the members of a sub-Saharan family troubled by jealousy; although characters representing colonizers are present, they play only a minor functional role in the story. These two novels, which serve here as proxies for numerous other works, were also published in Paris, once again showing how the sub-Saharan literary field was not autonomous from systematic metropolization. Within this system, however, in describing the simplest customs of everyday life as well as their ramifications, these authors were able to appropriate the distinctive medium of the novel, which had until then essentially belonged to European and other Western authors.

Colonial themes did not disappear with the successes of the independence movements of the 1960s, but persisted in the decades following decolonization. For example, the Guinean essayist Fodé Lamine Touré (1921) recounts his post-European schooling and his own life at the crossroads of two cultures—French and Guinean—in his autobiographical novel *Une enfance africaine*, (*African Childhood*, 1997). In his short story *Giambatista Viko ou le viol du discours africain* (*Giambatista Viko or the Rape of African Discourse*, 1975), the Congolese writer and academic Georges Ngal (1933) depicts the cultural alienation of a character who wishes to shed his Africanness in order to become an academic

22 Many of these films attempt to show the civilizing mission of France in the colonies. In contrast, films that deal with the brutal and alienating reality of colonialism were systematically censored in France, for example René Vautier's *Afrique 50* (1950) and Chris Marker, Alain Resnais and Ghislain Cloquet's *Les statues meurent aussi* (1953). The former was banned for more than 40 years and the latter until 1964. Jean Rouch's ethnographic films *Les Maîtres fous* (1954) and *Moi, un noir* (1958) were in turn banned in the French colonies in Africa.

recognized by the Western academic world. The Ivorian writer and filmmaker Jean-Marie Adiaffi (1941–1990) describes the cruelty of colonial administrators in his first novel *La carte d'identité* (*Identity Card*, 1980), a work inspired by Magical Realism and the religious traditions of the Igbo ethnic group. Another overarching anti-colonial theme in sub-Saharan literature of the last three decades is the redemptive vision of a pilgrimage to Paris, a place where all dreams are expected to come true, but which so often ends in profound disappointment and disillusionment. The Congolese writer Daniel Biyaoula (1953–2014) in his *L'Impasse* (*Dead End*, 1996) as well as Alain Mabanckou (1966) in the novel *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge* (*Blue-White-Red*, 1998) explore this paradigm, which has elements of journey narrative as well as the Bildungsroman.²³ These are just a few examples from an extensive collection of authors and works. The denunciation of colonialism and critical descriptions of the consequences of colonization as well as a degree of self-reflection remain present in the work of sub-Saharan authors from former French and Belgian colonies.

3 Limited and Restrictive Publishing in the French Colonies

The dependence of African authors on French publishers has been highlighted as a dominant theme in the narrative of this chapter. The possibility of sub-Saharan publishing houses was largely ignored and dismissed during the colonial period as a laughably unfeasible proposition. The putative impracticability meshed with colonial propaganda that reified the notion that the indigenous population was ready to build neither the necessary infrastructure nor the readership without the presence and, ultimately, the control of Europeans. In the French sub-Saharan colonies, the only local publishing houses were owned and operated by European missionaries. These institutions were dedicated to publishing versions and extracts from the Bible and other religious texts, but not original works by sub-Saharan authors. The same situation was the case with pedagogical or scientific texts, which until the 1950s were almost created by non-indigenous authors. Published in Paris, the above-mentioned *Bulletin* was not intended initially for texts written by the inhabitants of French West

23 The trope of the much anticipated journey of the colonized to Paris, the center of all civilized life, also appears in Francophone Caribbean literature. For example, the novel *Sauvage à Paris* (*The Savage in Paris*, 1958) by Guadeloupe lawyer and writer Sylvère Alcandre (1913–1984) describes the interpersonal problems associated with this radical change in geocultural context. This example is provided here only to highlight the dream image of the metropolis that we find in the literature of the entire former French colonial empire.

Africa (Afrique Occidentale Française, AOF), although a few articles from local sources did appear. The *Bulletin* published tales, fables and legends from this region of Africa translated or transcribed into French, often by Europeans with no input from the local population or original author. In their own countries, sub-Saharan authors had very few opportunities for publication. In later years, other journals dealing with the colonial situation in Africa appeared: the *Bulletin du comité de l'Afrique française*, the *Courrier maritime nord africain*, *La dépêche coloniale* (bringing issues devoted to other areas of the French colonial empire), *Togo-Cameroun*. The European contributors emphasized colonial progress, and the contributions of Africans are not to be found in these texts. Although the articles describe French colonization from various perspectives, in the vast majority of cases it is only through the eyes of the colonizers. Nevertheless, rare exceptions can be found, for example in *La Gazette du Cameroun* a small number of articles written by Cameroonians were published in the first decades of the 20th century. Such texts may serve as research sources with regard to issues concerning publishing houses established in sub-Saharan colonies. Originally founded in 1908, L'imprimerie du Gouvernement du Sénégal (later called L'imprimerie du Gouvernement, then L'imprimerie Nationale) served as an outlet for the Senegalese historian, politician and teacher Amadou Duguay-Clédor, who was able to publish his works *La bataille de Guîlé* (*The Battle of Guîlé*, 1912) and *De Faidherbe à Coppolani* (*From Faidherbe to Coppolani*, 1913). It should be added that the first Senegalese (i.e. not French) director of this publishing house was appointed four years before independence. Still, it can be said that from the outset this was not an institution that served the goals of decentralization or autonomization, since it was an extension of the center to the periphery.

A second, intriguing and puzzling example is the Librairie "Au Messenger" publishing house²⁴ in Yaoundé, Cameroon, which seems to have published sub-Saharan authors for several years before decolonization.²⁵ Today it is almost impossible to find clear information about this unique institution. Marie-Claire Matip (1938), one of the first French-language sub-Saharan women writers,

24 We found the alternative name Librairie du Messenger in a photograph of this institution taken in the 1950s. It seems that this location was a bookshop and stationery store that bore the name Au Messenger, although this is only our interpretation of the pictorial material.

25 In the former French colonies in Africa, there was often an institution called L'Imprimerie nationale which issued official texts such as laws, decrees and other administrative documents. Before decolonization, the name of these establishments had been L'Imprimerie du Gouvernement, which only issued printed documents related to the administration of the colony, not works of literature.

published her autobiographical memoir *Ngonda* with *Au Messager* in 1954, and five years later Joseph Owono (1921–1981) published his novel *Tante Bella* (*Aunt Bella*, 1959). According to several sources, including *A Bibliography of Cameroonian Literature* by expert Richard Bjornson (1986: 85–126), this publishing house seems to have ceased operations with the declaration of independence. In our research we have been unable to find any other authors who published there.

Two other publishing houses that defied colonial centralization in the Belgian Congo, also a French-speaking colony, should be mentioned. In 1929, the *L'Essor du Congo* began activity, first as publisher of a weekly newspaper, then issuing missionary texts and, finally, works by Congolese authors in the second half of the 1940s. For example, in 1947 the journalist and poet Antoine-Roger Bolamba (1913–2002) was able to put out his first collection of poems, *Premiers essais* (*First Attempts*, 1947). In 1943, the Bibliothèque de l'Étoile was founded in Leverville. This publishing house, which issued editions of European classics, also brought out works by Congolese authors, especially collections of short stories (see Collès, 2008). Both institutions were founded by Belgian settlers. Clearly their aim was not to strengthen local literary production, as the financing and readership continued to be dependent on the colonial metropolis. It should also be recalled that colonial policy makers generally were not interested in developing publishing houses in the colonies or disseminating fine literature among the natives. Everything related to the written word—even themes and tropes—had to pass through the colonial metropolis. This deferment in establishing a domestic literary market in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa remains the subject of numerous studies (Zidouemba, 2001: 414–428; Pinhas, 2012: 120–121; Onanina, 2017) which describe the absence or inadequacy of the printing industry, publishing and book distribution in African territories and countries during the colonial period.

4 Conclusion

As has been demonstrated here as well as in other chapters of this book, colonial policies and colonization itself weakened the connection of the local cultural traditions with the indigenous population, especially the educated elite and their children.²⁶ The colonized individual belonged to the periphery, but was systematically linked to the center by a chain of interlocking processes,

26 Another excerpt from an official speech from 1944 also illustrates this constant effort to barbarize and even dehumanize the colonized: “If we want our civilizing influence to have

with French education having disrupted the original collective memory by methodical deculturation. This situation, however, gave rise to new local elites who later denounced this policy of depatriation and the deterritorialization hidden behind the civilizing mission of the white school. Some members of these elites, including poets and novelists, have described how and in what aspects of everyday life the new axiological system of reference was taught and accepted as the sole possible reality, although these depictions only partially (if at all) reflected actual indigenous values and behaviors. Indeed, the explicitly stated central purpose of the cultural and educational policy was to dominate the colonized by reifying (even creating) the perception that the local *bons sauvages* were resolutely unable to improve their existential situation without the intervention of the colonizers.

Despite the critiques that came later, the literature of Négritude as well as the anti-colonial novels served as instruments of emancipation. Through these works, the oppressed gained a voice and retooled the language of the colonizer to criticize a system that was presented as redemptive when it in practice was exploitative. By describing their own real situations as well as those of their fellow citizens through ethnographic description, fiction and autobiography, these authors were able to break the long silence imposed by the Europeans. In various forms, we encounter the search for identity, the sometimes conflicting emotions aroused by the possibility of entering the Western world, the nostalgia for the tribe, family, customs, habits, and the rediscovery of lost faith. In many cases, this is a literature of revolt, but also of identity, lost and recov-

a profound and lasting effect, if we want the advice on hygiene to be applied in every household, if we want agricultural methods to be changed, if we want the huts to be healthier and the children to be better educated, it is essential that education should reach the Negro woman, whom it is important to make a wise housekeeper and a good mother of the family. To know how to read, write and count is amply sufficient for her. And one more thing: this education should be primarily oral and direct. Let her learn to sew, to knit, to organize her budget, to make her garden beautiful, to make her house cleaner and nicer, to take sensible care of her children." / "[S]i l'on veut que notre action civilisatrice ait une influence profonde et durable, si l'on désire que les conseils d'hygiène soient appliqués dans chaque foyer, que les méthodes de culture se modifient, que les cases soient plus saines et que les enfants soient mieux élevés, il est indispensable que l'éducation touche également la femme noire dont il importe de faire une ménagère avisée et une bonne mère de famille. Savoir lire, écrire et compter est largement suffisant pour elle. Il y a plus: cet enseignement devrait être surtout oral et direct. Qu'on lui apprenne à coudre, à tricoter, à ordonner son budget, à rendre son jardin plus varié, sa case plus propre et plus avenante, à soigner intelligemment ses enfants." (S.a., 1944) It is clear that the colonizers considered the people of French West Africa as quite backward, thus they could be benefit most by being taught only the rudiments of Western knowledge.

ered. The political and cultural engagement of these writers is reflected in the dynamism in so many of their works.²⁷ They tell their stories both to make the colonizers aware as well as to emerge as spokespersons for readers among the colonized.

These generations of the renaissance of Africanness originally came about from a process of a policy of *francophilisation*. Both as a result of these efforts and in some ways in spite of them, sub-Saharan postcolonial writing during these periods certainly represents a liberation of sorts for at least some of these African writers. Many of these creations are also immersed within a changing Western civilization that continued to shape the imaginations of their creators. Moreover, the works had to conform to the literary trends of the metropolis, first adapting to a primarily French readership, later to embrace and be embraced by the entire Western world. Most of these authors are considered members of a classical elite created by colonizers in their schools, with interpretations of their works often filtered through views of an educational system that masked colonial reality. Sometimes these writers are even accused of inscribing the colonial ethnographic model with all its simplifications and prejudices into their fictional and nonfictional descriptions of Africa. While their portrayal of the African continent is often critical (of the colonizers, but also of the inertia of the colonized), it can also be seen to come across as exotic in some ways, especially to Western audiences then and even now. Nevertheless, taken in the context of liminal identity, for example, these works can be seen as exploring—sometimes playfully, sometimes brutally—the fundamental yet problematic binary of the oppressed and the oppressor. These authors belong to two civilizations, one obscured and marginalized, the other celebrated and glorified, a reality which makes many of their works extremely thought-provoking and well worth reading today.

27 The literary prize for engagement La Cène Littéraire, Lecteurs engagés was established in 2016: “The Cercle des amis des écrivains Noirs Engagés aims to promote and advocate the literature of African writers and writers of African descent that draws attention to human, social, ideological, political, cultural and economic issues of Africa and its diaspora.” / “Le Cercle des amis des écrivains Noirs Engagés a pour buts la promotion et la défense des littératures produites par les écrivains africains et afrodescendants et mettant en exergue une cause humaine, sociétale, idéologique, politique, culturelle, économique de l’Afrique ou de sa diaspora.” ([https://cene.lacenelitteraire.com/la-cene-litteraire/.](https://cene.lacenelitteraire.com/la-cene-litteraire/))

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Sub-Saharan African Literature in French from the 1980s to the Present: The Symbolic Year 1980 as an Aesthetic and Thematic Turn

Petr Vurm

This chapter will explore recent and contemporary literature in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa, a part of the continent geopolitically and culturally distinct, as is its literature. Here, the rather complicated relationships between center and periphery, or rather among multiple centers and multiple peripheries, can be illustrated through links between Africa, Europe, America, even Asia, as currently represented mainly by China. It is also possible to clearly discern the dynamics of deterritorialization and reterritorialization through an examination of the growing importance of migrant literatures as literary production moves into European exile and back again. The literary scene of this region has changed in recent decades, especially since 1980. In this text the focus will be on authors who have come to prominence during this period and in doing so have created an imaginary breakthrough linking in some ways the various poetics, aesthetics and writing styles across sub-Saharan Africa. Following an attempt to situate this literature within Francophone traditions, the events, authors and works which preceded this period within Sub-Saharan African writing will be outlined in brief. This background is imperative for both an overall understanding of the rupture that took place in the last decades of the 20th century as well as for the way in which contemporary writers are influenced by authors now considered masters. A number of aesthetic and thematic turns will be presented, especially in terms of the ways they touch on migration issues, the complex relationship to colonial history as well as the birth of popular literature in the region. Finally, problems related to the choice of language will be touched upon.

The ramifications of the tremendous changes in the Francophone literary world which began in the late 19th century continue to resonate today. One of these transformations has been in the redefinition of the term “Francophone literature/s,” which can de facto refer to literatures originating in the former colonies, while the term “French literature” may be considered a national literature. The first term can be seen as somewhat stigmatizing and discriminatory, as it excludes a large number of authors and their works from the corpus

of what is represented in the second term. Nevertheless, under the influence of Anglo-Saxon postcolonial theories as well as through the demands of the manifesto "Pour une littérature monde en français" ("For a world literature in French," 2007), a gradual movement among at least some authors and literary critics has emerged calling for all works written in French, including "French literature," to be considered simply "Francophone literature."

While this view is certainly not shared by all, in many cases this approach has come to influence the way literature is taught in secondary schools and universities, especially in institutions outside of France. In the Anglophone world, for example, so-called French Studies programs have undergone a significant transformation which has been described in detail by David Murphy in his article *How French Studies Became Transnational*. Murphy demonstrates how in the 1970s the idea of "France" was central, thus the designation between the labels French Studies and Francophone Studies represented an almost ironic pleonasm. Since then, in a great number of educational institutions as well as in literary criticism a shift has gradually taken place towards a comparative approach, with "French Literature" eventually becoming merely "one of" (though still an essential part of) these literatures. Murphy concludes his article by arguing that a similarly novel turn has made it possible not only to study these literatures as a (quasi-unified) whole, but also to abandon often difficult-to-justify linguistic criteria. More pertinent heuristic models can thus be applied, especially in relation to the colonial and postcolonial origins of the texts under study. The postcolonial approach then quite logically makes it possible to proceed not along the axis of France, i.e. solely in terms of its former colonies, but along the single axis of all the former colonies of France, Belgium, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Germany. Works of Francophone Literature can thus be more readily compared to works / literatures in other European languages. Similar comparisons are borne out by the search for similar contours in the themes and poetics of postcolonial works: specificities and differences are observed in terms of the historical and philosophical context of colonization as determined by relationships among the colonized and the colonizer.

Any discussion about African literatures written in French must take into account many paradoxes. Firstly, Africa itself as a literary or cultural space was traditionally not considered a suitable or high-minded topic for Western commentators until relatively recently. The status of the African author had also long been suspect, with the role of the writer more or less reserved for the French or Belgian colonizer, often a government official, who had the privilege of spending some time in an African country and observing it with an Eurocentric gaze. This led to the creation of various documentary texts such as trav-

elogs and diaries along with attempts at ethnological and anthropological treatises. From today's perspective works like these can often make the reader smile with their naiveté or blatant racism, sometimes unintentional. It has become apparent that the exoticizing novels that once satisfied the desire of European readers for something mysterious and distant have little in common with the reality of African lives, excepting perhaps the geographical location (sometimes even bearing a European name) the works are set in. Nor have the gradual processes involved with the emancipation of African authors within the Francophone literary field and their penetration into the centers of academic studies produced entirely self-evident results, at least not at first glance. Indeed, even today African texts continue to be perceived and read as singular documents dealing with purely local or regional issues, communicating few universal themes, thus of little interest to the average European reader. Partially in response to this received perception, new African literature has since the 1980s undertaken a relatively rapid transformation under the influence of postcolonial theories and, more recently, intersectional transnationality.

Many African authors of recent generations have adopted a discourse which inclines them towards an "all-world" (*tout-monde*) view. This perspective represents the image of a postcolonial or universal world literature, however difficult it remains today to define what exactly *is* (a) world literature. As we will attempt to demonstrate, these "new authors" define themselves in relation to their predecessors, with whom they remain more or less in conflict in terms of ideas, themes and poetics. The younger writers, however, also demarcate themselves in relation to "French literature," the (often-disputed) canon and its representative authors. They enter the literary arena vehemently trying to be heard, but with many factors working against them. In this sense, the Djiboutian author Abdourahman Waberi has coined the term *les enfants de la postcolonie*, a literary and identitarian label for a group of loosely connected authors who by and large reject the received roles determined for them as spokesmen for Africa or even "bards" in the sense of Négritude movement. The protagonists of the works often flow in a liminal space as something between an incumbent subject "somewhere" in Africa and a defector who breaks out of it. The authors simply refuse to reduce their content strictly to traditional African themes, as sardonically characterized by Waberi: "We want to be writers first, then niggers." (Waberi, 1998: 8–15).¹ In line with Pascale Casanova's seminal essay, the goal is to emerge from the local or peripheral space to join the *World Republic of Letters*.

1 "On veut être écrivains d'abord, puis nègres."

An ancient legacy of literary production on the African continent is inherently based on oral cultures, sometimes designated as *orature*, a term created by the Ugandan Pio Zirimu in the early 1970s. In contrast to the various oral traditions across the continent, African writing in physical or digital texts, whether in native languages, English, French, Portuguese or other colonial languages, began in earnest only in the 20th-century. In terms of Francophone sub-Saharan literature, the first novels such as René Maran's *Batouala* appeared as early as the 1920s, with production flourishing in the 1930s and especially after the Second World War.² The emergence of the African written word came through several factors, especially the growing resistance to colonization and the desire to define the individual (as a part of or in contra-distinction to the community) politically and intellectually against colonization. French-language African literature soon began to undergo rapid and dynamic development, taking various tracks throughout the 20th century. Roughly four key periods can be distinguished:

- 1) The pioneers, the first African authors who began to write in French in the 1920s.
- 2) The political, cultural and literary Négritude movement, created by a group of intellectual elites from the French colonies who assembled in Paris in the 1930s. Three “founding fathers” are commonly associated with Négritude: Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, Aimé Césaire of Martinique and Léon-Gontran Damas of French Guiana, with today Senghor and Césaire having achieved almost legendary status around the literary world. The works of these three men—partly political and essayistic, but primarily poetic and theatrical—were published in magazines such as *Légitime défense*, *L'Étudiant noir* and *Présence Africaine*. The movement continues even today to represent the roots and inspiration for many Black African writers. Négritude served as a self-contained literary group, an important platform for disseminating works and ideas, as well as a general meeting space promoting the emancipation of the colonized. Eventually these writers' strong position in France came to be supported by eminent established intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Leiris (see more detail in Part 2, Chapter 12).

2 It should be emphasized, however, that René Maran was born in Martinique in 1887 and moved to Gabon with his parents at the age of seven. He subsequently studied at the lycée in Bordeaux and did not return to the African continent until 1912 as an employee of the colonial administration in Ubangi-Shari. Maran's experiences in French Equatorial Africa inspired him to write *Batouala* as well as many of his other novels.

- 3) Massive growth came in the 1950s and 1960s through the development of the historical novel, the realist novel as well as the Bildungsroman. One of the main points of focus is the clash between tradition and modernity along with the search for and exploration of possible positions of accommodation. During this time authors from West Africa first entered the literary scene: Bernard Dadié, Sembène Ousmane, Camara Laye and Cheikh Hamidou Kane. These were later followed by writers from Central Africa, the most famous of which are Ferdinand Oyono and Mongo Beti (who also wrote under the pseudonym Eza Boto).
- 4) By the late 1960s, the changing themes of novels of the post-independence African period signaled a transition into what is often called “disillusionment” fiction, works largely concerned with decolonization and the transition of the new African countries to dictatorships of various types. Across the continent, much of the population was experiencing profound disappointment with the advent of these despotisms, all the more so because of the expectations that independence would bring a transition to social equality and superior conditions than under French or Belgian colonial rule. The writers express this dissatisfaction in their works, often combining their discontent with harsh or satirically humorous criticism of the new regimes. The most famous novels from this period include Ahmadou Kourouma’s *Les soleils des Indépendances* (1968; *The Suns of Independence*, 1981), *La vie et demie* (1979; *Life and a Half*, 2011) by Sony Labou Tansi, and Henri Lopes’ *Le pleurer-rire* (1982; *The Laughing Cry*, 2017).

Following these four main periods, inspiration largely seems to have flagged a bit, for example with the emergence of the didactic and often discursive interventions of *littérature engagée*. Literary criticism also appears to have lost energy. This emptied literary field was gradually occupied by the authors we will overview in this chapter, although it must be stressed that this text does not represent an extensive critical assessment of the post-1980 period; this remains to be undertaken. The production of this period often responds to previous works, trying to define itself in relation to its predecessors, whether it extends their polemics, imitates them in some way, or reacts against them thematically or stylistically.

1 A Growth in Publication Outlets

Literary production has grown significantly since 1980, not only in quantity but especially in quality. French language literature from Africa began a painstaking

ing journey toward autonomy, fostered in part by its diversity and creativity as its commitment to heteronomy became less and less absolute. Compared to previous periods, it is therefore quite difficult to speak of a unified direction or perhaps even define a singular movement in the sense of Négritude, although the example of the *Afrique sur Seine* group, which we will introduce in a moment, is notable.

The diversity of the corpus we are studying represents not only a multiplicity of production, but also a gradual diversification of literary institutions. On the one hand, the authors' works are published by renowned houses such as Gallimard, Grasset or Actes Sud, while on the other small publishing companies are being set up in sub-Saharan Africa, a region with quite limited human capital and financial resources. It is also the case that the social and physical geography across the region is also quite multifarious, with the labels "sub-Saharan Africa" or "Black Africa" only imperfectly reflecting the cultural, geographical and ethnic heterogeneity of countries such as Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, etc. This can also be linked to aspects of diversity among the various authors in terms of their biographies and professional destinies, i.e. whether they choose to remain in Africa or (must or choose to) face the uncertainty of European or American exile. The variation among the individual life stories of these writers reflects to a great extent the diversity of the contemporary work that has become the most artistically and financially successful.

Let us focus first on the material aspects of sub-Saharan Africa literary production, which begins with the fact that contemporary writers now have more possibilities by which their work may be made available to the public. The production is thus much more varied and distinctive in comparison to that of thirty or forty years ago. While relatively recently a growing number of small publishing houses have emerged in Africa despite all the difficulties, especially material ones, publishers in France are also increasingly implementing various measures to support and promote African literature. Two important areas of sub-Saharan production can thus be distinguished, although their position in the literary field remains unequal: African centers of production, and European centers represented in particular by Paris, Brussels and Geneva. The disparity between the African and European centers can be seen especially in terms of their capitalization and organization. A small private publishing house in Dakar or Libreville cannot compete on the literary market with a large European media corporation / publishing house such as Gallimard, Hachette or Flammarion.

It should be noted that until the late 1970s, France held a monopoly on publishing African authors, from the selection of manuscripts to the produc-

tion, dissemination and promotion of the finished work. The significant date for Africa is 1972, with the founding of the *Nouvelles éditions africaines* (NEA, New African Publishing House), a firm created at the prompting of the Senegalese government on the initiative of Léopold Senghor, at the time President of Senegal. The establishment of NEA represents a significant milestone in sub-Saharan African production which would be reflected in the visibility and dissemination of works in Francophone Africa in the decades that followed and even until today, with the NEA affiliates currently based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and Lomé, Togo, in addition to Dakar, with Senegal remaining the main publishing center of sub-Saharan Africa despite the logistical and other difficulties. Another major African publisher which has emerged is the *Centre d'édition et de diffusion africaines* (CEDA, Center for African Publishing and Dissemination). In collaboration with the French publisher Hatier, CEDA issues mainly pedagogical texts in Africa along with creative texts and works by contemporary authors as well as nonfiction and essays.

During the fifty years since NEA was founded, several new publishing houses have been established, including *Le Figuier* (The Fig Tree) in Bamako, Mali; the *Khoudia* publishing house in Dakar; and *Arpakgnon* publishing in Lomé, Togo. *Le Figuier* was founded by the important pioneer of African writing from Mali Moussa Konaté; *Khoudia* was established by Aminata Sow Fall, one of the most significant Senegalese authors; *Arpakgnon* by the Togolese author Yves-Emmanuel Dogbé.³ It is thus evident that the precarious situation on the African literary scene leads authors to set up their own publishing houses where they can first put out works by themselves or their friends, then can eventually provide publishing opportunities for younger authors. One impetus for promoting work by unpublished writers may be that a major French publisher has rejected them, although the economic situation on the African literary market is also a factor, since it is generally the case that books imported from France and other European countries are quite expensive and nearly unavailable to the local population. A vital incentive is also literary and cultural pride in one's own country as well as in Africa as a space in itself. The desire to prove that despite all the difficulties it is possible to build a functioning publishing house without resources (or control) from Europe remains a prime motivation. The growing trend of the emergence of various small publishing houses also includes the establishment of *ODEM* in Libreville, Gabon; *Limpala* in Lumumbashi, Congo; *Editions Goutte d'eau dans l'Océan*; *les Presses de l'UCA*, ifrikiya and *SOPECAM* in Cameroon; *EDILIS* Publishing House, Eburnie and *Nouvelles*

3 <http://africultures.com/il-faut-savoir-honorer-le-livre-609/>

Editions Ivoiriennes (NEI) in Côte d'Ivoire; EDJA, Laure Kane and Clairafrique in Senegal; Kraal, SAnkofa, Hamaria and La Muse in Burkina Faso; Jamana Publishing House and La Sahélienne in Mali; as well as Moffi, Continents, La rose bleue and Akpagon in Togo. Like smaller publishing houses around the world, these companies are fighting a daily battle for survival, especially in the context of the multinational giants that dominate the global literary market. Obviously the underdeveloped economic conditions in Africa compound the gravity of the situation.

The other publishing center which concerns us here is France, particularly Paris. Here, too, we can distinguish between several types of publishing houses: those which have historically specialized in Africa, those which because of their cosmopolitan publishing profile are open to the whole world and therefore regularly include African authors in their publishing output, and finally those which mainly for economic reasons publish established authors, albeit in relatively smaller numbers. In the first group of specialist publishing houses, we find the well-known Parisian publishing houses such as *Présence Africaine*, *L'Harmattan*, *Karthala*, *Sepia* and *Nouvelles du Sud*. The oldest of these publishing houses, *Présence Africaine*, is associated with the eponymous magazine founded in 1946 by Alioune Diop (see above Part 1, Chapter 9) and continues its cultural and literary mission in disseminating African writers and their ideas, publishing classics, discovering new authors as well as engaging in other cultural activities. Founded in 1975, *L'Harmattan* pursues similar activities. In addition to its regular production, it runs specialist series such as *Encres Noires* (Black Inks), *Poètes des Cinq Continents* (Poets of the Five Continents) and *Polars Noirs* (Black Detective Stories). The two Parisian publishers *Présence Africaine* and *L'Harmattan* account for the most significant portion of the publishing activity concerning African authors. A third important publishing house is *Karthala*, established in 1980, although the books published here tend to be critical studies in social sciences and humanities rather than fiction, poetry, drama, etc. *Sepia*, founded by Patrick Mérand, has also been active on the literary scene since 1986, focusing on two literary domains: the Global South, particularly Africa, and other French former colonies and overseas departments, for example in the Caribbean. The themes of the works published range from ethnography to testimony. In 2016, this firm was bought out by *L'Harmattan*, but the editorial policy and overall focus on Africa have been maintained. The last of the publishers to be mentioned here is *Nouvelles du Sud* (originally *Silex*) established in 1980. This house was founded by the poet Paul Dakeyo in collaboration with other fellow writers and poets. It is thus one of the few publishers to focus primarily on poetry, although novels and essays can also be found in its editorial output.

Other groups of Trans-European publishing houses that allocate a part of their literary production to African and other authors can be named. Series issued in this context include *Monde noir poche* (Pocket Black World), issued by Hatier, and *Continents noirs* (Black Continents), a series published by Gallimard.⁴ Other companies take a more general approach, making room for authors from elsewhere, not just Africa. The now defunct publishing house *Le Serpent à Plumes*, which disseminated works from all over the world in a targeted and systematic way, devoted attention to genre diversity, making no distinction between popular forms such as crime fiction and more “highbrow” genres such as drama and long essays.

The third group of publishers is relatively marginal in terms of our research. As part of their editorial policy, large publishing houses attempt to attract established African authors who have demonstrated consistent commercial viability, both for economic reasons and international prestige. Generally, recognition of these writers has come because they have managed to win one or more major literary prizes, thus they have become known to a broader audience. (The ramifications of the award system are discussed below.) Eventually, these successful authors move on from smaller African or European publishers to the publishing giants. Nowadays, such writers include Alain Mabanckou, who migrated from *Présence Africaine* to Gallimard and *Seuil*, and Calixthe Beyala, who now publishes with Albin Michel. Other authors such as Ahmadou Kourouma, Henri Lopes, Tierno Monénembo and Kossi Efoui have also published or are publishing with *Seuil*, while others such as Bessora and Abdourahman Waberi have published with Gallimard.

2 The 1980s Generation and beyond

Having briefly mapped out some of the houses who publish in African literature, let us have a look at what is new in the writing of the younger generation of authors. A significant thematic shift since the 1980s has occurred which has to do specifically with writers related to migration and migratory waves. These authors have received a great deal of attention from literary critics and academics. Many of these writers have in common the fact that, although they are

4 It must be mentioned that the series *Monde noir poche* and *Continents noirs* have been strongly criticized for their essentialist character and categorization of authors, as the works often reflect the division of the former colonial world into periphery and center. Consciously or unconsciously, in many ways the texts perpetuate colonial narratives for a Francophone readership.

of African origin, they mostly live in Paris or other major French cities. These authors are often described as having given African writing a new dynamic, and in a way they represent a new impetus for sub-Saharan Francophone writing. Their integration into the global market is closely linked to the demographic transformation of France and its colonies in the 1970s and 1980s. This is related to ongoing migration to the French metropolis and the acceleration of migratory dynamics from Africa, which is in turn often conditioned by negative Western interventions in Africa and the rise of dictatorial regimes in former African colonies. The gradual settlement of African families and communities is less common in this context; instead, individual migrations and exiles are much more often the case. These authors are, in fact, second-generation migrants, with some of them French nationals. This generation is quite different from the first generation, their parents, as the younger authors did not experience the transition from the French colonial presence to decolonization. On the contrary, they generally have known only a single political regime, usually a dictatorship, thus they have experienced their own brand of disillusionment only after the thwarted great expectations of their parents following decolonization.

The original work of the young authors in question gradually began to attract the attention of French and Francophone literary critics, who recognized in these writers an original way of thinking and writing as well as fresh themes and a new overall worldview characteristic of a specific literary generation (Cazenave, 2003: 7–8). The Djiboutian author Abdourahman Waberi speaks of the birth of a new group of African writers working in France (and subsequently in Belgium, Germany, Austria and elsewhere) whom he calls, as mentioned above, “children of the postcolony” (Waberi, 1998: 8–15). The members of this generation share both similar creative starting points and a similar itinerant status, as they have mostly left their country of origin and found themselves living abroad. From a literary point of view, they have in common the fact that they are creators of innovative novels and other works in the context of the emergence of new themes, especially those connected to migration and exile. As Odile Cazenave argues in her seminal work *Afrique sur Seine. Une nouvelle génération de romanciers africains à Paris* (2003; *Afrique sur Seine: A New Generation of African Writers in Paris*, 2005), these writers have all seemed to have shifted the focus of their attention from Africa to themselves, embracing the interiorization in their writing (Cazenave, 2003: 8). The emergence of the new aesthetic of this generation, one shrouded in a certain theoretical indeterminacy as well as grounded in current issues as seen in the global context of contemporary thought has been blended with currents of Postmodernism and postcolonialism to create a new complex and polysemantic reality. The expe-

riences of these authors in their works can thus be applied not only to Africa and Europe, but to the whole world. Indeed, this approach facilitates the exploration of a number of cultural events and other phenomena of a global nature within contemporary society. The above-mentioned writers not only innovate on a thematic level linked to their own personal experience, but also bring to the world a new universality. They embark on a critique of metanarratives and thus propose a new way of understanding artistic creation, of understanding the world using the position of the individual in the world as a reference point and the basis of reality. Nevertheless, they do not impose their model as a universal truth, but rather propose it as a critical quest that transcends the binary boundaries of opposites, especially such as those of subject and object, self and other, identity and alterity, here and there. They seek what the Indian-British critical theorist Homi K. Bhabha calls a Third Space. The literature of diasporic writers, whose writing appears to have scrupulously cut itself off from earlier African texts, has succeeded in forging an entirely new connection between competing theories and ideologies in the world of postmodernity. Yet paradoxically, the novels of writers of African descent living in France cannot be understood in isolation from the African literatures of previous periods, for these new works too are expressions of resistance to authority and thus necessarily rank among the expressions of resistance to symbolic domination across the 20th century in the collective imaginary of sub-Saharan writers. They thus maintain a subversive and intertextual relationship with cultural and literary references of all kinds and genres, and thus contribute to producing an apragmatic discourse which cannot be separated from the issue of the interplay between postmodernity and postcolonialism (Husti-Laboye, 2009: 12).

The aforementioned writers of sub-Saharan origin living in France have entered the literary scene in part due to their relatively new position as creative individuals from this region in relation to the outside world as well as the new thematic aspects of their artistic production compared to previous works. Their reactions to their physical position in a new space and cultural position forces readers to rethink older frameworks for reading and interpreting African literature. The contemporary writing of this generation disrupts reader expectations and offers audiences new paradigms in which individuality and freedom become the main attributes of the creative act. By leaving their homeland, most often voluntarily, and moving elsewhere, contemporary writers of sub-Saharan origin are making a profoundly symbolic gesture under new circumstances, reliving in different modes the life choices of some of their predecessors who left to conquer European horizons. By taking on the existential conditions of exile, these writers have attempted to free themselves from the constraints of their previous lives and thus find a deeper creative freedom.

Their individualism and the disengagement of their work from larger systems seem to be a characteristic feature of the entry of these authors into the literary scene of their host country.

Significantly, the authors in question were mostly born in the 1960s or 1970s, a period when the African countries of their origin were gradually decolonizing. They thus had not experienced the radical transition from being colonized to that of becoming citizens of the newly established countries. On the contrary, those that came from Africa had very often lived only under one-party domestic political rule and had no other politico-cultural experiences with which to contrast their present disillusionment with the emerging dictatorships. Some of these (future) authors followed their parents into European exile; some were the children of the elite, such as diplomats or other officials. For many, their childhood or adolescence was accompanied by constant movement among countries and continents. This atypical and often alienating existential framework thus significantly influenced their relationship to Africa, their questioning of identity, their views on the status of the author in terms of political or cultural engagement as well as their relationship to literary production in general. In this way, they differ substantially from the generation of their literary forebears, from whom they simultaneously find inspiration and against whom they seek to define themselves, rethinking the aesthetic and poetic premises of their work.

Further, this transformation must be viewed within the entire globalized context of literary production, which has changed considerably in many ways since these writers came to maturity. As African literature has matured relatively quickly since the independence period, the authors mentioned above can thus draw on a reasonably significant corpus of works produced by their predecessors in the form of novels, plays, poetry and other genres. This is evidenced by the numerous intertextual references, through which it is not uncommon for young authors to refer to Senghor, Kourouma, Lopes, Labou Tansi or Tchicaya U Tamsi. What is relatively new within this intertextuality, however, is precisely the universal overlap with tropes and modes of so-called world literature. It is not rare for the work of these writers to be simultaneously influenced by the Magical Realism of Hispano-American authors, 1960s Minimalism, American jazz, or even the French detective novel, especially the darker "polar" works which are themselves influenced by so-called "hardboiled" or "noir fiction" originally from cities of the USA. The sources of inspiration for these new sub-Saharan authors can also be found beyond Africa, even beyond France, embracing a global(ized) context.

Although the work of these writers is extremely diverse both formally and thematically, perhaps one example may serve for all. The well-known Togolese

author and sociologist Sami Tchak went to Cuba for seven months in 1996 as part of his research on the poverty and social problems on the island that force many women into prostitution. In Cuba as well as during his further travels to other Central and South American countries he began to draw inspiration from Hispanic culture, which eventually influenced his fiction. For example, Tchak's polyphonic novel *Le Paradis des chiots* (*The Puppies' Paradise*, 2006) is set in a slum ironically called El Paraíso (Paradise), a world populated with street children trying to survive at any cost despite incredible poverty, violence and humiliation. Likewise, his novel *Filles de Mexico* (*Mexican Girls*, 2008) is set in various locations across Hispanic America. The main character of this partly autobiographical novel is the Black man Djibril Nawo, a French-writing author of Togolese origin, who ventures across the American continent from Mexico to Colombia to experience local culture and especially the women in the various settings. In certain ways the author seems to equate his native Africa with the Americas, locating numerous similarities, for example in the marketplaces, those "chaoses of the world."

3 Infrastructure and Institutions

As we have noted, the presence of Africa in the literary field is becoming more and more evident, and the situation of authors of African descent is becoming more and more established. Let us now try to critically assess to what extent this position is solid. A reader of European origin may form the impression that literary institutions in Africa function similarly to those in Europe or America, albeit perhaps on a smaller scale. This notion can easily be dispelled, as a functional and vibrant literature in a given country or continent cannot be measured merely by the number of works published nor by the novelty of the themes. The many factors that form the imagined breeding ground from which literary works grow must also be considered. So what is incomparably different in Africa as compared to Europe? While the low volume of published works and the small number of publishing houses remains an issue, the absence of the auxiliary systems of literary criticism and literary research remains an even more fundamental hindrance. With a greater number of African institutions, the procedures and methods which might be established through their work would inspire scholars in Europe. There is also a dearth of literary journals for both local consumption as well as possible listing in top citation databases through which the ideas of African scholars could be effectively disseminated among themselves and throughout the world. According to our research, only the more affluent African countries such as South Africa, Egypt and Morocco

tend to be heavily involved in cutting-edge research. By contrast, sub-Saharan Africa is lagging behind the rest of the continent. Even in the small central African country of Gabon, cited as the wealthiest African country by GDP per capita thanks to its oil revenues, the level of research does not approach that of any European country in terms of quality or quantity. Two factors contributing to this discrepancy are the unequal distribution of local wealth and the way most African states perceive the role of funding for education and research.

Another problem, however less acute, is undoubtedly the absence of a system of African literary prizes, which would both motivate individual authors as well as reflect the highest standard of writing on the continent. When sub-Saharan authors are awarded prizes, which happens relatively infrequently, the accolades come primarily from Europe, most often French prizes such as the Prix Goncourt, Prix Fémina, Prix Renaudot and others. While the first time the prestigious Prix Goncourt was awarded to a Black writer was in 1921, with the prize going to the Martinican René Maran for his novel *Batouala*, since then the award has been presented to only three authors of African descent. The most recent awardee was the French-Senegalese writer Marie NDiaye for her 2009 novel *Trois femmes puissantes* (*Three Strong Women*, 2012). The Cameroonian Léonora Miano received the Goncourt Prize for high school students for her novel *Contours du jour qui vient* (*Contours of the Coming Day*, 2006), and at the age of 77 the Ivorian Ahmadou Kourouma won the 2000 Renaudot Prize for his novel *Allah n'est pas obligé* (*Allah is Not Obligated*, 2006). One of the most well-known contemporary authors is certainly the Congolese-born Alain Mabanckou, who was awarded the Renaudot in 2006 for his novel *Mémoires de porc-épic* (*Memoirs of a Porcupine*, 2011), having narrowly missed out the previous year when his extremely popular novel *Verre cassé* (2005; *Broken Glass*, 2010) was shortlisted. In 2021, the Goncourt Prize was awarded to the Senegalese writer Mohamed Mbougar Sarr for his novel *La Plus Secrète Mémoire des hommes* (*The Most Secret Memory of Men*, 2023). Referencing the life of Malian author Yambo Ouologuem, this multivocal coming-of-age novel may be seen as a reflection on the relationship between the colonies and the metropolis. The book soon became a bestseller despite its piquant subject matter. Unfortunately, this list contains nearly all of the winners of literary prizes who may be associated with sub-Saharan Africa, since besides Sarr's novel few works from the vast expanse of Black Africa have been recognized in this way in recent years. Although awards are not always indicative of the long-term quality of a particular piece of literature, they certainly bring works and authors to a broader general readership, increasing notoriety and sales at least temporarily. Especially for African authors, the instantly identifiable red "prize winner" ribbon on the cover of a book is all the more valuable, as these writers often

have no other means of giving their work sufficient publicity at the regional level as well as on international websites, where the majority of book sales are made today.

If we now turn to the post-1980 sub-Saharan novel, compared to previous periods these works increasingly turn to topics characteristic of popular or “non-literary” (often genre) literature in terms of themes, characters and locations in addition to the concerns with migration and exile. This creates a rather interesting paraliterature which previously was quite limited or even non-existent. Popular forms with which these writers have worked with include, for example, the detective novel, the science fiction novel, the sentimental novel, the women’s novel, the adventure novel, the photographic novel, as well as comics and children’s literature. Just to name a few of such works, we may include those of the well-known Mongo Beti’s *Trop de soleil tue l’amour* (*Too Much Sun Kills Love*, 1999); Kouty, *Mémoire de sang* (*Kouty, Memory of Blood*, 2002) by Aïda Mady Diallo; Achille Ngoye’s *Sorcellerie à bout portant* (*Sorcery at Close Range*, 1998); and *Les Cocus posthumes* (*The Posthumous cuckolds*, 2001) by Bolya Baengy.

Examining this literature coming out of sub-Saharan Africa can be quite thought-provoking both from a literary point of view and from the perspective of the relationship between center and periphery, as such an investigation can show how the African literary field functions in confrontation (or collaboration) with the general European or the French field. Bernard Mouralis commented on such encounters in his 1975 work *Les Contre-littératures*, in which in a rather original way he explores the position of texts in various fields in terms of their literariness through perspectives such as centrality/peripherality, canonicity, visibility in the literary market, etc. Mouralis’ analysis is interesting from the standpoint of African literature in that he includes Negro-African works among his three types of counter-literatures, alongside exotic or exotizing literature (*littérature exotique*) along with popular literature or literature about ordinary people (*littérature populaire ou sur le peuple*). The French critic then uses these three categories to demonstrate how counter-literatures enter into a permanent conflict within the literary field and thus pose a threat of permanent subversion to literatures located closer to the center: “The protest against the colonial situation, the valorization of Black African culture and thus the neutralization of the various European discourses undeniably characterize a process of counter-literature.” (Mouralis, 1975: 27)⁵

5 “La protestation contre la situation coloniale, la valorisation de la culture négro-africaine, la neutralisation des différents discours européens caractérisent indéniablement un processus de contre-littérature.”

Mouralis' long essay, which both precedes and coincides with the period that is the focus of this chapter, is quite valuable regarding the dynamics of the emergence of paraliterary genres which emerged after 1980. The exact relationship between Mouralis's counter-literature and the aforementioned "new" paraliterature must be determined, as concurrently remarkable tensions were arising not only between single centers and peripheries, but between and among several complexes of centers and peripheries. While Mouralis perceives Negro-African work in general as anti-colonial and as counter-literature during the 1960s and 1970s, many works and authors have become with time more canonical within the African literary field, thus establishing a center of their own. On the periphery of this putative field, then, the aforementioned genres such as the detective novel, the women's novel and many others began to emerge along with, for example, the parallel emergence of "heightened" migration, exile or psychological literature which tackles the more serious identity issues of sub-Saharan African protagonists. Nevertheless, as demonstrated throughout this book, transitions and boundaries between center and periphery usually cannot be sharply defined. Many authors—the well-known as well as the undiscovered—explore both "serious" and "leisure" literature as well as liminal spaces among such categories, as is typical for paraliterary practices. In this context, Alain Mabanckou's novels *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge* (1998; *Blue White Red*, 2013), *African Psycho* (2003; *African Psycho*, 2007), *Tais-toi et meurs* (*Keep Silent and Die*, 2014), along with *Le Paradis du Nord* (*The Northern Paradise*, 2000) by the lesser-known Jean-Roger Essomba may be mentioned. While all of these novels feature conventions of detective fiction, the works may also be linked to tropes of exile and migration as well as psychological and identity issues.

The wider entry of women authors into African literature also represents a significant break with the past, with the 1980s bringing several notable developments. Examinations of the literature by and about women had before then been limited to a number of thematic studies by male authors which followed the few texts published since the 1950s. From this perspective, the African publishing house Nouvelles éditions africaines along with the specialized Parisian publishers Présence Africaine and L'Harmattan have played a key role, with the latter firm providing women authors with support and incentives (e.g. financial) to develop their talents and find a place in the literary market. The growing presence of women in Francophone African literature has also led to a number of ground-breaking critical articles and monographs (D'Almeida and Hamou, 1991; Cazenave, 1996; Lee, 1994; Bréant, 2012). These studies gradually began to offer a more global perspective on the work of women authors. At the same time, recurrent practical limitations and other disadvantages are also described, such as the inaccessibility of the texts themselves, which are usu-

ally out of print or inaccessible in libraries and other distribution channels. This lack of availability to their works has led to the marginalization of women authors, who are often unincluded in anthologies and corpora, thus eventually excluded from literary canon formation. Despite these practical obstacles, authors such as Cazenave and Jean-Marie Volet are keen to point out the tenacious dynamism of women's writing and the ever-increasing number of published works. The number of novels and other works by women has greatly increased since the 1980s and especially the 1990s. Taken as a whole, these contributions have proven (perhaps unexpectedly) vital in terms of their thematic and formal variety (Volet, 1994).

In addition to survey studies and anthologies, literary scholars have progressively focused more critically on women's writing itself, with one significant achievement the aforementioned monograph by Odile Cazenave *Femmes rebelles: Naissance d'un nouveau roman africain au féminin* (1996; *Rebellious Women: The New Generation of Female African Novelists*, 1999). Cazenave notes in particular the shift from an autobiographical, somewhat documentary approach to a more militant, rebellious, but also more creative, playful, and humorous style than can be found in the first women's works more widely available. Angèle Bassolé Ouédraogo speaks of "women warriors in the shadows" (Ouédraogo, 2008) in relation to this trend as well as the challenge represented by the invisibility that many women writers continue to face.

Despite this positive momentum, it remains the case that only exceptionally do works by women authors receive wide distribution and discussion in the African context. Women are generally forced to linger in the shadows of their male counterparts in terms of opportunity. In a strategic comment on this male-dominated climate, Senegalese author Mariétou Mbaye Biléoma has symbolically chosen the pseudonym Ken Bugul, "the one no one wants." It is also questionable to what extent contemporary literary work, much of it inspired by the migration and exile experience, reflects the actual position of women in Africa and the multiple modes of marginalization that women must overcome. In a number of their novels, Ken Bugul as well as other authors such as Véronique Tadjo and Léonora Miano have sought to capture the arduous and sometimes tragic fate of many women living in Africa.

4 Summarizing the Post-1980 Turn

It may be stated that after 1980 Francophone African literature could no longer be characterized in any one uniform thematic way as had been possible in the past through earlier categories such as "the autobiographical confession of the

individual alienated by the colonial environment,” “the expression of disillusionment with the decolonization process,” “committed / militant poetry,” etc. The 1980s and 1990s brought a great new variety of themes and creative practices in which the individuality and imagination of each creative subject are reflected. It is thus difficult for any literary scholar or critic to grasp, let alone characterize this period; the more diverse the literary landscape, the more fragmented the mirror that reflects it.

In attempts to compose a general survey of the literature of Black Africa, the fundamental characteristic of the diversity of the corpus under study remains a challenge. Not only the aesthetic and thematic heterogeneity, but also, given the size of the continent, the geographical and ethnic diversity spread across West and Central Africa must be emphasized along with the dissimilar publishing contexts, ranging from small local companies to giant corporate publishing houses with headquarters in Europe and North America. Diversity of genre is also a key factor: although fiction seems to predominate, many outstanding works of poetry, theatre and nonfiction have been produced which we do not have space to discuss here. Finally, along with (or perhaps instead of) generalizations about the development and state of sub-Saharan literature, exploring the oeuvre or even a single work by an individual author can yield exciting and profound results.

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Angola and Mozambique

Silvie Špánková

Although Angola and Mozambique share many aspects of a common history which has shaped their identities, the two countries on opposite sides of the southern African coast are different in many ways. The Portuguese entered Angolan and Mozambican territory decades apart in the 1480s and 1490s, respectively. As a result, a system of trading stations (*feitorias*) and captaincies (*capitanias*) was established in these territories with the aim of gradually exploiting and trading local resources. These two territories—until 1951 Portuguese West Africa and Portuguese East Africa, and from 1951 to 1972 the “overseas provinces” of “Estado Novo” (New State)—were also important for the slave trade. Angola and Mozambique each achieved independence through an armed struggle for national liberation, with both movements succeeding in 1975. Since the 1600s both countries have also been a target of the interest for European nations and countries: the Netherlands (17th century), Great Britain (19th century, especially after the Berlin Conference, established to resolve conflicting colonial claims that culminated in the English ultimatum of 1890) as well as in the second half of the 20th century South Africa, the Soviet Union and the USA. The process of deperipheralization thus occurred in Angola and Mozambique at a relatively later period than in other nations, although, as we shall see, the developments were just as internally problematic.

In terms of the historical-political context, the literatures of Angola and Mozambique are situated at the intersection of the influences of several centers that have imprinted them with certain specific features. Until 1974, the designation of Angolan literature and Mozambican literature as autonomous and national was not used, although the general notion of Angolanness and Mozambicanness after colonization had already been well established. In the former metropolis, there was still talk of “overseas” literature in 1971 (Amádio César, in: Pires Laranjeira, s/d: 51). In the late 1970s, however, literary historians António José Saraiva and Óscar Lopes included Angolan authors such as José Luandino Vieira within the Portuguese canon. Modifications came in subsequent editions of the works of these authors.

These circumstances influenced what can be called the starting points for the autonomy of both Angolan and Mozambican literatures. Although it is

acknowledged that each literature had undertaken a process of autonomization before national independence, some doubts have emerged about chronology and the designation of pivotal and “canonical” works. The origins of autonomy can be traced back to the establishment of the press in Angola, which according to Mário António Fernandes de Oliveira occurred in 1845 with the publication of *Boletim do Governo Geral da Província de Angola*. In the pages of this official newspaper were published “pastoral letters and provisions of the bishoprics of Angola and the Congo as well as other documents, chronicles of travels in Angola, articles and studies on overseas politics and economy, literary passages in prose and verse, reports from travelers in the hinterland of Angola, commercial advertisements and auction notices” (Oliveira, 1997: 2).¹ The same publishers also issued a book in 1849 now considered a milestone in Angolan literary autonomy: the poetry collection *Espontaneidades da minha alma: às senhoras africanas* (*Spontaneities of My Soul: to the African Ladies*) by José da Silva Maia Ferreira (1827–1881), considered the first African poet in Portuguese. Although not much concrete personal information has been documented regarding this poet, it is known that he was born in Luanda as the son of Europeans, went to Brazil to complete his literary (self-)education and returned to Portuguese Angola in 1849. The epigraphs of his poems suggest that he also had some knowledge of Latin, French and English. Since formal instruction in these languages was unavailable in Angola at the time, it is not sure where or how he acquired this knowledge (see Oliveira, 1997). After the *Boletim*, other newspapers began to appear in Angola, making the late 19th and early 20th centuries therefore of great importance for the process of Angolan autonomy and identity construction. According to Mário António Fernández de Oliveira, the phase of the “official” press represented by the *Boletim* was followed by the phase of the “free” press: the journals *A Civilização da África Portuguesa*, the first issue of which was published on 4 September 1866, as well as *O Cruzeiro do Sul* (1873–1878), *Echo de Angola* (1881), *A União Africo-Portuguesa* (1883) and other print media published in Luanda (Oliveira, 1997). In Mozambique, newspapers and magazines also played an essential role in identity and cultural autonomy, especially *O Africano* (1909) and *O Brado Africano* (1918).

1 “[...] pastorais e provisões do bispado de Angola e Congo, bem como outros documentos; crónicas de viagens através de Angola; artigos e estudos de política ultramarina e economia; trechos literários em prosa e em verso; relatórios de sertanejos do interior de Angola; anúncios comerciais e avisos de leilões [...]”

1 “*Negrorrealismo*,” Creoleness, Hybridity, and Multiculturalism

In later as well as contemporary critical assessments of the late 19th and early 20th century, two conceptions emerge. On the one hand, Pires Laranjeira refers to works embracing Africanness as *negrorrealismo* (“Negrorealism”), a term coined to “designate a specific literary reality of Africa” akin to “American Negritude” (Pires Laranjeira, s/d: 40).² On the other hand, Mário António Fernandes de Oliveira (1934–1989, born in Angola, after 1963 lived in Portugal) referred to a “Creole elite” (*élite crioula*) associated with Creoleness (*crioulidade*). These terms must be interpreted in terms of the historical context and their ideological implications. Creoleness is linked to the slave trade and, consequently, to “belonging” to one’s country of origin. Creoles are those who were born in a place—“sons of the soil” (*filhos do país*). In Oliveira’s conception, the original meaning of creole extends to the cultural sphere, and it has come to denote the hybridization of cultures, customs, beliefs and languages.³ Oliveira treated creole people and culture within the context of this definition in his academic texts *A formação da literatura angolana* (*The Formation of Angolan Literature*, 1987) and his essays *Luanda, ilha crioula* (*Luanda, Creole Island*, 1968) as well as in his own literary works. According to José Carlos Seabra Pereira, Oliveira follows this track “in order to defend the aesthetics and axiological autonomy of literary creation [while in doing so] he transfers to his lyricism a ‘Creole self,’ free of nativist constraints, a practice of cultural miscegenation of African, European, American contributions” which enables Oliveira to venture “in his narrative fiction without a revolutionary hero” (Pereira, 2019: 463).⁴ As Mário António Fernandes de Oliveira acknowledges, creole in its broadest sense must be understood primarily as the linguistic-cultural manifestation of the nineteenth-century city of Luanda: “its content is entirely and simply cultural, and therefore seems to us to encompass almost all nineteenth-century Angolan literature, especially its print.” (Oliveira, 1997: 16)⁵

The situation is not at all easy to delineate, since a number of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century journalists also published in Portuguese newspa-

2 “indicar uma realidade literária específica de África”; “Negrismos americanos”.

3 Evolutions of the term “creole” were occurring in several cultural fields throughout the second half of the 20th century, for instance in the 1970s in the context of French-speaking Louisiana in the southern USA—see chapter Part 3, Chapter 15.

4 “[...] [a] par de uma defesa da condição estética e da autonomia axiológica da criação literária, transpõe uma prática da mestiçagem cultural (africana, europeia, americana) na sua lírica de ‘ego crioulo’ sem restrições nativistas [...] e na sua ficção narrativa sem herói revolucionário.”

5 “O seu conteúdo é total e simplesmente cultural e é assim que nos parece abranger quase toda a literatura do século XIX em Angola, designadamente a sua imprensa.”

pers, thus maintaining a connection with the metropolis. This is the case of one of the first names to appear at the birth of what is called Angolan literature, Alfredo Troni (1845–1904). Born in Coimbra, Portugal, where he studied law, he was exiled to Angola in 1873 for his participation in student political activities (Xavier, 2017: 56–57). In 1882, he published his novella *Nga mutúri* (*The Widowed Woman*) in serial form in the pages of the Lisbon daily *Diário da Manhã*. In the same month and year of July 1882, the novella was printed in the Angolan *Jornal das Colónias*.⁶ Alfredo Troni is considered by both Pires Laranjeira and Oliveira as one of the forerunners of Angolan prose fiction. From the point of view of each of the above-mentioned conceptions, certain objections can be raised. If we consider the work in the context of Laranjeira's *negrorrealismo*, it should be stressed that in Troni's novella the figure of the Black African woman is not treated entirely without prejudice (unlike later perspectives); in principle, she is merely a creature yearning for social ascent and integration into colonial society. For this and other reasons, in the opinion of Manuel José Matos Nunes this work can hardly be considered "the founding work of Angolan prose" (Nunes, 2013: 183).⁷ The same reasoning can also be applied in terms of the putative Creoleness of the novella, because, as Nunes argues, "the text denies any natural and harmonious fusion of cultures, since it places the character in the process of the social ascent depicted on the plane of civil and cultural inequality" (Nunes, 2013: 182).⁸ Finally, it is impossible to classify the novella within the colonial literature that emerged in the context of the introduction of the Estado Novo (New State, 1933–1974). The Estado Novo works employed tropes of a nationalist imperial ideology that promoted—in the colors of a simplistic and naive exoticism—a vision of the African paradise as part of the Portuguese empire. According to Nunes, Troni's novella stands out from colonial literature for four reasons: it does not celebrate in any way the Portuguese colonial empire; the colonists are portrayed with no heroic or patriotic mission; no natural coexistence is shown between Europeans and Africans, merely power relations; and the chief focus is on a character born in Africa (Nunes, 2013: 185). Nunes summarizes his arguments by concluding that the novel is "a narrative by a Portuguese writer on Angolan themes" (Nunes, 2013: 185).⁹

6 [https://www.infopedia.pt/apoio/artigos/\\$nga-muturi](https://www.infopedia.pt/apoio/artigos/$nga-muturi)

7 "peça fundadora da narrativa angolana".

8 "[...] o texto desmente qualquer fusão natural e harmoniosa de culturas, sendo no plano da desigualdade civil e cultural que se move essa personagem no processo de ascensão social que o texto relata."

9 "uma narrativa dum escritor português sobre temas angolanos".

Despite the relevance of the arguments that Manuel José Matos Nunes brings to this issue, we must not forget that Troni lived for almost thirty years in Angola, that he founded and managed important newspapers there (*Journal de Loanda* from 1878, *Mukuarimi* from 1888 and *Concelhos do Leste* from 1891); he came to inhabit the local reality and he died in Luanda. Furthermore, his interest in African cultures is evidenced by the title of one of his periodicals in the Kimbundu language—*Mukuarimi*. Based on these data, Troni along with his texts can be considered one of the first markers of the Angolan quest for autonomy, and his minor works as a whole can be considered a cornerstone of Angolan prose. In addition to Troni, other writers and journalists supported this call for autonomy, including Cordeiro da Matta, Pedro Félix Machado and Pedro da Paixão Franco. These authors wrote about “African themes” from the perspective of a people rooted in the African territory with no metropolitan colonial ideology. Deperipheralization as a process of African literary emancipation must then be understood as acquiring an awareness of Africanness that manifests itself both culturally through interest in regionalism, the collection of folk heritage, praise of the land, etc. as well as ideologically in terms of the degree of acquiescence to or rejection of colonial rule.

Along with several works on language issues, Cordeiro da Matta (1857–1894), who was born and died in Angola, composed the poetry collection *Delírios* (*Deliria*), of which no copies have survived. A poem from this book written in 1881 entitled *Negra* (Negro Women) was published in 1902 in the Angolan magazine *Ensaíes Literários*. Another of the authors mentioned, Pedro Félix Machado (1850–?), was born in Portugal and lived in Angola. Oliveira called him “the little Machado de Assis that Angola needed in its transition to a new era after the end of slavery” (Oliveira, 1997: 85).¹⁰ Machado’s significant interest in the social themes was manifested in his prose work *Scenas d’África. Romance íntimo* (*Scenes from Africa. Intimate Novel*), which was published serially in the Portuguese newspapers *Gazeta de Portugal* and *Tarde* from 1892 to 1893, republished serially in *O Angolense* in 1907. As Oliveira recalls, Pedro Machado worked as a professor and was also allowed to give free evening classes in Ilha de Luanda in one of the rooms of the house where he lived (Oliveira, 1997: 112). It is worth noting Oliveira’s observation that Machado’s “literary belatedness in relation to what emanated from the creative centers on which he depended

10 “[...] o pequeno Machado de Assis que Angola requeria no seu trânsito para a época do trabalho pós-escravo.” Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839–1908) is an eminent Brazilian writer.

[...] seems slight, or at least less than what was evident in almost all other cases" (Oliveira, 1997: 112–113).¹¹ The last of the trio Pedro da Paixão Franco (1869–1911) is the author of the polemical prose work *História de uma traição* (*The Story of a Betrayal*). With its four hundred pages, it is the most extensive prose work published in Angola until 1911. It tells the story of the clash between fellow journalists working at the newspaper *O Angolense*. This conflict, which ended with the unexpected death of the author at the time of the work's publication, also serves as the historical backdrop for the 1989 novel *A conjura* (*The Conspiracy*) by Angolan José Eduardo Agualusa. The narrative elements are taken primarily from articles from *O Angolense*, with texts from the newspaper entering the novel in the form of epigraphs as well as being featured in the plot itself. The novel's world depicts Luanda at the turn of the 20th century, including a number of contemporary historical figures such as Pedro da Paixão Franco and Alfredo Troni.

Angolan Creole society during this time period is also reconstructed in some of Agualusa's other narratives, particularly in the novella *A feira dos assombrados* (*The Marketplace of the Damned*, 1992) and the novel *Nação crioula—a correspondência secreta de Fradique Mendes* (*The Creole Nation—the Secret Correspondence of Fradique Mendes*, 1997). *Nação crioula* features the literary character Carlos Fradique Mendes, originally created by Eça de Queirós and other authors of the Portuguese 1870 generation. This epistolary novel (with letters dating from 1868–1888) follows the structure of Queirós's *Correspondência de Fradique Mendes* (*Correspondence of Fradique Mendes*): the cosmopolitan Fradique arrives one day in Luanda and becomes "Africanized." Although this is a fictional character in an adventure plot, the story can be seen to illustrate a phenomenon common since the late 19th century: the Portuguese seeking out an African space not only to explore and exploit for their own benefit, but to inhabit and make a home in a process akin to emigration in a desire to change their lives by adapting to local conditions.

In this context, it should be remembered that Portuguese interest in Africa was renewed after the "loss" of Brazil in 1822 when this former South American colony declared independence. Two factions soon emerged in Portugal, one seeking to rehabilitate the legacy of discovery by celebrating the national history and proprietorship of the African colonies, the other criticizing the ambition to maintain the colonies when Portugal itself was facing great economic difficulties. The controversy escalated after the 1884–1885 Berlin Conference,

11 "[...] atraso literário em relação ao que se fazia nos centros de produção de que se dependia (...) parece inexistente ou pelo menos inferior ao verificado na quase totalidade dos casos."

which set new rules for the colonization process and proclaimed the need for effective colonization instead of abstract historical claims. The supporters of the latter faction, which included Eça de Queirós and other prominent intellectuals of the time, acknowledged that Portugal did not have the resources for such an undertaking. Nevertheless, Portugal responded to the results of the Berlin Conference with the “pink map” project, which aimed to create a Portuguese Africa in a broad swath from Angola to Mozambique. This project, however, clashed with British ambitions for an “Africa from Cairo to Cape Town,” since the area between Angola and Mozambique corresponded precisely to the British area of interest. In 1890 Portugal thus was forced to abandon its dream of a Portuguese Africa and cede the African interior to England under the threat of armed conflict. These circumstances led to a strengthening of national sentiment in Portugal. During this period, *A Portuguesa* (a sort of Portuguese version of *La Marseillaise*) was written by Henrique Lopes de Mendonça, set to music by Alfredo Keil, and in 1911 became the national anthem of the new Portuguese Republic.

In line with these historical circumstances, Coimbra professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos refers to the concept of the “semiperipheral” metropolis: at the end of the 19th century Portugal was facing many internal problems, among them poverty, high illiteracy rates and insufficient infrastructure, with many of these issues persisting into the new century. As Portugal did not enjoy a powerful status in Europe, Africa represented a place of salvation. The dream of a legendary Africa—similar to the image of the American Far West—attracted Portuguese settlers. In literature, for example, this trope replaced the traditional dystopian image of Africa as a hell and a place of exile. This penetration of another space, not in the form of invasion, plunder and the imposition of the structures of European civilization, but in the form of “immigration” or reverse “assimilation,” has been depicted in various narratives since the end of the 19th century.

The British Ultimatum was considered disastrous for Portugal even by the supporters of the second faction who were critical of colonization for economic reasons. They mitigated their previous views and also began to see the African space as a place of renewal. In Eça de Queirós’s novel *A ilustre casa de Ramires* (*The Noble Family of Ramires*, 1900), the protagonist dreams of traveling to Africa to undertake an adventure like the one in H. Rider Haggard’s 1885 Victorian colonial novel *King Solomon’s Mines*. While the treasure motif is a primary focus of adventure in English popular fiction, as influenced for instance by the legend of John the Priest as well as Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883), this is not quite the case with Queirós’s hero Gonçalo Ramirez, who actually “finds” himself in Africa and returns to Portugal not only rich, but

renewed inwardly. The adventurous search for wealth also became the motif of several stories written in Portugal in the first half of the 20th century, not only in colonial literature but also—albeit paradoxically—in socially critical prose (Carlos de Oliveira, Branquinho da Fonseca). By the end of the 20th century a tendency toward recovering this substrate of Angolan and Portuguese history had emerged: e.g. *Yaka* (1985) by the Angolan Pepetela; *Choriro* (2005) by the Mozambican Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa; and *Os pretos de Pousaflores* (*The Blacks of Pousaflores*, 2011) by Aida Gomes, born in Angola and living in the Netherlands and Portugal. This trend may be seen to demonstrate a certain emancipation of identity, as it overcomes the phase of historical *ressentiment* and dares to develop an overview of layers of historical identity through a perspective linked neither to colonial ideology nor to the ideology of the Angolan and Mozambican guerrilla resistance.

Nevertheless, the relevance of the concept of Creoleness continues to be debated in Angolan society and culture, for example as characterized by Pires Laranjeira: “the majority of the population is far from miscegenation and much further from creolization” (Pires Laranjeira, s/d: 23).¹² Perhaps this sense of divarication is why some Angolan authors such as José Luandino Vieira prefer to refer to Angolan society as multiracial, “pluriethnic” and multicultural (Vieira, 2012: 37). In the 20th century, many Angolan authors of European descent, whether born in Portugal or Angola, embraced Angola as the country with which they identified, and they have contributed significantly to the formation of contemporary Angolan identity, for instance Luandino Vieira, David Mestre, Henrique Abranches, João-Maria Vilanova, and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho. In addition to the mixed provenance, another factor contributing to a certain degree of Angolan cultural hybridism is literary influences. Angolan authors have drawn inspiration from Western literature (European, American and Latin American, with an emphasis on Brazilian literature) as well as from indigenous expressions of African culture. Authors such as Nicolás Guillén, Pablo Neruda and Paul Éluard, and especially several Brazilian authors such as Jorge Amado, Graciliano Ramos and Guimarães Rosa were significant for the early stages of Angolan cultural autonomy. The influence of Brazilian literature on African literature is one of the latter’s distinctive characteristics and a feature established by numerous scholars such as Pires Laranjeira, Carlos Ervedosa, Antero Abreu and Mário António Fernandes de Oliveira. Manuel Ferreira even mentions a quote by Costa Andrade in which he addresses his

12 “[...] a maioria da população está longe da mestiçagem e muito menos da criouliização [...]”

“Brazilian friends”: “your literature has influenced ours. This is a fact. The same identity was forged and hybridity was created on the same coordinates” (Costa Andrade, in: Ferreira, 1989: 141).¹³ In addition to the lines of social engagement and protest that have permeated African literature through the influence of Brazilian authors, one cannot overlook the aesthetic values, specifically the work with language, which shows a number of parallels between Brazilian and African literature. Guimarães Rosa’s distinctive language can thus be compared to that of Luandino Vieira, which itself is based on a knowledge of classical languages, the cult of style inspired by Portuguese masters such as the Jesuit António Vieira, and the vernacular language of Luanda. Following similar tracks, the Brazilian Guimarães Rosa and the Angolan Luandino Vieira were models for the literary language of younger generations, among whom special mention should be made of the Mozambican Mia Couto and the Angolan Ondjaki. The inspiration of Brazil is still apparent today, especially the influence of poets such as Manuel Bandeira, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, João Cabral de Melo Neto, Manoel de Barros and Adelia Prado, traces of whose work can be found in the Angolan poetry of Paula Tavares, João Melo, Ondjaki, Lopito Feijó and others.

Mozambican culture, equally “multiracial” and “multiethnic,” is based on a cross between Nativism and universalism (through multiculturalism), which comes not only from “Black Africa” and Europe, but also from the East (Arab, Indian and Chinese influences) and, above all, from South Africa. The proximity to the Anglo-Saxon world mediated by the South African space has stimulated some new voices in Mozambican poetry, especially the work of Rui Knopfli (1932–1997). The poet himself states in this context: “Very soon we managed to break free from the influence of France. Portugal was, and for many years would be, a colony of France. [...] However, thanks to the neighborhood of South Africa [...] I began to discover other authors.” (in Chabal, 1994: 188)¹⁴ Even today, this proximity to South Africa is felt to be a factor in the cultural difference between Mozambique and Angola, a view taken by Mia Couto (1955–), Mozambique’s most famous writer of today: “For me, the fact that Mozambique is very close to South Africa means the country’s dependence also from a mental, cultural, etc. point of view, bringing in a factor that Angola does not have. I mean the neighborhood, the shadow of the tree next door and the shadow

13 “A vossa literatura influenciou a nossa. É um facto. Forjou-se a mesma identidade e o híbrido resultou das mesmas coordenadas.”

14 Rui Knopfli interviewed by Patrick Chabal: “Nós conseguimos muito cedo libertar-nos da influência da França. Portugal foi e será, durante muitos anos, uma colónia da França. [...] Mas com a vizinhança da África do Sul [...] comecei a descobrir outros autores.”

here, is very structuring.” (Leite et al., 2012: 171)¹⁵ In addition to other cultural or socio-political manifestations (e.g. the Southern African Development Community project), the importance of the proximity to South Africa is also evident in literature, for example, in the work of the writer Lilia Momplé, specifically in her novel *Neighbours* (1996), in which, however, an unpleasant, suffocating neighbourhood is accentuated.

Several notable 20th century Mozambican authors were either born in Portugal (Fonseca Amaral, Sebastião Alba, António Quadros, Glória de Sant’Anna, João Paulo Borges Coelho) or have Portuguese ancestors in their family (Rui Knopfli, Mia Couto, Luís Carlos Patraquim, etc.). On the other hand, a number of writers born in Mozambique have left the country for Portugal or other European countries (England, France, Portugal), some of whom have become known as poets with a “double” Mozambican and Portuguese identity. Many have left significant traces in local Mozambican as well as diaspora literature, for example the poets Virgílio de Lemos (France), Rui Knopfli (Portugal, UK), Alberto de Lacerda (Portugal, UK, USA) and Luís Carlos Patraquim (Sweden, Portugal) as well as one of the first prominent Mozambican prose writers, João Dias (Portugal). This situation has resulted in a spectrum of identity peripeties that manifest themselves within the work itself (e.g. in Rui Knopfli) or in the creation of a heterogeneous identity through the use of heteronyms: e.g. António Quadros, who was born in Portugal and lived in Mozambique from 1964 to 1984, created the heteronyms Mutimati Barnabé, João Pedro Grabato Dias, and Ioannes Garabatus, while Virgílio de Lemos wrote under the names Lee-Li Yang, Duarte Galvão and Bruno dos Reis.

2 Regionalism, Social Realism and Negritude

Among African cultures, Angolan literature in the Portuguese language has maintained the greatest continuity since its beginnings in the 19th century, not least because of the momentum gained early on as succeeding generations looked to previous periods for stimulus and inspiration. Angolanness as an expression of the will to form a nation began consciously with the manifesto “The Voice of Angola crying in the desert” (“Voz d’Angola clamando no deserto”) of the 1900 generation, and came to fruition throughout the 20th

15 Interview of Mia Couto: “[...] acho que o facto de Moçambique estar muito puxado para a África do Sul, é um país dependente até do ponto de vista mental, cultural etc., também introduziu um factor que Angola não tem. Quer dizer, o factor da vizinhança, da sombra da árvore do lado e essa sombra aqui é muito estruturante.”

century, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. By the first decades of the 20th century, African literature had already entered into an opposition with colonial writing, with the latter characterized by “Tarzanist proliferation” (“proliferação tarzanística”; Pires Laranjeira, s/d: 48). Writing by indigenous Africans slowly began to present an Africanism increasingly “conscious” of its particularities. On the other hand, colonial literature also paradoxically contributed to strengthening literary and cultural autonomy by generating interest in African themes in the metropolis and serving as a counterweight to the new African literature, which entered into a critical dialogue with the colonial worldview and aesthetics as an antithesis.

The first half of the 20th century, a period which Pires Laranjeira defined as “African Regionalism” (*regionalismo africano*; 1901–1941), is characterized by Nativism and the highlighting of a “particularistic typicality” (*tipicidade particularista*; Pires Laranjeira, s/d: 40). Here, the voices of the “precursors of modern Angolan literature” (“precursores da moderna literatura angolana”; Xavier, 2017) such as António de Assis Júnior, Óscar Ribas and Castro Soromenho stand out. The works of these authors deal with themes of African customs, sometimes in conflict with the exogenous culture introduced by Portuguese colonists.

Born in Angola and dying in Portugal, António de Assis Júnior (1887–1960) was a founding member and first president of the Liga Nacional Angolana (Angolan National League), founded the magazine *Angola*, and was the author of the original Kimbundu-Portuguese dictionary. Assis wrote the first novel on Angolan customs, *O segredo da morta: romance de costumes angolenses* (*The Secret of the Dead: a Novel of Angolan Customs*), published in a series in 1929 in the Luanda newspaper *A Vanguarda* as well as in book form in 1935 (Luanda: A Liv. Editora Lusitana). Óscar Ribas (1909–2004) was also born in Angola and died in Portugal. Primarily an ethnographer, Ribas wrote regionalist fiction featuring regional customs such as *Uanga: Feitiço: romance folclórico angolano* (*Uanga: Magic Power: an Angolan Folklore Novel*, Lisbon, 1951) along with ethnographic works such as *Ecos da minha terra: dramas angolanos* (*Echoes of My Country: Angolan Dramas*, Lisbon, 1952) as well as *Ilundo: divindades e ritos angolanos* (*Ilundo: Deities and Angolan Rites*, Luanda, 1952; Museu de Angola, 1958; later republished several times with the title *Ilundo: espíritos e ritos angolanos* / *Ilundo: Spirits and Angolan Rites*, Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1975; União dos Escritores Angolanos, 1989; Ministério da Cultura, Comissão Organizadora do II Festival Nacional de Cultura, 2014). Ribas is considered one of the most significant chroniclers of the Angolan oral tradition.

A special place in the overall context of Angolan literature belongs to Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho (1910–1968), who was born in Mozam-

bique to European parents and who lived in Angola until 1937, when he and his parents moved to Portugal. A vehement opponent of the Salazar regime, Soromenho moved to Paris and then to Brazil, where he died. Like Óscar Ribas, Soromenho was interested in Angolan ethnography, which marked the first creative phase in the books he published in Portugal: e.g. *Lendas negras* (*Black Tales*, 1936), *Nhari: o drama da gente negra* (*Nhari: the Drama of the Black People*, 1938), *Noite de angústia* (*Night of Anguish*, 1939), etc. The second stage of his literary work began with the novel *Terra morta* (*Dead Land*, 1949). The aesthetics and axiology of Castro Soromenho were already being influenced by Portuguese Neorealism, which became a tool for criticizing political authoritarianism, unjust social system and colonialism. *Terra morta* was published in 1949 in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, Casa do Estudante do Brasil), in French translation (under the title *Camaxilo*) with a foreword by Roger Bastide in 1956 by *Présence Africaine*, and in 1961 in Portugal. Like Óscar Ribas, Castro Soromenho continued to produce works beyond the 1950s which were crucial for the realization of the autonomy of the African space.

The period that follows is what Pires Laranjeira calls *casticismo*¹⁶ (1942–1960), a period of “purity” within which the phases of Social Realism (1942–1950s/60s) and Negritude (1949–1959) emerged. This posture had a significant influence on the process of deperipheralization of Angolan and Mozambican literature. Ideologically, *casticismo* is based on a consciousness of race, class and territory, thus works that did not assume this commitment cannot be associated with the movement (Pires Laranjeira reminds us that the choice of Africa as a theme does not in itself imply belonging to the movement; Laranjeira, 1995: 144).

In 1942, the São Toméan poet Francisco Tenreiro published the poetry collection *Ilha de nome santo* (*The Island of the Holy Name*) as part of the neorealist library *Novo Cancioneiro*. Tenreiro's collection is associated with neorealist poetics without Negritudarian features, with its title referring to the colonial situation (the “Holy Name” refers to São Tomé—corresponding to the island of St. Thomas). Nevertheless, Tenreiro can be considered one of the forerunners of Negritude, since in the poems *Epopéia* (*Epopéia*) and *Negro de todo o mundo* (*Negro of the Whole World*) he referred—if only implicitly—to race and racial solidarity. As Pires Laranjeira points out, the Mozambican poet Noémia de

16 The term *casticismo* originally referred to a return to the “purity” of Castillian Spain in contradistinction to, for example, the French Enlightenment and mestizo cultures. The concept was used as an expression of traditional patriotic pride regarding the themes and formal aspects of cultural artifacts during the early-mid stages of 1939–1975 dictatorship of Francisco Franco. Unlike in Spain however, the era of *casticismo* in Angolan literature has positive, progressive aspects, since it values and emphasises the Black race and African territory.

Sousa also arrived at Negritude based on a similar intuition and contextual situation (although a not identical context, as there was a greater degree of racism in the Mozambican space). Simultaneously, the American inspiration of the Harlem Renaissance was also at work (Pires Laranjeira, 1995: 139). At the end of the 1950s, Francisco Tenreiro (himself mixed-race) opted for a dialogue of civilizations without boundaries between “Black” and “White” poetry, thus approaching Senghor’s perspective on Francophone Négritude. Pires Laranjeira recalls that Senghor was one of the first to invoke the symbol of Mother Africa, with all its specific features such as animism, the cult of ancestral spirits, the importance of rhythm, oratory, etc. (Pires, 1995: 78–81). Nevertheless, he also mentions that around 1950 Senghor came to prefer to “praise the crossing and call for reconciliation between Europeans and Africans” through the path of “dialogic Negritude,” which Tenreiro followed from 1956 onwards after he broke away from the neorealists and entered the Portuguese National Assembly as a deputy (Pires, 1995: 83).¹⁷

Interestingly, in Senghor’s poem *Élégie des saudades* (Elegy of Longing, from the collection *Nocturnes*), in alluding to the transliteration of his name to the Portuguese “senhor,” the Senegalese poet imagined himself as a descendant of the lord of Coimbra: “My Portuguese blood has dissolved in the sea of my Négritude” (“Mon sang portugais s’est perdu dans la mer de ma Négritude”; in Pires, 1995: 82).

While Portuguese Negritude was inspired by Francophone Négritude, it was also influenced by North American movements that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s (Black Renaissance, Harlem Renaissance, New Negro) as well as by Haitian Indigenism, the program of which (according to Normil Sylvain) focused on the reconstruction of the image of the Black man. The most resonant inspiration was Langston Hughes, a representative of (what Hughes termed himself as) the Harlem Renaissance, who even before Césaire and Senghor had formulated the concept of Negritude in his poems. Published in Port-au-Prince (Haiti), *La Revue Indigène*, which functioned as a manifesto comparable to the Brazilian Oswald de Andrade’s *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928), played an identical role to that of *Claridade* (1936–1937, 1947–1960), the Cape Verdean magazine of Baltasar Lopes, Manuel Lopes, and Jorge Barbosa. *Claridade* was similar to Henri Barbusse’s French magazine *Clarté* (1921–1928) and other periodicals called *Claridad* (Argentina, Peru, Chile, etc.). These magazines and movements expressed the desire for authors to, as the slogan of the Cape Verdean *Claridad* declared, “stand with their feet on the ground” (“fincar

17 “[...] exortando à reconciliação entre europeus e africanos, na via de ‘Negritude dialogante.’”

os pés na terra”) by valorizing the traditions of folk tales and poetry based on regional and rural themes with mythical ancestral roots.

Portuguese-language Negritude highlighted collective and racial consciousness as well as African heritage in articulating socio-political claims. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it developed only in the 1950s along with its unique mixture of romantic, realist, neorealist, modern and nationalist features. This chronological split is understandable, since African literatures do not maintain one uniform continuity as does European literary history. These ruptures also represent a general feature of autonomizing peripheries as they strive for time accumulation in their attempt to catch up with Pascale Casanova’s zero meridian. In the context of Negritude, three European centers also play an essential role in the process of autonomy of African literature in Portuguese: Paris, Lisbon and Coimbra. For Portuguese-language African literatures as for countless other Western centers and peripheries, Paris was “like the centre of the world, not only cultural, but as a cosmopolitan city par excellence, sophisticated, attracting intellectuals and artists from all over the world” (Pires Laranjeira, 1995: 55).¹⁸

By 1935 Walter Benjamin had singled out Paris as the capital of the 19th century. Much more recently, Pascale Casanova also confirms the city’s vital role in the history of the various national literatures, stating how between 1830 and 1945 the French capital was home to a large number of foreigners who usually emigrated from their countries for political reasons and who were attracted by the freedom and avant-garde of Paris (Casanova, 2004: 30 ff.). Between 1928 and 1934, Senghor, Damas and Césaire met in Paris (see above Part 1, Chapter 3, Part 1, Chapter 9, Part 1, Chapter 10, see below Part 2, Chapter 12). The 1930s became decisive for the constitution of the Francophone Négritude: 1932 saw the publication of the single issue of the journal *Légitime Défense*; 1934–1940 saw the publication of the review *L’Étudiant Noir*, in the third issue of which the term Négritude first appeared; in 1938 Léon Damas published *Retour de Guyane* (*Return from Guyana*); in 1939 Césaire made *négritude* famous in his *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*); in 1947 the magazine and publishing house *Présence Africaine* was founded and expanded to Dakar. In the 1950s, Paris—the “Black Babylon” for the African and Caribbean intellectuals who flocked to the French capital in the 1920s¹⁹—also became a center for Portuguese-speaking Negritudinists, the most impor-

18 “[...] como o centro do mundo, no plano não só cultural, cidade cosmopolita por excelência, sofisticada, que atraía intelectuais e artistas de todo o mundo [...]”

19 This term is used by Philippe Dewitte, as indicated by Pascale Casanova (Casanova 2004: 32).

tant of whom was Mário Pinto de Andrade (1928–1990), who went in Paris in 1954, but also lived at certain points in Algiers, Bissau and Lisbon. In 1957, the Angolan poet Viriato da Cruz arrived in the French capital, as did the Mozambican poet and politician Marcelino dos Santos. Dos Santos published under the pseudonyms Kalungano and Lilinho Micaia before becoming President of Mozambique from 1977 to 1994. Amílcar Cabral, a Guinean politician, was also becoming acquainted with the cultural environment of Paris during the 1950s.

The texts that have emerged as most significant are the Parisian and international works of Mário Pinto de Andrade, who served as editor-in-chief of the *Présence Africaine* from 1955 to 1958. In 1955 Andrade interviewed the Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén in Paris, introducing him to the anthology *Poesia negra de expressão portuguesa* (*Black Poetry in Portuguese*, 1953). Andrade could be found among the attendees of the 1st Congress of Black Writers and Artists held in Paris in 1956, and two years later together with Viriato da Cruz Andrade participated in the 1st Congress of Afro-Asian Writers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where he met the Anglo-American sociologist and activist W.E.B. Du Bois. Mário Pinto de Andrade began organizing a new anthology of Black poetry in Portuguese for the Parisian publisher Pierre Jean Oswald. By this time, Andrade considered the Negritude period closed, and he had accepted Frantz Fanon's thesis of armed struggle. Following this track, in 1959–1962 Andrade became president of the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola—People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola). In 1961 he prepared an anthology of Black literature with a foreword by Pier Paolo Pasolini, and in 1967–1969 he organized two volumes featuring various African literatures in Algiers, and also published a French version of *La poésie d'expression portugaise* (*Black Poetry in Portuguese*). By 1975 Andrade had published *Antologia temática de poesia africana* (*Thematic Anthology of African Poetry*) in Portugal. The importance of the work of Andrade for Negritude and for the autonomy of Portuguese-speaking African literatures is undeniable, even if his vision of literature was militant, even given the historical context. As Pires Laranjeira emphasises, Andrade was the first to “definitively break with the concept of Afro-Portuguese literature” (Pires Laranjeira, s/d: 15).²⁰

The Negritude movement emerged from the associational and cultural events organized in Portugal and its “overseas provinces”, emphasizing the close connection between the four “centers” in the metropolis and the peripheries: Lisbon, Coimbra, Luanda and Lourenço Marques. The African organizational, civic and cultural tradition dating back to the 19th century continued to the

20 “rompeu definitivamente com a concepção da literatura afro-portuguesa”.

generation of the 1880s in Angola, followed by the formation of various associations in the 20th century. In the 1920s, the African League (Liga Africana) was founded in Lisbon, the Mozambique Center (Casa de Moçambique) was established in Coimbra in 1941, and the Center of Students of the Empire (Casa dos Estudantes do Império, CEI) was founded in Lisbon in 1944 with a section in Coimbra. Until 1952, the CEI Centre published an internal circular, *Mensagem* (1951–1952; its activities were interrupted between 1953 and 1956, after which it continued to function until 1964). The newsletter *Meridiano* was published in Coimbra from 1947 onwards. A CEI section was opened in Luanda in 1951, and in Lourenço Marques the following year. The Angolan magazine *Mensagem* should also be seen as the result of the Movement of Young Angolan Intellectuals (Movimento dos Novos Intelectuais de Angola, 1948) which promoted the goal of creating an Angolan literature. The importance of poets such as Viriato da Cruz, António Jacinto and Agostinho Neto should be emphasized. The attitudes of Agostinho Neto and Viriato da Cruz respectively represent, according to Pires Laranjeira, “two different modes of literary autonomy in relation to the colonizing metropolis and to European literature in general” (Pires Laranjeira, s/d: 53).²¹ With Agostinho Neto, the African is represented by the colonized Black who maintains the European power system through his slave labor, while with Viriato da Cruz biological and cultural crossover is accentuated.

The *Mensagem* was followed by (although editorially distanced from) the aforementioned conceptions of Negritude by poets from the southern Angolan town of Benguela who lean towards a “Creole” vision and production: Aires de Almada Santos, Alda Lara and Ernesto Lara Filho. The Angolan version of the *Mensagem* was followed by the magazine *Cultura*, which emphasized Angolanness, although this was not the publication’s only concern, since it also published poetry of a more intimate nature, e.g. by Mário António. At the same time (1952), one issue of the Mozambican magazine *Msafo* was published in which poems by Noémia de Sousa were printed. A representative of Negritude, Sousa was one of the first Mozambican women poets. The poet herself stated that she was not familiar with Francophone Négritude, and that she had been inspired by American Black poetry. Her book *Sangue negro* (*Black Blood*, 1951) was circulated in cyclostyled copies in Mozambique and Angola.

In terms of historical landmarks, the beginning of Lusophone Negritude coincides with the penetration of Francophone Négritude into Portugal and

21 “dois modos distintos de autonomia literária em relação à metrópole colonizadora e à literatura europeia em geral”.

its colonies. The decline of this movement began in 1956 with the formation of the liberation movements MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola; Angola People's Liberation Movement) and PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde; African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) as well as with the radicalizing speech of Frantz Fanon at the 1st Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Paris in 1956. Apart from the small number of adherents, the reason for the belated emergence of Negritude in the Portuguese milieu was the weak response to it in a much more closed and less cosmopolitan environment than Paris. In this sense, Portugal also confirmed its position as a "semiperiphery" as defined by Boaventura de Sousa Santos: as a "metropolis" in relation to the "overseas provinces" and a "periphery" in relation to European countries (Sousa Santos, 2002). This also corresponds to the interdependence model between centers and peripheries proposed by Pascale Casanova (Casanova, 2004: 11–12).

Today the opinions of literary critics and writers on Negritude vary in several ways. Although the importance of Negritude for the awareness of the specificities of African territory and identity is unquestionable, the critical voices of some contemporary writers speak of the "doxic" and "hegemonic" nature of the concept. From a contemporary perspective, one reflection is provided by José Eduardo Agualusa's novel *Estação das chuvas* (*The Rainy Season*, 1996). The work is a fictional portrayal of Angola in the 20th century that might easily be mistaken for a historical account of actual events. The narrative strategy imitates a documentary style (journalistic, epistolary, philological); the names of certain characters refer to historical figures (including Mário Pinto de Andrade), and the references to titles and excerpts from well-known periodicals are spatiotemporally accurate. The novel has provoked controversy for its putatively (self-)critical view of several stages of Angolan political history as well as for the declaration in the novel's conclusion that "the country has died" ("Este país morreu"). At one point, the character of Lídia do Carmo Ferreira (also the name of a real poet of the time) is asked to contribute her poems to Andrade's anthology of Black poetry. Lídia refuses, as she considers poetry to have nothing to do with race. From a contemporary revisionist perspective, this view seems justified. In the light of the history of the African continent, however, a positive reassessment of the Black race taking into account its pride and achievements was at the time urgent and necessary. Moreover, the Negritude movement represented an important milestone in the autonomization of African literatures, as proponents sought to demonstrate an original sensibility and aesthetic independent of the European canon.

3 In the “Underwater Realm”: A Period of Resistance and Enforced Silence

Resistance against colonialism as well as the manifestations of this confrontation intensified during the armed struggles for independence of Angola and Mozambique in the years 1961–1974. From a literary point of view this spirit can be traced in the committed poetry of the era, which often embraced polemic. Some authors expressed their protest against colonialism and the lack of political freedom in a less overt way, however, through semantic acts and semiotic signs that impugned the silence imposed on African culture and people. A “textual ghetto strategy” emerged, with poets and writers “referr[ing] to individual revolt (in connotation with collective revolution), sometimes under the guise of a moderate existentialism that was alien, almost incomprehensible in this context of reading” (Pires Laranjeira, s/d: 44).²² In Angola, important writers in this context include David Mestre, author of *Crónica do ghetto* (*Chronicle of the Ghetto*, 1973); Jofre Roche, with his collection *Tempo de cicio* (*Whistling Time*, 1973), and José Luandino Vieira. In Mozambique, Luís Bernardo Honwana and Sebastião Alba were prominent. As Lola Geraldine Xavier has written, along with Arlindo Barbeitos and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, David Mestre can be seen as “responsible for changes in Angolan aesthetics and thematics” (Xavier, 2017: 50).²³ In conjunction with a more inward reflection on the colonial situation, the war and its wounds and scars, the literature of the 1970s opens up to universalism and shows a greater interest in the possibilities of language, as one can see for example in the work of authors such as Luandino Vieira (e.g. the short story collection *Luuanda*, 1974), Ruy Duarte de Carvalho and Arlindo Barbeitos (the collection of poems *Angola, Angolê, Angolema*, 1976). In the Mozambican context, the magazine *Caliban* (1971 and 1972, 4 issues published) is worth mentioning; this publication was coordinated by J.P. Grabato Dias (one of the heteronyms of António Quadros) and Rui Knopfli, who ranks among the greatest Mozambican poets of the second half of the 20th century along with José Craveirinha. According to Ana Mafalda Leite and Vanessa Riambau Pinheiro, the title of the magazine “refers to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, in which the Prospero/Caliban pair stages the logic of colonization, but for Caliban the

22 “[...] estratégia textual de ghetto, [em que os poetas e escritores] aludiam à revolta individual (em conotação com a revolução coletiva), às vezes sob a máscara de um existencialismo mitigado, estranho quase incompreensível neste contexto de leitura”.

23 “responsáveis pelas mudanças na estética e na temática angolanas”.

legacy of language becomes the greatest weapon of resistance and struggle.” (Leite, Pinheiro, 2020: 23–24)²⁴

In literary terms, *Caliban* asserted aesthetic quality as a form of resistance in a marked departure from ideologies and limiting perspectives. The magazine published poems by Mozambican authors such as José Craveirinha, Fonseca Amaral, Rui Knopfli, Sebastião Alba, etc., but also works by poets from Portugal like Herberto Helder and Jorge de Sena as well as internationally known poets such as Zbigniew Herbert and Marianne Moore.

Within a universalism inspired by the highlights of European (and canonical) poetry, Rui Knopfli was able to engage with local African and especially Mozambican issues while also referring to the colonial situation, as indicated by the titles *O país dos outros* (*The Country of the Others*, 1959), *Reino submarino* (*The Submarine Kingdom*, 1962), and *A Ilha de Próspero* (*Prospero's Island*, 1972). Although Knopfli left Mozambique after independence and moved to London, his double Mozambican and Portuguese identity (which arguably could be extended to a more universal perspective) has always tended more towards the African space. The titles of his works unequivocally emphasize African motifs: *Mangas verdes com sal* (*Green Mangoes with Salt*, 1969), *O monhé das cobras* (*The Conjurer of Snakes*, 1997), and highlight his warm relationship with Ilha de Moçambique, the birthplace of the poet Alberto de Lacerda, who also left the country and subsequently lived in Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. The legacy of Knopfli and Lacerda is continued in contemporary Mozambican poetry, including that of Luís Carlos Patraquim and Ana Mafalda Leite, who also live outside Mozambique in Portugal. José Craveirinha, another renowned poet, is the author of works of Negritude (*Xigubo*, 1964), poems inspired by oral traditions (*Karingana ua karingana*, 1982), as well as intimate poetry (e.g. verses written in memory of his wife Maria, 1988).

4 The Present of “Lost Borders”?

The post-independence period since 1975 is characterized by a wide range of themes and aesthetic attitudes. In addition to the authors already recognized as classic who continue their literary careers such as Luandino Vieira,

24 “[...] faz referência à peça teatral de Shakespeare, *A tempestade*. Como se sabe, a dupla Próspero/Caliban encena a lógica da colonização, mas a herança da língua torna-se para Caliban a sua maior arma de resistência e de luta.”

Angolan and Mozambican literature is experiencing an influx of new writers. Several names have already become well-known at the national, Lusophone and international level. These include the Angolan writers Pepetela, José Eduardo Agualusa, João Melo and Ondjaki, as well as the Mozambican authors Mia Couto, Paulina Chiziane, Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, and João Paulo Borges Coelho, only to mention the most famous names. Many of these Angolan and Mozambican writers have chosen historical themes from the 19th century or earlier periods such as the Angolans Pepetela (e.g. *Lueji*, 1990; *A gloriosa família / A Glorious Family*, 1997) and José Eduardo Agualusa (*A rainha Ginga. E de como os africanos inventaram o mundo / Queen Ginga or How Africans Invented the World*, 2014) as well as Mozambicans such as Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa (*Ualalapi*, 1987), Mia Couto (the trilogy *As areias do imperador / The Emperor's Sands*, 2015), Paulina Chiziane (*O alegre canto da perdiz / The Merry Partridge Song*, 2008) and João Paulo Borges Coelho (*O olho de Hertzog / The Eye of Hertzog*, 2010).

In comparing Angolan and Mozambican literature, one clear difference emerges: while Angolan literature is predominantly urban, Mozambican literature reflects the countryside. More specifically, we can observe the dominant presence of Luanda in the Angolan space as compared to other, less eminent cities, especially Benguela and Huambo. Several commentators have confirmed the vital place that Luanda occupies in Angolan literature, including Luandino Vieira: “Luanda had the honor, at least in the 17th century, of being the crucible in which the nation was formed. It was there that the printing press was placed, journalism developed, and the social class that acquired economic, financial and symbolic power was established.” (in Leite, 2012)²⁵ In addition to representing socio-political and symbolic power as the capital of Angola, the city of Luanda has also become a prominent setting in the works of Angola's greatest and most famous writers, Luandino Vieira, Pepetela, Ondjaki, João Melo and João Eduardo Agualusa. In contrast, the Angolan countryside is essentially limited to a few authors who have dedicated themselves to documenting and/or reviving local traditions. The work of Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, a Portuguese-born anthropologist who settled in Angola in 1963 and acquired Angolan citizenship, is inspired by the way of life of the nomadic people of

25 Interview with Luandino Vieira: “Luanda teve o privilégio de ser o cadinho, pelo menos no século XVII, da formação da nação. Ali é que puseram o prelo, e ali é que se desenvolveu o jornalismo, e ali é que se formou uma classe que chegou a ter poder económico, financeiro e simbólico.”

southern part of the country, as reflected in works such as *Chão de oferta* (*The Offered Land*, 1972), *Ondula, savana branca. Expressão oral africana: versões, derivações, reconversões* (*Wave, White Savannah. African Oral Discourses: Versions, Derivations, Reconversions*, 1982). The more recent poetry of Paula Tavares is influenced by African traditions, such as the collections *Ritos de passagem* (*Rites of Initiation*, 1985) and *O lago da lua* (*Moon Lake*, 1999). In Mozambican literature, the city—if it even exists at all—is mostly limited to the suburbs and other bordering areas between the city and the countryside. It was in this peripheral space that modern Mozambican poetry was born, cultivated both by the Africanized Portuguese who settled in Mozambique such as Fonseca Amara and Sebastião Alba, as well as by the established “jewels” of Mozambican literature, notably José Craveirinha.

Many authors regularly travel between Africa, Portugal and Brazil, or even live outside the country, for example Agualusa, who has lived in Portugal and Brazil and currently resides in Mozambique, and Ondjaki, who resided in Brazil for many years. The title of one of Agualusa’s many short story collections, *Fronteiras perdidas* (*The Lost Frontier*, 1999), signals a shift in emphasis from the local context to the notion of an open, globalized world, which does not mean the dissipation of the particular in favor of the universal, but the enrichment of the universal with the local and particular. The loss of borders corresponds to an open space, what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a “smooth space,” open and changeable, in contrast to the “striated space” of the polis, a settled space, dominated by politics and policy, enclosed by walls, barriers and borders (see Westphal, 2015: 39).

Openness is also manifested at the level of the literary text: the considerable variation of themes (social, historical, intimate, etc.) is matched by a richness of expressive registers and formal features. This tendency can be illustrated in the literary genre of the novel, which is open to hybridization and transcends not only the sub-genre markers sanctified by tradition (historical novel, social novel, Bildungsroman, etc.), but challenges the very boundaries of the novel as such by mixing fiction, fact, biography, tragedy, testimony, traditional history. On this last point, it is interesting that several “novels” are constructed as a sequence of tales as in the sense of traditional short story collections, which are often somehow thematically linked or feature the same characters. This tendency is quite noticeable in the Mozambican novel, the specificity of which according to Ana Mafalda Leite lies in its “oralizing strategy” which represents “an attempt to articulate between the rural and the urban world,” “between myth and modernity,” “between the stories of oral tradition and the coexistence—tragic and ironically creative—with the irreversible changes brought about by the new mentality and the new times” (Leite, 2003:

97).²⁶ Such features can be found in the novels *Ualalapi* (1987) by Ba Ka Khosa, *Terra sonâmbula (A Somnabulant Land, 1992)* by Mia Couto, and *Sétimo juramento (The Seventh Oath, 2000)* by Paulina Chiziane.

The process of deperipheralization is closely related to the emergence of an educational structure and institutions that support the dissemination of culture, especially publishing houses. Until the 1960s, there were no universities in Angola and Mozambique, with higher education only available in Portugal, especially in Coimbra, where several members of the Angolan as well as Mozambican intellectual elite studied beginning in the 1940s. At the time, Coimbra played a vital role in the country's literary life. Especially after the establishment of the modernist revue *Presença* (1927–1940), the city provided a refuge for a group of neorealists with an engaged and social orientation: in 1941, the aforementioned collection of social poetry *Novo Cancioneiro*, co-authored by Francisco José Tenreiro of São Tomé, was launched in Coimbra. A nucleus of African students living in Coimbra began to publish the magazine *Meridiano* with the collaboration of Agostinho Neto along with the magazine *Momento—Antologia de Literatura e Arte*, operated by the Angolans Agostinho Neto and Lúcio Lara and the Mozambican Orlando de Albuquerque. Secondary schools were also established in the Angolan and Mozambican territories (Liceu Salvador Correia in Luanda and Liceu Diogo Cão in Sá de Bandeira, Liceu Salazar in Lourenço Marques). In 1962, two higher education institutions, one in Angola, the other in Mozambique, were founded under the name of Estudos Gerais Universitários (General University Studies). In 1968 these schools were renamed Universidade de Luanda and Universidade de Lourenço Marques, respectively.²⁷

The goals and challenges of developing new university institutions can be illustrated in the case of Angola. The University of Luanda originally consisted of the Faculty of Engineering, Economics and Medicine in Luanda, the Faculty of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine in Nova Lisboa and the Faculty of Arts in Sá de Bandeira. These faculties were each upgraded to independent universities in 1974: Universidade de Luanda (since 1975 Universidade de Angola and since 1985 Universidade Agostinho Neto), Universidade de Nova Lisboa (in 1976

26 “estratégia oralizante”; “tentativa de articulação entre o mundo rural e o urbano”; “entre a mundividência mítica e a modernidade”; “entre o mundo fabuloso das tradições e a convivência, trágica e, ironicamente criativa, com as alterações irremediáveis, que as novas mentalidades e os novos tempos trouxeram”.

27 Lourenço Buque, Suzete. “A formação de professores de geografia em Moçambique: um breve histórico.” <http://cepedgoias.com.br/edipe/vedipefinal/pdf/gto7/co%20grafica/Suzete%20Lourenco%20Buque.pdf> (Downloaded 28.7.2021).

merged with Universidade de Angola [Universidade Agostinho Neto], since 2008/09 Universidade José Eduardo dos Santos, Huambo) and Universidade de Sá de Bandeira (in 1976 merged with Universidade de Angola [Universidade Agostinho Neto], since 2008/09 Universidade Mandume ya Ndemufayo, Lubango). In 2008/09, the faculties of Universidade Agostinho Neto which had existed outside Luanda each became the autonomous regional universities of Benguela, Cabinda, Huambo, Lubango, Malanje and Uíge.

Apart from the founding of educational institutions, another important aspect of these processes also relates to principles and practices with regard to the dissemination of knowledge and culture. Local distribution and the autonomy of periodicals had been established long before the universities were finally chartered, especially in Angola, where the development of the press is linked to the emergence of the Creole elite, as mentioned above. Indigenous book publishing was sporadic, and until the 1960s it continued to be carried out by the same enterprises (e.g. ABC in Luanda), or by smaller local publishers (e.g. Culturang in Luanda, Bailundo in Nova Lisboa, Imbondeiro in Sá de Bandeira); some books were published in Angola and Mozambique at the authors' expense. Surprisingly, many of these works were by authors born in Portugal and settled in Angola or Mozambique, such as David Mestre, António Quadros and Sebastião Alba. Most of the material was being published in Portugal by the 1960s (see Ferreira, 1989: 276). According to M. Ferreira, some works were published abroad outside Portugal (Brazil, Italy, USSR, Algeria, France, Zambia, etc.), but "the police machinery was efficient enough to prevent these works from reaching Portugal or former Portuguese colonies in reasonable quantities" (Ferreira, 1989: 278).²⁸

After independence, local publishing activities began to prevail, mainly through the work of two new institutions: the Union of Angolan Writers (União dos Escritores Angolanos; UEA) and the Mozambican Writers Association (Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos; AEMO), organizations which became highly active in publishing and disseminating culture. Books by the new generation of writers and poets that emerged after independence were also published under the umbrella of the UEA and AEMO. At the same time, however, much Angolan and Mozambican literary production was still being published in Portugal, particularly by the Lisbon publishers Edições 70, Caminho and Dom Quixote. Sometimes these activities were undertaken in parallel with local publication concerns, while later there was a tendency to pub-

28 "[...] os mecanismos policiais tornaram-se suficientemente aptos para evitar que essas obras entrassem em quantidade razoável, quer em Portugal quer nas ex-colónias portuguesas [...]."

lish exclusively in Portugal. A representative case in this respect is that of Pepetela: in 1977 and 1978 his works were published in Angola, after 1978 in parallel in Angola and Portugal, and since 1992 in Portugal. This is also the case with authors such as Mia Couto (published in Mozambique until 1988, then in Lisbon), as well as Luís Carlos Patraquim (his first collection *Monção / The Monzum* of 1980 published in Mozambique and Portugal, the 1985 collection *A inadiável viagem / The Urgent Journey* published in Mozambique, since 1991 all works published in Portugal). Other authors such as Ana Mafalda Leite and José Eduardo Agualusa (except for poems published in Luanda in 1991) have published in Portugal or Brazil since the beginning of their careers, e.g. the collection *Outras fronteiras: fragmentos de narrativas / Other Frontiers: fragments of narratives* by Ana Mafalda Leite was published in 2017 by the Brazilian publisher Kapulana. These publication histories may lead to reflections on the growing blurring of borders in publishing policy and in the book market, a situation which is promoted not only through the generalizing concept of Lusography (a term increasingly used for literary expression), but also by concrete projects such as the 2007 creation in Lisbon of the Leya publishing house, which brings together Portuguese, Brazilian and African publishers.

In the context of this cultural policy strategy, writers are increasingly open to and even demanding of cross-border penetration, although the Portuguese and Brazilian markets seem to dominate the current circulation of books by African authors, even in Portuguese-speaking African countries. Many established and emerging publishers such as Kacimbo in Angola and Kuvananga and Fundza in Mozambique face the reality of international competition. These publishers support the work of lesser-known Angolan and Mozambican authors, with a strong emphasis on children's and young adult literature. African authors who publish in Portugal have an advantage in the market, as they are aware that their readership is primarily Portuguese and Brazilian. A similar situation is evident in criticism and research on African literatures in Portuguese, some of which has attracted attention abroad in Portugal and Brazil (at the universities of Lisbon since 1974, Porto since 1976, Coimbra, Madeira and Faro), where scholars such as Pires Laranjeira in Coimbra and Ana Mafalda Leite, Inocência Mata and Ana Paula Tavares in Lisbon stand out. Mozambican/Angolan academics and teachers often collaborate with research centers in Portugal or Brazil, and they also frequently publish their results in these countries.

As a result of these circumstances, cultural links between Africa, Portugal and Brazil continue to gain strength today, also encouraged by the work of the Comunidade dos Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa (CPLP; Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries) as well as various projects of common interest at the cultural, commercial and educational level. In terms of literature, the

African space is brought to life in Portuguese works, with a growing number of titles inspired by a particular “African” experience, for example in colonial wars. Nevertheless, the colonial past is by far not the only issue of importance to authors. Stories of returnees from chosen or forced exile, revisiting childhood, and the questioning of identity have come into prominence in several works, especially in novels that reveal transitions and transactions between Africa and Portugal. Afro-descendant authors or those born in Africa are featured, for example the novelists Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida (*Luanda, Lisboa, Paraíso / Luanda, Lisbon, Paradise*, 2018), Dulce Maria Cardoso (*O retorno / The Return*, 2011), Aida Gomes (*Os pretos de Pousaflores / The Blacks of Pousaflores*, 2011), and Yara Monteiro (*Essa dama bate bué! / That lady is but on a roll*, 2019). In this sense, these expressions of what José Carlos Seabra Pereira calls “hypercontemporary” literature are also “intercultural” (Pereira, 2019: 754), expressing multifarious paths, crossings and mutual “anthropophagies” among former centers and peripheries.

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PART 2

Centralities



Introduction to Part 2: Centralities

Petr Kyloušek

The previous sections have dealt with deperipheralization processes and considered center-periphery dynamics in terms of the emancipating peripheries. Let us now focus on some particular salient aspects of centrality as the starting point of the gravitational field. The conceptual metaphoric transfer from economic geography (Grimmeau, 1994) to intercultural and interliterary relationships (Klinkenberg, 2008) facilitates a processual approach to modeling and apprehending what happens not only between the center and the periphery or peripheries, but also between and among centers reciprocally. This allows us to evaluate the influential strength of the periphery on the transformation of the center/s as well as the functioning of centrality within these newly set relations.

Each of the three studies we present seeks to illuminate the issue from a different angle, in a different setting and at a different stage of historical development. The dominant starting point in terms of time and prominence is Paris, a place of deep-seated accumulation and concentration of values in the literary field. The subchapter on Parisian centrality shows how the exploitation of peripheral elements in struggles within the literary and artistic field leads in turn to the valorization of the periphery, with the initiation of artistic and intellectual processes from outside of the center resulting in an autonomizing argumentation of the periphery; the center then becomes a resonant and fecund space both for action inward (Sartre, Camus, Fanon, Memmi) and outward (Négritude).

The second study focuses on the interaction of two literary fields and two centralities—the centralized French space and the polycentric Hispanophone field. In the 1960s, a polemical clash occurred between Octavio Paz, a representative of the Hispano-American area, and Juan Goytisolo, a leading representative of the Spanish avant-garde. This clash, which greatly influenced events in Spanish and Hispanic literature, saw the intervention of another contemporaneously dominant central authority, Paris and the publishing house Gallimard.

The subchapter on Italy in the past three decades is devoted to the redefinition of the national canon and the related transformation of literary criticism and history. It charts the situation of a literature that, although central, is not dominant within Europe. The Italian literary field is, therefore, open to external influences, especially French and Anglo-Saxon ones. Unlike the Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone and Hispanophone areas, Italy has not until

recently and for various historical reasons developed an awareness of its (colonial) periphery as a space where a large Italian diaspora once operated as colonizers or immigrants. Only after the 1980s onwards under the influence of increasing immigration from the former colonies or elsewhere did this migrant literature emerge, creating a space in which interactions with non-Italian influences permeated literary criticism and production, leading a large segment of Italian-language literature towards transcultural conceptions of creation.

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Paris—Centrality as an Initiator of Deperipheralization

Petr Dytrt, Eva Voldřichová Beránková

In this chapter, we provide an overview of historical context regarding the formation of the image of the periphery, how it was shaped by French intellectuals, and how this image was imagined by intellectuals coming from the periphery to the center. The focus will be on writers and other figures of political life who were brought by their studies to Paris—the cultural center of Europe at the time—and who often settled permanently in France. Although we will touch upon the (anti-)colonialist attitudes of French intellectuals, we will also discuss the achievements and interactions of writers from the periphery of the French colonies. As we shall see, the thought and works of those from the colonies and those born in France significantly influenced each other. This reciprocal dimension of the relationship between the periphery and the center gave rise to a particular intellectual breeding ground that contributed significantly to the decolonizing mood before and after the Second World War as well as to decolonization beginning in the 1960s.

The narratives of centrality were of vital importance for the emancipation of the peripheries through the relationship of Paris to the French “Negro” colonies. The presuppositions and effects of centrality will be demonstrated in the example of the Négritude movement and related waves of intellectual reflection and self-reflection. The fluid and interwoven nature of all the sets of artistic affinities, intellectual interests, scientific knowledge, and philosophical reflection must be stressed in advance. Outcomes can be measured not only by the social and political impact in both central and peripheral spaces, but also by the intellectual and artistic perspectives that French centrality opened up and transferred to other settings, including Anglophone, Hispanophone, and Lusophone literary fields.

The valorization of the periphery as a source of fresh artistic impulses for the central avant-gardes emerged simultaneously with the arrival of the first generations of peripheral Black writers and intellectuals in the central environment of Paris. Furthermore, it is precisely the role of the center as a place of human, economic, artistic and intellectual concentration that acts as an amplifying and accelerating factor in the centrifugal tendencies in which the

initiative is gradually transferred from central authorities (avant-garde artists, ethnologists, philosophers) to peripheral authorities. Picasso, Breton, Leiris, Camus and Sartre are followed by Gontran Damas, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire, Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon, and later (from a period not covered in this chapter) by Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau (see above Part 1, Chapter 3). We will also try to display the ambiguity and complexity of the processes corresponding to the gravitational model, with all the dialectical twists and turns that are implicated. The interest that the center shows in the periphery in order to absorb and appropriate it—for example from material, humane or value perspectives—leads to its own transformation as well as that of the periphery.

1 Parisian Avant-gardes and Black Art

Sustained interest in Black Art and poetry in the French milieu dates back to the beginning of the 20th century.¹ The growing interest in the “primitive art” of the so-called “Black continent” can be considered the first tentative step toward serious consideration of African literature and art by Europeans (Blachère, 1981). The enthusiasm for these sources of cultural stimuli has been particularly evident since the early 20th century in painters whose works show the inspiration of African sculpture. Indeed, Picasso’s, Derain’s and Vlaminck’s collections of statues from Benin and Gabon, all of which are documented by more than one photograph with the artist, are clear evidence that leading 20th-century European artists were seeking to break out of the conventions imposed by an Aristotelian vision of reality. It was no longer just a matter of attempting to represent or “mimic” exotic scenes, as had been the case with the artistic avant-gardes of the late 19th century (Paul Gauguin, Paul Cézanne, etc.). The succeeding decades would witness the first attempts to depict reality in a way characteristic of artists working in this non-European environment. The Fauvists, Cubists, Dadaists and Surrealists attempted first to see, then to capture a different vision of reality according to models from Africa. A typical example can be found in Picasso’s 1907 *Les Femmes d’Alger (O. K. G.)* (originally titled *The Brothel of Avignon*), considered to be the first Cubist painting. In particular, features typical of African tribal masks are visible

1 Regarding the “Black Question” and the “Black Art” in the French scholarly context, see e.g. Malela, Buata B. (2013). René Maran et la “question noire” en France: stratégies et prises de position dans le champ intellectuel des années vingt et trente. *Présence Africaine*, 187–188, 121–138.

in the two figures on the right, which Picasso repainted onto an earlier version of the work. Picasso always denied a direct connection to African art, in a 1939 statement unequivocally indicating that his interests “were intensely centered on Iberian sculpture” (Sweeney 2015, 191). Still, many art historians cite as evidence of African influence Picasso’s purported visit(s) by at least spring 1907 to the Musée d’Ethnographie du Trocadéro² a few months before completing *Les Femmes d’Alger* (Richardson, 1991: 24–26).

Another prominent figure in European art who responded to the emerging collections of African statues and masks in Paris was Guillaume Apollinaire, not as a poet but as an art critic. A year before his death (1917), Apollinaire wrote a preface to a catalog of African art collector Paul Guillaume entitled *Premier Album de Sculptures nègres* (*First Album of Black Sculptures*). This preface, called *À propos de l’Art des Noirs* (*On the Art of the Blacks*), is considered the beginning of a path towards the legitimization of Black Art in Europe (Décaudin 1948: 321). In this text, the author of *Alcoholes* emphasizes, among other things, that unlike Western art, which is “objective and realistic,” Black Art refuses to simply imitate reality and instinctively resists any rational categories as well as anthropomorphism. Apollinaire arrives at the insight that rather than reproducing reality, this art is concerned with wholly re-creating it, thereby seeks to create a new cosmic order in which sundry realities flow and mix into each other. Apollinaire was almost certainly led to these insights by the discoveries of his colleagues in the Cubist circle such as André Derain, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and Maurice de Vlaminck, who had all come into contact with art objects from Africa and Polynesia in various settings in Paris (Décaudin 1948: 318). The collections of “primitive” art at the ethnographic museum at the Trocadero as well as the Royal Museum of Central Africa at Tervueren near Brussels were also crucial in this respect. Both institutions gathered and displayed collections of African and other non-European art which drew the admiration of Parisian artists, philosophers and ethnographers in the years before the First World War. This approbation is evidenced for example in lectures by the French philosopher, sociologist and anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, a professor at the Sorbonne. Lévy-Bruhl developed and popular-

2 Founded in 1878 as the Ethnographic Museum and housed in the Palais de Chaillot at the same location of the Trocadéro, this museum is today known as the Musée de l’Homme, a name the facility took on in 1937 when the World Exhibition was held here. For details on the African and other works included in this exhibition, see Obergöker, 2016: 80–95. Regarding Picasso’s claims about the influence of Iberian sculpture, this is understandable, as many of these works also show features characteristic of North African art. (Godefroy and Le Meaux, 2021).

ized theories regarding nations lacking written culture, with one of his main conclusions emerging as the postulation that beauty is not a universal category but a social form.

Tristan Tzara and Blaise Cendrars played an essential role in creating an environment fostering the development of interest in non-European art, with Tzara beginning in 1917 publishing his own translations of *Poèmes nègres* (*Black Poems*) along with articles on Black art. A founder of the Dadaist movement, Tzara organized among other projects “Negro parties” (“*soirées nègres*”), gatherings which he transferred after the war from Zurich to Paris. It should be noted here, however, that the *Négrisme* of the Dadaists was only a kind of admixture intended to exacerbate the bourgeois indignation at the already highly destructive approach to artistic language taken by Dadaists and others. Among other influences, Tzara’s research drew on the Vienna-based international journal for anthropology and linguistics *Anthropos*, which published texts not only on Africa but also on Australia and Oceania. At the time when Dadaism was morphing into Surrealism, Tristan Tzara wrote several plays featuring Black characters. These works had a single function: to turn Aristotelian Europe upside down (Kesteloot, 2001: 49). Notwithstanding the goal of mocking the bourgeoisie, these plays also brought “art in a state of birth” (“*l’art à l’état natif*”) into the consciousness of the Parisian public (Tzara, 1917: 2). Together with (and sometimes supplemented in productions with) sculpture and other plastic arts, the theatre thus becomes the milieu through which African cultures enter the European scene and gradually become sites of interest for artists and intellectual elites. Thanks to Tzara and other artists in the Parisian avant-garde, African and Afro-European artists and future founders of movements, such as Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire, came into contact with French “Black Art.” Thanks to the Surrealists and art collectors, these leaders discovered new connections to their native continent (Africa or the Antilles). These revelations paradoxically, came in Paris, i.e. the cultural center, not in the “periphery” many of these men were born in.

As mentioned above, the Swiss-born poet, novelist and travel writer Blaise Cendrars also made a significant contribution to the creation of the “*modèle nègre*” (Kesteloot, 2001: 54). An important landmark was the publication of Cendrars’ *L’Anthologie nègre* (*Black Anthology*) in 1921, which together with *Petits Contes nègres pour les enfants blancs* (1928, translated as *Little Black Stories for Little White Children* 1929) and, above all, *Comment les Blancs sont d’anciens Noirs* (1930, *How the Whites Used to be Black*), marks the beginning of widespread European interest in Black culture. With its rituals and pagan cosmogonies, Africa is for Cendrars an immeasurable space of images that would inspire his future work. Cendrars’ attempts at depicting the world through the

prism of African tales, legends and myths was preceded by careful preparation, with Raymond Radiguet assisting him in transcribing the texts at the National Library. Although Cendrars respected neither ethno-linguistic criteria, nor socio-cultural issues in his reworkings and thematic arrangements, he nevertheless followed the classifications of ethnologist and folklorist François-Victor Équilbecq, as can be seen in Équilbecq's *Contes populaires de l'Afrique occidentale, précédés de Essai sur la littérature merveilleuse des Noirs (Folk Tales of West Africa, preceded by an Essay on the Wonderful Literature of the Blacks)*. Cendrars's *Anthologie nègre* was such a great success in the French literary and artistic milieu of the time that it could rightly be seen as a primary impetus in shaping a new European perspective on colonized African ethnicities and their culture (Jamin, 2010: 415). This also led to a gradual change in the way Black authors were viewed, whether they came to the cultural, political and economic center of Paris from Africa, Martinique or other French colonies (Le Quellec Cottier, Christine. Préface. In: Cendrars, 2005a: x).

Contacts with the French poetic avant-garde played a key role in the emergence of a network of Black intellectuals in Paris. These two communities shared not only artistic insights but, more importantly on a political and social level, anticolonialist, anti-militarist and leftist positions (Blachère, 1981). "Blackness" fits in with various prominent markers of the Surrealists, such as the tendency to provocation, the privileging of spirit and emotion in texts and visual art, collage and *ready-made*, and the preference for dreamlike evocations and free associations. Moreover, personal, intellectual and artistic affinities come into play. Shared militant attitudes link André Breton to the Martinican René Ménéil or to Aimé Césaire, for whom Breton wrote the preface to the *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939, 1947 and 1956, translated variously as *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, *Return to My Native Land*, or *Journal of a Homecoming*). Breton met Césaire in person in Martinique in 1941, the Haitian René Depestre in 1945 (Berthet, 2008: 49–62; 99–116). Another example of this kind of accord is the friendship between Robert Desnos and the Guyanese poet Léon-Gontran Damas, for whose poetry collection *Pigments* Robert Desnos wrote the preface in 1937.

In addition, this interest in African civilizations developed in parallel and, initially, independently of the artistic field. Thanks to the *Revue du monde noir*, young Black intellectuals were becoming acquainted with the findings of the new French ethnographic school, which were moving beyond the now-outdated theories of the aforementioned Lévy-Bruhl³ as well as Arthur de

3 French philosopher, sociologist and anthropologist who contrasts a "primitive" mentality, one formed without writing, in opposition to a "civilized" mentality. While Lévy-Bruhl points out

Gobineau⁴ and Oswald Spengler.⁵ Thus, there is a shift in the view of so-called “primitive” cultures and peoples, which are studied with what was seen as a greater degree of objectivity. Leo Frobenius’s *Histoire de la civilisation africaine* (1936) and Maurice Delafosse’s *Les Nègres* (1927) were read and commented on vividly by students in Paris with African ancestry. In texts like these—in this case by a German and by a Frenchman—readers discovered a past that had been considered unimportant by previous generations. Frobenius refutes pre-conceptions about Africa’s past and shows how European seafarers had already discovered civilization in what is now the Congo by the end of the Middle Ages.

In the second half of the 1930s and in the 1940s, a new generation of French ethnologists appeared such as Paul Rivet, Michel Leiris, Marcel Mauss, Marcel Griaule, and, later, Georges Balandier, Germaine Dieterlen, Jean Rouché, who with scholarly authority would support the efforts of Black intellectuals to valorize African and African-based culture and civilization, especially after Lévy-Bruhl openly retracted his earlier claims about the difference between the mentalities of primitive and developed peoples. This shift in the way non-European colonized areas were viewed was significant. For centuries, the West had neglected the findings of modern ethnography and considered itself the standard by which the ability and art to think were to be measured, i.e. the idea that a dark realm of primitivism incapable of rationality lurked on the frontiers of the Western man and his world. Similarly, with a certain amount of

the danger of such a dualistic approach, even this warning reifies this simplistic binary, one seemingly exclusive to Western man. Cf. *Les Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*, 1910 (translated as *How Natives Think*, 1926); *La Mentalité primitive*, 1922 (translated as *Primitive Mentality*, 1923); *L’Âme primitive*, 1927 (translated version published in 1928 as *The “Soul” of the Primitive*, reedited in 1965). In 1938 Lévy-Bruhl revised his views and openly admitted in his notebooks that it had become necessary to retract his earlier statements, i.e. his view allowed no qualitative differences between the so-called primitive mentality and the mentality of “developed” nations (Lévy-Bruhl, 1949: 131 ff.).

- 4 Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, French politician, diplomat and writer who in his book *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines* (1853 and 1855, translated as *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, 1915) developed a theory of three races (white, yellow and black) based on contemporary scientific knowledge as well as on popular prejudices. This theory allowed him to distinguish five different world civilizations from the dawn of history to the present day, and to formulate the claim that civilizations do not disappear because of changes in climatic conditions or for political or moral reasons, but for racial reasons.
- 5 German philosopher of history best known for his two-volume book-length essay *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918 vol. 1. and 1922 vol. 2), translated as *The Decline of the West* (1926 vol. 1 and 1928 vol. 2). Spengler links political economy and politics, science and mathematics, art and music. *Der Untergang* is presented as an application of the morphological method Goethe developed for the natural sciences by which world history is characterized as the recurrent rise and fall of cultures and civilizations.

hypocrisy, the Belgian journal *Europe-Afrique* accused the ethnologists Michel Leiris, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Mircea Eliade of undermining the colonial system through problematizing the putatively clearly defined relationship between colonizer and colonized, and the received opposition between civilization and savagery. This crude but reliable and comfortable hierarchy for Europeans gradually collapsed, as scholars—at least those who studied African cultures without prejudice and without bias—invalidated a notion of the savage that was so convenient to salve the conscience of colonialists and the beneficiaries of the colonial system.⁶

And although more recent critics of colonialism such as Noureini Tidjani-Serpos (Tidjani-Serpos, 1996) still point to the fundamentally imperialist aims of the aforementioned ethnologists and colonial administrators, the fact remains that they were the first Europeans to be aware of the reality of African cultures, to be interested in them and to study their languages. It should be added that, as late as the mid-1950s, Aimé Césaire, one of the founders of the Négritude movement, would comment retrospectively on the shift in thought that had taken place as an evasive self-serving accusation and attempt at atonement: “the great betrayal of Western ethnography which, with a deplorable deterioration of its sense of responsibility, has been using all its ingenuity of late to cast doubt upon the overall superiority of Western civilization over the exotic civilizations.” (Césaire, 1972: 19)⁷ Césaire further emphasizes that many who were denouncing this phenomenon at the time actually understood its real (if unconscious) motivations and underpinnings. Roger Caillois, for example, criticized those European intellectuals whose intense disillusionment and resentment led them to deny or contradict the ideals of their own culture, thus perpetuating a specific intellectual and rather “a tenacious malaise” in Europe in particular (Césaire, 1972: 19). Césaire takes issue this critique by Caillois of modern ethnography, although it was in fact Caillois that attempted to demolish the entrenched hierarchical axiology that privileges the “civilized” and “cultured” West over “primitive” Black peoples.

6 “Previously, the colonizer essentially understood his relationship to the colonized as that of a civilized man to a savage. Colonization was thus based on a hierarchy, certainly crude, but vigorous and secure.” / “Auparavant, le colonisateur concevait fondamentalement son rapport avec le colonisé comme celui d’un homme civilisé avec un homme sauvage. La colonisation reposait ainsi sur une hiérarchie, grossière assurément, mais vigoureuse et sûre.” (Césaire, 1955: 57).

7 “La grande trahison de l’ethnographie occidentale, laquelle, depuis quelque temps, avec une détérioration déplorable du sens de ses responsabilités, s’ingénie à mettre en doute la supériorité omnilatérale de la civilisation occidentale sur les civilisations exotiques.” (Césaire, 1955: 57).

2 The Emergence of a Space for Black Literature: From René Maran to the Négritude Movement

The creation of space for the Black question (Malela, 2013) was undoubtedly facilitated by the award of the Goncourt Prize to the Martinican author René Maran for his novel *Batouala: Véritable roman nègre* in 1921 (translated in 1922 by Adele Szold Seltzer as *Batouala*; later editions have followed the original title *Batouala: A True Black Novel*). This award was of far-reaching significance, as it not only was the first literary prize to give official recognition to a Black author, but moreover an author who openly criticized the colonial policy of France at the time in the preface of his novel. And despite the fact that Maran's first novel follows the French Naturalism of the previous century, a tradition long overtaken by modernist tendencies of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, the award of the highest French literary prize meant the official sanctification of a text subsequently considered to be the initial impulse of the Négritude movement (Malela, 2013: 188 an.). Although René Maran's text does not criticize the basic presuppositions of colonialism, no doubt because he himself was an official in the colonial administration, *Batouala* openly describes the excesses of French colonial policy on the African continent.

The awarding of the Goncourt Prize has another equally important dimension. It manifests the progressive "melanophilia" in the intellectual and cultural center itself. Like many other Afro-Antillean and Malagasy authors, Maran was beginning to be discussed in Paris. These intellectuals, who had generally come to Paris to study, were thus increasingly given space and approbation by French intellectuals. The liminal situation of these newly-recognized authors is, however, not without paradoxes. On the one hand, they fit into the dominant culture through recognition, but from the perspective of colonial politics, they remain in a subaltern position vis-à-vis the dominant. On the other hand, the face-to-face encounter of authors connected to West Indian and West African colonies such as René Maran, Kojo Tovalou Houénou, Lamine-Guèye and Camille Mortenol gradually made it possible to reshape the ideological field and redefine Black identity for the future, in particular for a vigorous demarcation against cultural assimilation and a gradual emergence from a subaltern situation.

As a cultural and intellectual center and a place with a high concentration of authors from peripheries all over the world, Paris played an important role in this process. Pascale Casanova enumerates two reasons why Paris became the capital of the literary world: it is here that the factor of the strong presence of intellectuals from different parts of the world and the space of political freedom won by the French Revolution coexist. Paris has thus become an idealized city

where literary Modernism has proclaimed artistic freedom (Casanova, 2004: 24–25). Paris attracted intellectuals, thus it is not surprising that the largest Black community in continental Europe at the time would gather there. It has been estimated that between three and five thousand Black people lived in Paris in the 1920s, including a significant number of those who were entitled to an education in the metropolis by the colonial system (Dewitte, 1985: 25). A community of Black elites takes shape here, whose members gradually worked their way from exclusively Francophile and assimilationist positions toward a more critical view of the cultural center and its colonial policies. This generation of young intellectuals born from 1880 to 1890 in Africa, Madagascar, and the French Antilles met in Paris and connected. Through their interactions (with each other and with the environment) they gradually became suspicious of the assimilationist model they had embraced in the early stages of their intellectual development, thus beginning a search to define a Black identity that would culminate in the 1930s in the form of Négritude.

Nevertheless, the develop of what became Négritude was preceded by a period in which the Black authors were consolidating their position and sharpening their critical views of French society and its supposed cultural superiority. Indeed, despite their putative cultural and intellectual acumen, French elites in Paris continued to perceive Black intellectuals as inferior, in other words, as those who should simply show gratitude and not criticize the cultural center that (had) allowed them to develop culturally and intellectually. Indeed, the shift of opinion in René Maran, as one of the central figures of the Black movement in France, can be seen from this perspective as exemplary for understanding the cultural and ideological development of Black authors in Paris. Maran enters literature in 1912, a moment when he is still working in the colonial system as a police officer in Bangui in the Oubangui-Chari region of the Afrique-Équatoriale française (AEF). In the preface to his novel *Batouala*, Maran exalts France as the country “that gave him everything” (Maran, 1921: 11), then goes on to unrelentingly disparage the French colonial system and the eccentric and superior behavior of the colonizers in equatorial Africa which is compounded by their alcoholism along with the generally squalid colonial environment. The result is the often inhumane treatment of the indigenous population without any punishment from the French colonial administration. It is important to note, however, that the initial praising of France as the country that allowed Maran to advance culturally is symptomatic of the entire first generation of Black writers in Paris, whose search for identity is based on their seeming belief that the Black author must first fully submit to the dominant French culture, becoming part of it (Maran won the Goncourt Prize as a French author). Only in this way will he be able to criticize its colonial system, follow-

ing the example of non-African French writers and intellectuals such as André Malraux, Albert Londres (*Terre d'èbène: la traite des noirs*, 1927), André Gide (*Voyage au Congo*, 1927 translated as *Travels in the Congo*, 1927; *Retour du Tchad / Return from Chad*, 1927–1928), Louis-Ferdinand Céline (*Voyage au bout de la nuit*, 1932, translated as *Journey to the End of the Night*, 1983), and Michel Leiris (*L'Afrique fantôme*, 1934 translated as *Phantom Africa*, 2017), the latter of whom will be discussed below. Indeed, so vehement was the reaction of the proponents of colonial policy to the preface to *Batouala* that Maran himself preferred to resign from the colonial administration two years after the novel's publication and, from then on, devoted himself solely to his literary career. Maran's subsequent autobiographical novel, *Journal sans date (An Undated Journal)*, written in 1927 and renamed *Un homme pareil aux autres* twenty years later, illustrates the situation of many authors of this generation. The novel tells the story of an individual who comes to Bordeaux from Martinique to study and later becomes one of the few Black colonial officials in equatorial Africa, like the author himself as well as his friend Félix Éboué. The novel's altered title ironically reflects the situation of the protagonist Jean Veneuse. His disillusionment arises from the contrast between revolutionary values, such as racial equality, which he is inculcated with during his studies, and the colonial reality that makes it impossible for a Black man to coexist with a white woman. Although he loves her, he cannot expose her to the danger of persecution by the "others," i.e. white colonizers with strong racist prejudices. The character of Jean Veneuse, an alter ego of the author himself, illustrates the role of René Maran in forming the identity of the French Black author. As much as Maran advocates the assimilationist model typical of the nascent Black diaspora in Europe, he seeks to maintain close contact with an imagined Black Africa. Maran/Veneuse criticizes colonial policies to highlight the otherness of Black Africa through the constant posing of the "Black question" along with inquiries into the nature of authenticity (Malela, 2013: 138).

At this point, it is also important to highlight the unique role of the Parisian literary avant-gardes, especially the Surrealist movement, which was impressed by Black poetry and art. The Surrealists were among the first to turn their attention to African authors living in Paris. In doing so, the Surrealist movement allowed these intellectuals to move closer to their desired status as full-fledged authors in the white world. Thanks to Surrealism, René Maran was able to concentrate fully on his life's goal of integrating into the Parisian literary field, which he was able to do thanks to the affection of André Breton and Philippe Soupault. The traditional modernist need to seek new impulses from outside Europe probably played a role in this, but one must also take into account the willingness of Surrealists to take risks to bring a completely new conception

of art unencumbered by past traditions and to link it to new political thinking (predominantly leftist). The first and especially the second *Surrealist Manifesto* (1930), which juxtaposes modernist poets of Rimbaud's style and Marxist philosophy, can undoubtedly be considered the culmination of these efforts. This Surrealist position, however, complicates Maran's situation. While Maran is a critic of colonialism, at the same time he advocates a policy of assimilationism consisting, among other components, of an unconcealed admiration for French rationalism. (See the discussion of Maran's Francophilia above.) Surrealism was indeed an appropriate space to give voice to many Black poets and writers, for the movement embraced a new hope for modern poetry in the irrationality of the African, which the Surrealists placed in opposition to the rationality of the European. For Maran, however, this move would be to deny the very reasons that led him to admire French culture and thought. Thus, René Maran eventually turns to more traditional-looking literature, if only because he cannot afford to problematize his stance through experiments that question the rational basis of language in the way that the avant-gardes do. Maran becomes fully engaged with another question, namely the problem of authenticity.

René Maran is also considered one of the key precursors of a group of young Black authors in Paris who would later form the movement known as Négritude, a neologism coined by Aimé Césaire. A significant development in this regard was the founding of two journals that acted as platforms for debate on the Black question in the French context: the *Dépêche africaine* (1928–1936) and the *Revue du Monde Noir/ The Review of the Black World* (1931–1932) by sisters Paulette⁸ and Jane Nardal, the first Black students of Martinique origin at the Sorbonne. In 1928, the first of the above-mentioned journals, *La Dépêche africaine*, became the official organ of the Comité de défense des intérêts de la race noire (Committee for the Defence of the Interests of the Black Race), an organization which defended an assimilationist political line close to the Social Democratic Party SFIO. Among other goals, this journal profiled itself as an essential link between Black elites from different continents, among whom the Antillean elites had the task of “hastening the evolution of Africans” (Sharpley-Whiting, 2000: 12) in order to promote Black thought and culture. The second of the journals mentioned, *La Revue du Monde noir*, was founded by Paulette Nardal, who was already well known in the Parisian intellectual milieu for her

8 In the 1940s, Paulette Nardal (1896–1985) would go on to found *La Femme dans la cité*, a journal primarily concerned with the place of women in Martinique society. She would later be awarded the Order of Academic Palms and even the highest French state order of merit, the Legion of Honor.

articles in *Paris-Soir*. And although only six issues of this monthly magazine were published (November 1931-April 1932), the publication became an important stage in developing the intellectual movement that would later become Négritude.

At this point, it is also worth mentioning that most of the issues related to Négritude are linked, particularly by Paulette Nadal, to a notion of racial equality inspired by Marx's notion of class equality. In the fourth issue of *La Revue du monde noir*, Paulette Nardal highlighted Marx's role in bringing awareness to the importance of the Black question and the need to engage with African culture (Nardal, 1932: 347), a project her successors in the journal *Légitime Défense* would also continue. After the demise of *La Revue du monde noir*, organizers of *Légitime Défense* would take over Nadal's role, with the difference that these contributors, mostly of Martinican origin, would reject the assimilationist, consensualist attitude of the previous generation. René Ménil, Étienne and Thélus Léro, Jules-Marcel Monnerot Michel Pilotin, Maurice-Sabas Quitman as well as Pierre and Simone Yoyotte would openly show their aversion to the so-called "Antillean bourgeoisie" (Malela, 2008: 118). The writers of *Légitime Défense* would explicitly disparage the members of *La Revue du monde noir* for their compromising attitudes towards the French colonizers. The group around *Légitime Défense* proclaimed the necessity of linking the Black question to Marxism and its dialectical materialism, because only this could prevent the assimilationist tendencies promoted by a corrupt and hypocritical bourgeoisie that gravitated towards the metropolis and its conservative values (cf. Léro, Ménil et al., 1932: 1). On a literary level, then, the members of this group insisted on the need to write authentically Antillean literature, referring to the views of André Breton and other members of the Surrealist movement. Indeed, André Breton admitted that he saw the group of young Antillean authors as a movement parallel to Surrealism (Kesteloot, 2001: 49). In the introduction to the first and only issue of *Légitime Défense* (1932), considered as a manifesto, Breton even declared that the future of Antillean authors was linked to Surrealism, and the magazine itself directly referred their readers to the Surrealist manifestos of André Breton and their legacy in the works of Louis Aragon, René Crevel, Salvatore Dalí, Paul Éluard, Benjamin Péret and Tristan Tzara. The combative tone of this text is not unlike the militant mood of most avant-gardes, with the artistic and political often going hand in hand. Similarly, the Marquis de Sade, Hegel as well as Freud are often invoked in order to make strong statements against the "bourgeois family" and its "impure conventions," among which above all "humanitarian hypocrisy" ("hypocrisie humanitaire") and compassion ("pitié") are considered to be "stinking emanations of Christian rotteness" ("émanation puante de la pourriture chrétienne") (Kesteloot,

2001: *ibidem*). The journal is then intended to serve the Caribbean question and, above all, related literature. The authors define themselves as Caribbeans (*Antillais*) writing in French and wish to speak primarily to the young Black Francophone inhabitants of the African colonies and the Americas who suffer most from capitalist oppression and who therefore have the greatest potential to rebel against it (cf. Léro, Ménil et al., 1932: 2). The journal was ultimately limited to only one issue because of, among other factors, colonial censorship and the general reluctance of established Black intellectuals to enter into conflict with colonial power. Nevertheless, its authors were able to publish several more articles the following year, signed together as the *Légitime Défense Committee*. However, for the further development of Caribbean and Black identity in general, and for its literary expression in particular, this journal played a crucial role, if only because its authors named the fundamental problems preventing the Black ethnic group from addressing the question of its own emancipation. In 1978, co-founder René Ménil noted that *Légitime Défense* was not a magazine defending the idea of Négritude, as Léopold Sédar Senghor would have probably wished. Ménil criticizes the magazine for its insufficiently ambitious demands, particularly on the question of the liberation of Africa and the Antilles; he does defend himself, however, by pointing out that in 1932 it was impossible to anticipate the developments that would take place just after the Second World War. According to Ménil, the fundamental difference between the Négritude movement and *Légitime Défense* lies above all in the fact that, while Négritude gave priority to cultural struggle and “Negro values” (“valeurs nègres”) over social contradictions, *Légitime Défense* followed the path of the struggle of oppressed peoples against the Western and Negro corrupt bourgeoisie, framing the struggle for Negro values solely within the social transformations set out by Marx. In defining himself against Senghor and the latter’s way of dealing with the Black question, Ménil even labeled the *Légitime Défense* project as “Fanonist” *avant la lettre* (on Fanon, see below), as it allowed these activists to sketch out the general features of a Black mentality described in the “incredible caricature of the Negro-African,” an identity about which Léopold Sédar Senghor “had only dryly theorized” (Ménil, 1979: 2–3).

In addition to the activities of the group of authors around *Légitime Défense*, the establishment of a literary salon in Paulette Nardal’s apartment near Paris where members of the Black diaspora in France met was also an important milestone in the constitution of a Black cultural center in the French capital. This was a place of encounter for Black students from Martinique, Haiti, Senegal and other African countries, such as Léopold Sédar Senghor (originally from Senegal), Aimé Césaire (from Martinique) and Léon-Gontran Damas (from French Guiana), and above all the aforementioned René Maran, who

gave a lecture on his experience concerning the reception of his novel *Batouala*. The Nardal sisters' apartment was also a meeting place for members of New York's Harlem Renaissance movement, which was attempting to revive African-American Black culture. In this salon, young Black intellectuals and students could thus meet figures such as Countee Cullen, Claude McKay and Langston Hughes (Kwaterko, 2017: 126). The Americans essentially had the same interest: to make Black culture visible, especially literature that sought out indigenous African roots as well as to spread awareness of the plight of Blacks in the United States. In the period of the 1920s and 1930s, these writers and artists succeeded in penetrating beyond the American Black elite in New York. The poets of the Harlem Renaissance, for example, were a great inspiration to young aspiring Black writers in Paris in their search for a way to reconcile their own identity in their African homeland with the need to openly criticize the situation in the colonies.

These Black writers from Martinique, the Caribbean, Guyana or Africa attempted to renew the relationship with the African continent which had broken by colonial policies. Nevertheless, the image of Africa in their eyes was largely distorted, often more imaginary than real, with the cause of this mythicization the loss of contact and, above all, seeing Africa through a French or American prism. The need to return to the African roots resulted in the founding of a movement similar to that founded by American Blacks. The Négritude movement had two basic objectives: on the one hand, a struggle against colonialist ideology and its consequences on a socioeconomic level in the countries of origin of the authors. On the other, it represented an effort to uproot the idea of assimilating the Black population and integrating it into European culture, a goal which held sway in the minds of the French and other Europeans with a colonial past.⁹ In other words, the aim was emancipation from the yoke of a literary tradition extolling cultural assimilation along the lines of colonial exhibitions (Obergöker, 2016: 80–95).

The word Négritude first appears in issue 3 of the monthly magazine of the *Association of Martinique, Haitian and French-Antillean Students in France, L'Étudiant noir* (May–June 1935). In the article *Conscience Raciale et Révolution Sociale*, Aimé Césaire discusses Black identity and its culture in opposition

9 This literary tradition is sometimes referred to as “doudouist,” after the word “doudou,” which in Haitian and Martinican Creole refers to a doll. This ironic term is mainly intended to draw attention to the distorted image of an idealized life in Haiti, just as the depictions of indigenous life in the colonies during the colonial exhibitions were intended to do (Kwaterko, 2017: 126). It should be added that this term ceased to appear after 1933, after the appearance of the group around the magazine *Légitime Défense*.

to Frenchness (“*francité*,” Césaire, 1935b: 2), which he understands as an oppressive instrument of “French accounting.” Indeed, he would return to the concept several more times and redefine it in later writings (notably, in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, 1939 and 1947, no. 2011; and *Discours sur le colonialisme*, 1950).

The aforementioned review *L'Étudiant noir* played a crucial role in the debates. It was headed since March 1935 by Aimé Césaire himself as a young student from the prestigious *École normale supérieure*. With its original mission to defend the interests of Martinique students in Paris, the journal would build on the ideas and debates developed in previous journals, especially in *La Revue du monde noir* and *Légitime Défense*. Above all, however, the journal represents the first publication to break free from the grip of Breton's Surrealism. Thanks in particular to Aimé Césaire, the debate on Black identity and the place of Black culture would shift, eventually resulting in a disparate understanding of the concept of *Négritude* which would also become a point of contention between Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor. In Aimé Césaire's work, a universalist vision of Negro/Blackness prevails through which it is indispensable to “break the mechanism of racial identification and to tear up superficial values, to grasp the immediate Black man in oneself, to plant one's *Négritude* like a beautiful tree until it bears its authentic fruit” (Césaire, 1935b: 2).¹⁰ In contrast, Léopold Sédar Senghor's work is dominated by an essentialist vision of these issues as “the set of values of the civilization of the Negro world, the set of qualities, modes of thought and feeling specific to the Negro race” (Senghor, 1939: 299).¹¹ The vision is thus simply that of “the cultural values of the Negro world as manifested in the life, institutions and works of the Negro” (Senghor 1964: 9),¹² which Senghor places on the same level as those of the white world. According to Aimé Césaire, however, attempts to approximate the culture of whites inevitably leads to contempt on their part and thus results in violence, as Blacks and whites are in conflict. In addition, there is also a tendency towards passivity among Black artists, because they acknowledge that they will never match white culture, which emphasizes originality over mere imitation. According to Césaire, this disparity, which represents a source of suf-

10 “[R]ompre la mécanique identification des races, déchirer les superficielles valeurs, saisir en nous le nègre immédiat, planter notre *Négritude* comme un bel arbre jusqu'à ce qu'elle porte ses fruits authentiques.”

11 “L'ensemble des valeurs de la civilisation du monde noir, l'ensemble des caractères, des manières de penser, de sentir, propres à la race noire.”

12 “[L]'ensemble des valeurs culturelles du monde noir, telles qu'elles s'expriment dans la vie, les institutions et les œuvres des Noirs.”

fering for Black artists and writers, must be discarded and space given to young artists: “Black youth want to act and create. It wants to have its own poets, its own novelists to tell it of its own misfortunes and its own greatness; it wants to contribute to universal life, to the humanization of humanity; but to do this, it must preserve itself or find itself: the self must come first.” (Césaire, 1935a: 3)¹³ This goal also extends the scope of the work to the entire Black population, not only to the Antilles and the African-American area, as was the case with previous magazines.

The goals of Césaire and Senghor do in fact converge at two points. Firstly, the Black question must be extended to Africa itself (Senghor was Senegalese) as well as to a wider generalization. Secondly, the Black writer, and by extension any member of the Black race, must accept the color of his skin and not try to conform to or imitate the white race. But these two goals are where the agreement ends, as a contradiction arises in seeking to achieve them. In contrast to previous groups of Black intellectuals around the *Revue du monde noir* and *Légitime Défense*, including Léopold Sédar Senghor, Césaire pursues the path of emancipation and the unconditional rejection of assimilationism. Senghor, on the other hand, argues that it is not enough to assimilate, but that it is necessary to adopt French culture as well as to adapt African culture to Europe (Malela, 2008: 125). Such conceptions of the Black question later provoked a reaction from Jean-Paul Sartre, who saw in them a specific effort to ideologize the Black question as well as the danger of indoctrinating the race in the form of class struggle along the lines of militant Marxists. In *Black Orpheus*, the preface to the *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (*New Anthology of Black and Malagasy poetry*, 1948), Sartre even speaks of the “anti-racist racism” of Black people: “[...] the Negro himself [...] wishes in no way to dominate the world: he desires the abolition of all kinds of ethnic privileges; he asserts his solidarity with the oppressed of every color. [...] And it is certainly not just by accident that the most ardent cantors of Négritude are also militant Marxists.” (Sartre 1965: 48–49).¹⁴

13 “La jeunesse Noire veut agir et créer. Elle veut avoir ses poètes, ses romanciers, qui lui diront à elle, ses malheurs à elle, et ses grandeurs à elle; elle veut contribuer à la vie universelle, à l’humanisation de l’humanité; et pour cela, encore une fois, il faut se conserver ou se retrouver: c’est le primat du soi.”

14 “[...] le nègre, [...], se crée un racisme antiraciste. Il ne souhaite nullement dominer le monde: il veut l’abolition des privilèges ethniques d’où qu’ils viennent; il affirme sa solidarité avec les opprimés de toute couleur. [...] ce n’est pas par hasard que les chantres les plus ardents de la *Négritude* sont en même temps des militants marxistes.” (Sartre 1948: XL).

3 The Africanization of the Intellectual Left

Thanks to the magazine *L'Étudiant noir*, the first Black magazine of its kind to break free from the grip of the Parisian avant-gardes, the term Négritude became established in the Parisian art scene of the second half of the 1930s. Following the artistic trends of the previous period of the so-called “mad years” (*les années folles*), a leftist avant-garde network emerged, cemented by the prefaces of Jean-Paul Sartre¹⁵ and later joined by Claude Lévi-Strauss and, above all, Michel Leiris with their anti-colonial critiques.

In March 1950, Michel Leiris¹⁶ gave a lecture entitled *The Ethnologist in the Face of Colonialism*, which he published in Sartre's *Les Temps modernes*. This was a daring theme at the time, at least in France, since among ethnologists focused on Africa, the colonial context was never explicitly mentioned, and no one commented on the economic, political or social impact of colonial policies on the communities under study. Hence, when Michel Leiris published a book in 1934 entitled *L'Afrique fantôme* (*Phantom Africa*, 2017), describing the Dakar-Djibouti mission (May 1931 to February 1933) during which Griaule's research group crossed Africa from west to east (over 85,000 km) and “collected” 3,500 objects for the Ethnographic Museum on the Trocadero in Paris, the admission of such a confiscation of artifacts caused a scandal. The texts from this mission were then published in *Minotaurus*, a surrealist magazine founded by Robert Skira and published between 1933 and 1939. Leiris held the position of secretary and archivist during the expedition and therefore kept notes. Instead of merely charting the course of the journey, however, he also recorded his own impressions and feelings, giving the text the character of a diary. In doing so, he also revealed what should undoubtedly have remained hidden: the social inequality and racism of the colonizers. Among other consequences, the publication of *L'Afrique fantôme* signaled a break with Marcel Griaule and thus with the French official ethnographic school, as the nature of “this book, which others

15 In 1948 Sartre published a preface to Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (*An Anthology of the New Negro and Malagasy Poetry in French*), characteristically entitled *Black Orpheus* (Senghor, 1948), and in 1961 a preface to Fanon's *Les Damnés de la terre* (Fanon, 1961, translated in English as *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963).

16 French writer and ethnographer. In his youth, in the 1920s, Leiris was close to Surrealism, but he broke with the Surrealists in 1929 after a conflict with Breton, whom Leiris had criticized. Leiris then began studying ethnology and working at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. After World War Two, he worked closely with Jean-Paul Sartre and was one of the founders of the review *Les Temps modernes*. Leiris was also involved in campaigns against racism and the war in Algeria.

protested as ill-timed [was] potentially harmful to the ethnographers working among the Europeans in colonial territories” (Leiris, 2017: 63).¹⁷ Leiris describes here the difficulties and pitfalls that made objective scientific research impossible. His lecture and diary remained for a long time a unique testimony to the difficult situation of the scientist, whom he defines as an “honest intellectual worker” facing the colonial administration and the distrust of the local population (Adriti, 1990: 95).

From Leiris’s perspective, the colonial situation represents a set of several factors that have irreversibly prevented the development of African societies, even in cases in which these societies had already come into contact with other social formations and cultures in previous periods, such as interactions with Islamic societies. This led him to reflect on the history of societies on the so-called “Black continent,” thus going beyond the then-prevailing school of Griaule. Leiris refuses to categorize these societies as merely primitive or without a written language, because these characteristics are negative, as they are derived from the European perspective and based on the paradox of studying the values of civilization and culture (such as art) of societies considered inferior in terms of colonial ideology. In this, Leiris opposes the presuppositions of the Griaullian school, which places these societies outside history, thus it is unnecessary to take into consideration the effects of colonialism or any other phenomenon that would bring about social change.

In his militant stance (reflecting on the organization of work, forms of industrialization, the protection of artisans), Leiris comes close to Sartre’s commitment, as he demands that the ethnologist put himself in the role of a natural advocate of colonized ethnicities vis-à-vis the colonizing peoples to which he himself belongs. Leiris would later confirm this position by being one of the few ethnologists to sign *Manifesto of the 121* (full title: *Déclaration sur le droit à l’insoumission dans la guerre d’Algérie—Declaration on the Right of Insubordination in the Algerian War*, 1960), which calls for the legitimization of the right to self-determination of Algerians during the Algerian War. Similarly, he would condemn the forced labor on the plantations of Europeans in the Ivory Coast. His engagement was also directed inwards in French society, as he sought to disrupt the stereotypes and misconceptions of Europeans about the communities he studied. Leiris thus presents a kind of realist ethnography less concerned with the traditional study of myths, rituals and traditions in favor of studying everyday patterns of behavior, subsistence provisioning and various other aspects of everyday life.

17 “Ce livre, inopportun m’opposa-t-on, [est] de nature à desservir les ethnographes auprès des Européens établis dans les territoires coloniaux.” (Leiris 1934, reed. 1981: 7–8).

4 Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre

The Algerian war was a significant factor in the polarisation of French and Francophone intellectuals in terms of center-periphery relations (Brun, Penot-Lacassagne, 2012: 37). This also applies to the existentialists, whose attitudes largely predetermined the future contributions of individual authors to post-colonial thought and the cultural emancipation of colonized peoples. This contemporary dynamic can be illustrated in the thought of several intellectuals who became protagonists in the highly heated axiological controversies of postwar France.

A kind of moderate left-wing advocate of a “third way” (Spiquel, 2010: 1190–1201), which would also consider the rights of the so-called *Pieds-Noirs*, i.e. future French repatriates from North Africa, was Albert Camus (1913–1960). As an Algerian Frenchman from a very poor background, this writer and philosopher developed a strong empathy for the local population. Despite his many reservations about Marxism, at the age of twenty-two he joined the Communist Party of Algeria, through which he hoped to improve material and cultural conditions in the country. Two years later, however, he was officially expelled from the party for “Trotskyism” due to his protests against the change in party policy. The Communist Party of Algeria in fact gradually moved away from criticism of colonialism and eventually even denounced the individuals associated with France who were suspected of having links with Algerian nationalists.¹⁸ Guided by his own “code of honor” (Todd, 1996: 151), Camus firmly stood up for his imprisoned friends, including the future prominent politician Messali Hadj.

In June 1939, the *Alger républicain* published a series of reports by Camus entitled *The Misery of Kabylia* (*Misère de la Kabylie*) in which the author detailed the waves of famine plaguing a region of northern Algeria with record unemployment, the de facto non-existent health system, the outdated education system, and the charity-based social policy. Even by African standards, the colonial regime and those who supported fostered an incredible level of corruption and administrative cruelty. At the end of each of his articles, Camus

18 In the early 1950s, Camus returned to his unfortunate communist experience in a letter to Jean Grenier, on whose advice he had once joined the party: “Some [of the Algerian nationalists] who had escaped persecution came to ask me if I would let this disgrace pass in silence. That afternoon marked me; I still remember how I trembled when they spoke to me. I was ashamed, and then I did what I had to do.” / “Quelques-uns [des nationalistes algériens], qui avaient échappé aux recherches, sont venus me demander si je laissais faire cette infamie sans rien dire. Cet après-midi est gravé en moi; je me souviens encore que je tremblais alors qu’on me parlait; j’avais honte; j’ai fait ensuite ce qu’il fallait.” (Phéline, Spiquel-Courdille, 2017: 301).

offered himself as an unofficial spokesman for the silent mass of the dominated population, whose demands he could interpret and communicate to the central authorities. Further, he proposed his own plan for the region's economic, social and political development, a scheme in which the Kabyles (the Tribes) themselves would take an active part in local government.

The Misery of Kabylia remains a very valuable *in situ* testimony to the colonial conditions of the late 1930s, as well as a robust defense of the dignity of the indigenous population selflessly delivered by Camus from his position as a humanist journalist committed to truth and social justice for all. At the same time, the same text clearly defined mental and political boundaries beyond which the writer would never step throughout his life. For example, in the section on education, Camus described the need for quality standard education for both the Kabyles and the local French, justifying this necessity in purely colonial terms: "If assimilation is really the objective and if we really wish to make such a noble people French, separating them from the French is not the solution. If I have understood correctly, that is all they ask." (Camus, 2014: 211)¹⁹ Throughout his reportage, then, Camus emerges as a modern intellectual (with lifelong gratitude to the metropolitan "center" for his own education): while he feels an "instinctive sympathy" for the oppressed local population, he remains firmly embedded in the French colonial "we." This "we" is, admittedly, subjected to scathing criticism in the text and challenged to a profound transformation in its thinking, but it is in no way challenged *an sich*.²⁰

During the 1940s and 1950s, Camus found himself in an ideologically tricky position to sustain. On the one hand, after his resettlement in France, his attachment to his native Algeria steadily deepened:

I have passionately loved this land where I was born, I drew from it whatever I am, and in forming friendships I have never made any distinction among the men who live here, whatever their race. Although I have

19 "Si l'on veut vraiment d'une assimilation, et que ce peuple digne soit français, il ne faut pas commencer par le séparer des Français. Si je l'ai bien compris, c'est tout ce qu'il demande." (Camus, 1965: 923).

20 "If there is any excuse for the colonial conquest, it must be found in the degree to which it helps the conquered peoples maintain their personality. And if we have any obligation to this country, it is to allow one of the proudest and most humane people in history to stay true to itself and to its destiny." (Albert Camus, 2014: 226) / "Si la conquête coloniale pouvait jamais trouver une excuse, c'est dans la mesure où elle aide les peuples conquis à garder leur personnalité. Et si nous avons un devoir en ce pays, il est de permettre à l'une des populations les plus fières et les plus humaines en ce monde de rester fidèle à elle-même et à son destin." (Camus, 1965: 938).

known and shared every form of poverty in which this country abounds, it is for me the land of happiness, of energy, and of creation.

CAMUS, 1960: 140–141²¹

On the other hand, none of the forms of federative union between his homeland and France, which Camus would have preferred to immediate independence, proved viable. The writer spent years denouncing the oppression of North African Muslims as well as patiently explaining that all Pieds-Noirs do not conform to nationalist caricatures of bloodthirsty exploiters.²² All his life, he sought a compromise between the injustices of the colonial regime and a wholly independent Algeria, which he believed would sooner or later take the path of religious or nationalist fanaticism.²³ As the conflicts developed into war in the early 1950s, he increasingly felt himself in a mental “*no-man’s-land between hostile armies*,” where he could only “preach the folly of war as bullets fly” (Camus, 2014: 114–115).²⁴

On 22 January 1956, Camus made *L’Appel pour une Trêve Civile* (*Appeal for a Civil Truce*) in Algiers, which was already sounding more desperate than any of his previous speeches. Essentially, he called on both the French and Arab sides “to declare simultaneously that for the duration of the fighting the civilian population will on every occasion be respected and protected” (Camus, 1965: 993),²⁵ however cruel the course of the war itself might be. The response to his plea was a barrage of stones hurled against the façade of the cultural center and the police protection under which he had to flee the country. For several months afterward, he received death threats from both camps.

Camus’s assertion that he “experienced Algeria’s misfortune as a personal tragedy” (Camus, 2014: 150)²⁶ is confirmed in his last major public appearance in October 1957 as he was awarded of the Nobel Prize for Literature. In

21 “J’ai aimé avec passion cette terre où je suis né, j’y ai puisé tout ce que je suis, et je n’ai jamais séparé dans mon amitié aucun des hommes qui y vivent, de quelque race qu’ils soient. Bien que j’aie connu et partagé les misères qui ne lui manquent pas, elle est restée pour moi la terre du bonheur, de l’énergie et de la création.” (Ferrisi, 2008: 11).

22 A detailed analysis of Camus’s argument and his relations with Algerian intellectuals (Mohammed-el-Aziz Kessous, Mouloud Feraoun, Jean Amrouche, Kateb Yacine) is provided by Agnès Spiquel in the above cited article.

23 In the early 1950s, Camus broke with a number of his former friends (e.g. Pascal Pia) as well as with his protégé the Algerian poet Jean Sénac. As the latter had taken part in several armed uprisings, the writer described him as a “little thug” (Pironet, 2020).

24 “dans un no man’s land entre deux armées”; “prêcher au milieu des balles” (Camus, 1965: 964).

25 “la population civile ser[ait], en toute occasion, respectée et protégée” (Camus, 1965: 993).

26 “vécu le malheur algérien comme une tragédie personnelle” (Camus, 1965: 992).

the ensuing discussion, Saïd Kessal, a student of Algerian origin, asked Camus whether it was possible to consider the national liberation struggle just even if it involved terrorist attacks on civilians. The philosopher replied:

As I have always condemned terror, I must also condemn the terrorism which is practiced blindly in the streets of Algiers, for example, and which may one day strike my mother or my family. I believe in justice, but I would defend my mother before I defend justice.

MONNERET, 2013: 116²⁷

Most of the French press of the time distorted the answer, turning it into a nonsensical slogan (“Between justice and my mother, I choose my mother” [Monneret, 2013: 116])²⁸ which was then used purposely to dehumanize the author. Although Camus received a much fairer appraisal after his death (1960), in his native Algeria he had to wait until the twenty-first century for “the end of purgatory,”²⁹ and even then he was given only the token recognition of a “part-time fellow citizen.”³⁰

The ideological counterpart to Albert Camus was Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980),³¹ whose unreservedly pro-separatist stance on the Algerian question earned him worldwide fame and recognition from postcolonial intellectuals.

27 “J’ai toujours condamné la terreur. Je dois condamner aussi un terrorisme qui s’exerce aveuglément dans les rues d’Alger par exemple, et qui peut un jour frapper ma mère ou ma famille. Je crois à la justice, mais je défendrai ma mère avant la justice.”

28 “Entre la justice et ma mère, je choisis ma mère.” (Laçon, 2010).

29 “la fin d’un purgatoire.” For the following five decades Camus was branded with the label of a pro-French “traitor” who opposed an independent Algeria. It is only since the 2010s that university lectures, conferences and the largely positive assessments of local writers (Maïssa Bey, Boualem Sansal, Hamid Grine, Salah Guemriche, Malek Chebel, Kamel Daoud) have proliferated to begin the symbolic rehabilitation of Camus as a significant part of the Algerian cultural heritage (Lenzini, 2010: 117–119).

30 “compatriote à temps partiel.” This comment by the Algerian sociologist Abdelkader Djeghloul points to the persistent split between Camus in the 1950s and public opinion in North Africa today. In the dispute between Sartre and Camus, most Algerian intellectuals of the time clearly sided with the former, a position that has long marked their students and followers (Rochebrune, 2013).

31 According to Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre and Camus were originally quite close friends, but they had been clashing privately since 1947 (e.g. regarding the controversy over the Soviet gulags). Still, it was not until the publication of Camus’s *L’Homme révolté* (1951) that open warfare broke out between them. The dispute over the historical scope of Marxism and related ideas about revolution gradually affected dozens of other intellectuals and to some extent continues to influence the French public sphere to this day.

Sartre had no familial or emotional relationship with Africa, so he proceeded with the detachment of an academic philosopher in his assessment of the local political situation. Neither the Algerian war nor decolonization was at the center of his thought; instead, the events merely provided Sartre with the space to apply theoretically thought-out concepts that he had formulated independently of them in a purely abstract manner.

The main prism through which Sartre viewed (post)colonial developments was Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic, which the philosopher became familiar with in the writings of Wilhelm Dilthey and Jean Wahl (Marmasse, 2013: 240) as well as through the lectures of Alexandre Kojève, his brilliant but somewhat eccentric professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études. Sartre subjected Hegel's dialectic to a thorough critical analysis in *L'Être et le Néant* (*Being and Nothingness*, 1943), and based his *Réflexions sur la question juive* (*Reflections on the Jewish Question*, 1946) on it, used it as proof of his Marxist orientation in *Critique de la raison dialectique* (*Critique of Dialectical Reason*, 1960), and finally elaborated on it again in *Cahiers pour une morale* (*Notebooks for an Ethics*, 1983). Likewise, most of the anticolonialist texts in the fifth volume of *Situations* (*Situations v*, 1964, second expanded edition, 2018) as well as Sartre's other articles on related subjects testify to his desire to relate world events to the Master-Slave dialectic as a universal interpretive model.

The evolution of Sartre's thinking and the gradual transformation of his understanding of the dialectic are readily apparent in the prefaces he provided to a number of exceptional works by African and Antillean authors that foreshadowed future postcolonial theories. In this context, one globally important phenomenon should first be highlighted: Pascale Casanova describes the "canonizing effect" (Casanova, 1999: 173; Casanova 2004: 130) of prefaces or translations from the pens of writers recognized by the center (Breton, Gide, Yourcenar, etc.), without whose "consecration" non-European authors would not have achieved notoriety, thus their works would never have reached a broader readership.

In Sartre's case, such an effect can be multiplied by his position as the intellectual leader of the Western left who is able to bestow the unshakable cultural credit of contemporary France:

In the 1960s, Jean-Paul Sartre personally embodied the accumulated wealth of four centuries of French literary and intellectual activity, almost single-handedly concentrating the totality of historical belief and Parisian credit. As an intellectual committed to the cause of the politically repressed, he also became one of the most powerful sources of recognition in the world of literature, notably on behalf of Faulkner and Dos

Passos. Mario Vargas Llosa evoked Sartre's stature in the eyes of young intellectuals throughout the world who came to Paris in search of literary modernity [...]. He was [like Voltaire, Hugo, Gide] that curious French institution: the intellectual mandarin. That is, someone who is seen as a teacher, beyond what he knows, what he writes or even what he says, a man on whom a huge public confers the power to legislate on matters ranging from the largest moral, cultural and political questions to the most trivial [ones] ... Sartre's immense power of consecration made him a sort of embodiment of literary modernity.

CASANOVA, 2004, 129–130³²

Sartre's prefaces, written for prestigious Parisian publishing houses (Presses universitaires de France, Buchet/Chastel, Maspero), may be employed as key materials in any understanding of the philosopher's role in the center-periphery dynamic.

The three main texts that Sartre introduced and shielded with his powerful authority were Léopold Sédar Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (*New Anthology of Black and Malagasy poetry*, 1948), Albert Memmi's *Portrait du colonisé précédé du Portrait du colonisateur* (*The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 1957), and Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961).

In the prefaces to these works, Sartre explicitly addressed Europeans, with whom, like Camus, a common "we" is shared. Sartre refers to "our gaze" (291), "our whiteness" (291), "our greatness" (292), "our dignity" (292), "our race" (293), "our technics" (293), "our society" (295), "our culture" (300), "our rapport with the world" (314), "our fathers" (291), "our bourgeois sons" (294) (Sartre, 1988:

32 "Rassemblant en quelque sorte en sa personne le produit de quatre siècles d'accumulation littéraire et intellectuelle française, Sartre a concentré presque à lui seul, autour des années 1960, la totalité de la croyance, du "crédit" parisien. Intellectuel engagé en faveur des dominés politiques, il est devenu aussi l'un des consacrant littéraires (de Faulkner, de Dos Pasos ...) les plus puissants. [...] Il incarna, tout comme [Voltaire, Hugo, Gide] cette curieuse institution française: le mandarin intellectuel. C'est-à-dire quelqu'un qui exerce un magistère au-delà de ce qu'il sait, de ce qu'il écrit et même de ce qu'il dit, un homme auquel une vaste audience confère le pouvoir de légiférer sur des sujets qui vont des grandes questions morales, culturelles et politiques jusqu'aux plus banales [...] L'immense pouvoir de consécration de Sartre faisait de lui une sorte d'incarnation de la modernité littéraire." (Casanova, 1999: 193–194). An excellent summary of all the types of capital at Sartre's disposal—philosophical, literary, critical and political—can be found in Boschetti, 1985.

291–314).³³ In *Black Orpheus* alone, he obsessively repeated this possessive pronoun forty-five times. At the same time, however, Sartre repeatedly warned his fellow Europeans that neither African nor Antillean authors would henceforth write for a European audience that they would henceforth be politically and culturally ignored. According to Sartre, instead of its traditional position as the subject of History, Europe would now become its object.³⁴

This division between “us” and “them” was accompanied in the texts of the prefaces by what can be seen today as a surprising degree of essentialist prejudice: apparently influenced by the leaders of the Négritude movement itself, for example, Sartre automatically associated Black people—and Négritude as such—with an explosive temperament, marked masculinity, and historical irrationality. Regarding such a reductive characterization, however, “a white man cannot speak properly [of Negritude], since he has no inner experience of it and since the European languages lack the words which would allow it to be described.” (Sartre, 1988: 313).³⁵

While according to the French philosopher, Europeans have always been characterized by individualism and civic attachment to modern technocratic civilization, the African is described as an anonymous “bird-charmer”; a “fake tree” on the branches of which things come to perch (315); a black soul drawing its unity from the rhythm of the tam-tam or jazz (321) (Sartre, 1988: 291–330).³⁶ In particular, in passages based on sexual metaphors, Sartre’s own phantasms are completely let loose, as the Black man is described as “the great male of the earth, the world’s sperm” (Sartre, 1988: 316).³⁷ Négritude is reduced to a kind of erotic pantheism extended to the fauna and flora of the entire continent (Sartre, 1988: 317, 325).

33 “notre regard”; “notre couleur”; “notre grandeur”; “notre terre”; “notre race”; “nos techniques”; “notre société”; “notre culture”; “notre rapport au monde”; “nos pères”; “nos fils” (Sartre, 1948: I–XLIV).

34 In fact, such a radical tone corresponded only to the content of Fanon’s book, while on the contrary Senghor and Memmi emphasized the effort to reach a broad readership of both colonists and colonized.

35 “un blanc ne saurait parler convenablement [de la Négritude], puisqu’il n’en a pas l’expérience intérieure et puisque les langues européennes manquent des mots qui permettraient de la décrire.” (Sartre, 1948: XXIX).

36 “charmeur d’oiseaux”; “les choses viennent se percher sur les branches de cet arbre”; “c’est le rythme, en effet, qui cimente les multiples aspects de l’âme noire, c’est lui qui communique sa légèreté nietzschéenne à ces lourdes intuitions dionysiaques”; “tam-tam, jazz qui figure la temporalité de l’existence nègre” (Sartre, 1948: I–XLIV).

37 “le noir reste le grand mâle de la terre, le sperme du monde”; “un accouplement perpétuel de femmes et d’hommes métamorphosés en animaux, en végétaux, en pierres, avec des pierres, des plantes et des bêtes métamorphosées en hommes” (Sartre, 1948: XXXII, XXXIV).

Up to this point, Sartre's statements had not differed much from the Parisian prejudices of the time,³⁸ only with the opposite sign, but the philosopher's prefaces also brought about a major ideological shift in the application of Hegel's dialectic. According to the French philosopher, the fate of the colonized was largely analogous to that of other historically dominated slaves, serfs, proletarians or Jews:

Like the white worker, the negro is a victim of the capitalist structure of our society. This situation reveals to him his close ties—quite apart from the color of his skin—with certain classes of Europeans who, like him, are oppressed; it incites him to imagine a privilege-less society in which skin pigmentation will be considered a mere fluke.

SARTRE, 1988: 295³⁹

Nevertheless, Sartre indicated an awareness of at least one specific ontological difference regarding the colonized. As he wrote in *Réflexions sur la question juive*, black skin represented a much more insurmountable handicap than belonging to the working class or Jewish communities: while the proletarian may under certain circumstances become rich, and the assimilated Jew may blend into the majority society, the Black man remains identifiable at first sight as Black, as the Western tradition interprets his skin color as “pure negativity.”⁴⁰

Specifically, Sartre then evaluated the movement of Négritude within Hegel's schema as the second negative phase of the dialectical cycle (the rebellious Slave turning the Master's own way of thinking against him). This idea of “anti-racist racism” (Sartre, 1988: 18) is very clearly illuminated in the preface to Senghor's *Anthology*:

38 Unlike Camus, Sartre came from a very wealthy family, graduated from the prestigious *École normale supérieure*, and for most of his adult life embodied the authority of the Parisian center.

39 “Le nègre, comme le travailleur blanc, est victime de la structure capitaliste de notre société; cette situation lui dévoile son étroite solidarité, par-delà les nuances de sa peau, avec certaines classes d'Européens opprimés comme lui; elle l'incite à projeter une société sans privilège où la pigmentation de la peau sera tenue pour un simple accident.” (Sartre, 1948: VIII).

40 “négativité pure” (Gyssels, 2005: 639). Frantz Fanon, Édouard Glissant and other (post) colonial intellectuals like Valentin-Yves Mudimbe will also stress this ontological otherness and “fundamental unassimilability” of the African. Comparisons with the Jew or the proletarian will be unacceptable to them.

In fact, Négritude appears like the upbeat [unaccented beat] of a dialectical progression: the theoretical and practical affirmation of white supremacy is the thesis; the position of Négritude as an antithetical value is the moment of negativity. But this negative moment is not sufficient in itself, and these Black men who use it know this perfectly well; they know that it aims at preparing the synthesis or realization of the human being in a raceless society. Thus Négritude is for destroying itself, it is a “crossing to” and not an “arrival at,” a means and not an end.

SARTRE, 1988: 327⁴¹

Thus, according to Sartre, a typical representative of the center in this respect,⁴² the proponents of Négritude developed their racial and cultural specificities only to arrive at universal values in the next stage, promoting negativity (including explicit violence) in order to eventually arrive at some ultimate conciliatory positivity. By analogy, the French philosopher assumed that his other literary protégé, the French Tunisian Albert Memmi “attempts to live his particularity by transcending it in the direction of the universal. The transcendence is not toward Man, who does not yet exist, but toward a rigorous reason enforcing its claims on everyone.” (Sartre, 2003: 18)⁴³

Only five years later, in the preface to Fanon’s *Les Damnés de la Terre* (1961), would Sartre abandon his universalist and Eurocentric premises when he articulated the unbearable paradox of the colonized in relation to the coloniz-

41 “En fait, la Négritude apparaît comme le temps faible d’une progression dialectique: l’affirmation théorique et pratique de la suprématie du blanc est la thèse; la position de la Négritude comme valeur antithétique est le moment de la négativité. Mais ce moment négatif n’a pas de suffisance par lui-même et les noirs qui en usent le savent fort bien; ils savent qu’il vise à préparer la synthèse ou réalisation de l’humain dans une société sans races. Ainsi la Négritude est pour se détruire, elle est passage et non aboutissement, moyen et non fin dernière.” (Sartre, 1948: XL1).

42 As Pascale Casanova reminds us: “In this sense the notion of universality is one of the most diabolical inventions of the center” (Casanova, 2004, 154) / “L’universel est, en quelque sorte, l’une des inventions les plus diaboliques du centre.” (Casanova, 1999: 227). Pierre Bourdieu had already noted the extent to which France had always politically exploited the power of its “literary capital,” both in relation to colonized nations and in international politics in general. In this context, the sociologist speaks of a cultural “imperialism of the universal” based on the notion of France as the “mother of art” into whose kindly arms intellectuals and artists the world over should take refuge in order to achieve the desired international recognition through the universally valid “consecration of Paris” (Bourdieu, 1992: 149–155).

43 “essaye de vivre sa particularité en la dépassant vers l’universel. Non pas vers l’Homme, qui n’existe pas encore, mais vers une Raison rigoureuse et qui s’impose à tous.” (Sartre, 1973: 30).

ers: “You are making us into monstrosities; your humanism claims we are at one with the rest of humanity but your racist methods set us apart.” (Sartre, 1963: 8)⁴⁴ Unlike the two previous prefaces, Sartre could no longer outline in Fanon’s case a reconciliatory Hegelian synthesis, some third dialectical phase that would bridge centuries of systematic dehumanization of the colonized, and thus arrive at a catharsis in relations with the former colonizers.

Sartre not only adopted Fanon’s conviction of the inevitability of revolutionary violence, but he rationally intensified the radicalism of such a move:

For in the first days of the revolt you must kill: to shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remain a dead man, and a free man; the survivor, for the first time, feels a *national* soil under his foot.

SARTRE, 1963: 22⁴⁵

Hegel’s dialectic thus remains *grosso modo*, but its third phase is now predicted by Sartre as written in blood:

The war, by merely setting the question of command and responsibility, institutes new structures which will become the first institutions of peace. Here, then, is man even now established in new traditions, the future children of a horrible present; here then we see him legitimized by a law which will be born or is born each day under fire: once the last settler is killed, shipped home, or assimilated, the minority breed disappears, to be replaced by socialism.

SARTRE, 1963: 23⁴⁶

The last of Sartre’s prefaces thus resulted in a revolutionary call to the French not to end up on the scrapheap of history along with their colonial posses-

44 “Vous faites de nous des monstres, votre humanisme nous prétend universels et vos pratiques racistes nous particularisent.” (Sartre, 1961: 24).

45 “Abattre un Européen, c’est faire d’une pierre deux coups, supprimer en même temps un oppresseur et un opprimé: restent un homme mort et un homme libre; le survivant, pour la première fois, sent un sol national sous la plante de ses pieds.” (Sartre, 1961: 35).

46 “La guerre—ne fût-ce qu’en posant la question du commandement et des responsabilités—institue de nouvelles structures qui seront les premières institutions de la paix. Voici donc l’homme instauré jusque dans des traditions nouvelles, filles futures d’un horrible présent, le voici légitimé par un droit qui va naître, qui naît chaque jour au feu: avec le dernier colon tué, remarqué ou assimilé, l’espèce minoritaire disparaît, cédant la place à la fraternité socialiste.” (Sartre, 1961: 36).

sions, but instead to join the opposite camp while there is still time: “But, as they say, that’s another story: the history of mankind. The time is drawing near, I am sure, when we will join the ranks of those who make it.” (Sartre, 1963: 31)⁴⁷ Thus, in contrast with Camus’s futile attempts to reconcile the colonial periphery with the metropolitan center within some new political order, the Sartre of the 1960s responded forcefully that the center must disappear, or at least withdraw altogether, so that the periphery could finally thrive. This radically formulated position was the source of Sartre’s considerable popularity in developing countries,⁴⁸ but also the cause of some embarrassment among those intellectuals who after decolonization remained symbolically trapped in a liminal space between center and periphery.

5 Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon

The paradoxes of the fates of these intellectuals can be illustrated by the example of Albert Memmi (1920–2020), a Tunisian writer and essayist of Sephardic origin who acquired French citizenship in 1973. As a secular Jew raised in a majority Arab country under the French protectorate, Memmi belonged to the imaginary center of Fanon’s famous “pyramid” of social stratification in colonial countries: “rich colonists—poor white proletariat—Jews—educated natives—Arab people” (Bouamama, 2014: 140–159).

The career path of Memmi showed a number of analogies with that of Camus,⁴⁹ from his illiterate mother and poor living conditions, to enlightened teachers in primary and secondary school (Louis Germain/ Jean Amrouche), merit scholarships (from France in both cases), quality philosophy studies in the periphery (Algiers/ Tunis), then moving to Paris, to marrying a French woman (Francine Faure/ Germaine Dubach) and gradually establishing himself in the metropolitan center.

This experience of a Tunisian of Jewish origin with a European education, who was neither a colonizer nor a colonized in the strict sense, served Memmi as the starting point for his famous essay *Portrait du colonisé, précédé du Portrait du colonisateur* (*The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 1957). Each of the two sym-

47 “Mais ceci, comme on dit, est une autre histoire. Celle de l’homme. Le temps s’approche, j’en suis sûr, où nous nous joindrons à ceux qui la font.” (Sartre, 1961: 42).

48 The development of Sartre’s views on developing countries and the philosopher’s subsequent reception by postcolonial intellectuals are well summarized in Lamouchi, 1996.

49 Both famous Alberts knew each other well, with Camus writing the preface to Memmi’s autobiographical novel *La Statue de sel* in 1953.

metrical parts of the book showed one version of distorted colonial psychology, which Memmi viewed from a kind of central point zero.

According to the author, even the poorest colonizer always occupies a privileged position over the natives, and is thus seen in the colony as a usurper of rights and wealth that do not really belong to him. Hence his psychologically unbearable attitude: the more progressive colonizers suffer from constant remorse and tormenting contradictions since, while they harbor strong doubts about the colonial regime (and see the nationalism of the natives as legitimate), on the other hand they know full well that after any decolonization there would be no place for them in the country. They are therefore hesitant about how much they can support the natives in their process of growing self-awareness without sawing off the branch upon which the tree of colonization has conveniently placed them. Nor are conservative colonists spared from severe contradictions and complexes, this time towards the metropolis, the intellectual and technological development of which they admiringly compare to the mediocrity of colonial conditions, while at the same time they can accuse Paris of a lack of patriotism and “un-Frenchness.” Over time, they develop a particular type of local Fascism, which Memmi calls the “Nero complex” (Memmi, 1973: 14, 81–83; 2003, 7, 96–97), in which the colonizers fall into increasingly extreme racist theories in order to internally justify the constant apartheid they practice against the natives.

The colonized, in turn, according to Memmi tend to adopt and internalize the negative image of themselves that the colonial mirror has set up for them. As a result, many choose the path of voluntary assimilation, that is, the rejection of their indigenous languages, cultures and religions in favor of imitating European models. The colonizers, however, cannot not accept this strategy from the native and constantly remind the colonized that they can never become “real Frenchmen” (Memmi, 1973: 151–155; 2003, 150–161). The only way out of such an intolerable state of affairs is revolution and the consistent rejection of the West, but in such a case African societies risk a gradual return to traditional tribal and religious practices, including bloody fanaticism and civil wars.⁵⁰

In the context of the center-periphery theme, an interesting historical circumstance should be mentioned: one of the earliest editions of the famous essay was devoted to Quebecers (Nadeau, 2020), and in 1972 Memmi agreed to a

50 Fifty years after the collapse of colonialism, Memmi returned to his original theme and wrote *Portrait du décolonisé arabo-musulman et de quelques autres* (2014), a sequel of sorts to his famous original essay.

separate Canadian version of his book, completed with a special preface⁵¹ and a transcript of the author's discussion with students at Montreal's economic colleges. In his new text, Memmi questioned the extent to which Quebec history could be viewed through a colonial prism. While he was aware of the vast difference in the standard of living of the average Quebecer under British rule compared to the average Tunisian under the French protectorate, he clearly recognized in the French-Canadians of the 1960s "the economic, political and cultural characteristics of a dominated people." He concluded by noting that "oppression is relative and the extreme severity of one domination does not justify more subtle ones" (Memmi, 1972: 7–8).⁵²

Although Albert Memmi is today still regarded as a major postcolonial writer and he did long advocate Tunisian political independence, he emigrated to France after decolonization, as he saw no chance of survival for the Jewish minority in his old Muslim-dominated homeland. Here too in a way he was following the legacy of Albert Camus, who towards the end of the 1950s was building his own "Algeria" in the southern French village of Lourmarin.

Among Memmi's later literary and sociological works, it is important to mention for example the two-volume *Anthologie des littératures maghrébines* (1965–1969) as well as the study *Le Racisme: description, définition, traitement* (1982), in which he developed the concept of "heterophobia," defined as "a vague, passive-aggressive fear of the other that may end in physical violence" (Bordeleau, 1991: 52). According to Memmi, racism is a specific expression of this heterophobia.

Throughout his life of nearly a century, Albert Memmi was deeply concerned with the issue of identity and with questions regarding the reconciliation of Western values with the Orient, individual freedom with community membership, and cultural Judaism with state secularism.⁵³ Memmi's psychological profiles of the colonized and the colonizer were brought to much more radical political conclusions by Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), a Martinican psychiatrist and essayist with "Algerian citizenship."⁵⁴

51 In Montreal, Memmi was surprised by the many left-wing activists who were handing out illegal copies of his book to pedestrians on the street.

52 "Il est hors de doute que l'on trouve chez les Québécois des traits économiques, politiques et culturels de gens dominés"; "l'oppression est relative; et l'extrême gravité d'une domination ne légitime pas de plus légères."

53 Memmi develops his own concept of *Judéité*, which, although culturally rooted in Judaism, aims to describe the very wide range of habitus through which modern secular Jews relate to their identity and have further developed it under diasporic conditions.

54 This was only a declared citizenship, as Fanon did not live to see the declaration of an independent Algeria. He remained legally French until his death, although he symboli-

Fanon was also discovered and supported in high school by a prominent intellectual, Aimé Césaire,⁵⁵ whom Fanon later helped campaign for parliament for the Communist Party of France. Fanon's future anti-colonial orientation was even more profoundly influenced by his decision to volunteer for the French Liberation Army (1943) and fight against the Nazis. Although in the military environment he was soon disillusioned in the face of "ethnic discrimination and narrow nationalism" (Cherki, 2000: 27),⁵⁶ the army nevertheless advanced his career twice and, in a way, showed him his future mission. The first instance was back in 1944, when he was sent on a mission to Algeria for several months, the second time his being granted a special scholarship for veterans, which allowed him to study medicine⁵⁷ and do a doctorate in psychiatry in metropolitan France.

Fanon capitalized on his experience as an ethnically mixed Afro-Indian-Caribbean individual struggling to make it in France's elite clinics. This period as well as his notes from Algeria became the basis for *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*), published in 1952. Together with Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), *Peau noire, masques blancs* became an essential source for future post-colonial studies. Fanon's autoethnographical study took the form of a fundamental psychological analysis of what the symbolic violence of colonialism left as a legacy to humanity, especially regarding the pathological relations between Black and white. Indeed, only a rigorous unraveling of the links between the colonial experience and the resulting mental, physical and sexual disorders afflicting the descendants of formerly enslaved people could bring about the desired liberating effects.

According to Fanon, as a result of colonialism Black identity and the Black experience have been derived almost exclusively from the relationship with the white man. The Antillean who wants to succeed in the metropolis, for example, undergoes a kind of "genetic transformation":⁵⁸ he discards Creole in favor of

cally "renounced" his citizenship by joining the *Front de libération nationale* (FLN). Later, he represented the provisional Algerian government in pan-African negotiations and contributed regularly to separatist publications. He travelled on a Libyan passport issued under an assumed name. (Boumgar, 2019).

55 For a comparative biographical analysis of the two Martinicans, see Bouvier, 2010.

56 "la discrimination ethnique, des nationalismes au petit pied".

57 While at the University of Lyon, Fanon attended philosophical lectures by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, studied psychology, directed the student magazine *Tam-tam*, and participated in anti-colonial demonstrations organized by the Young Communists.

58 "The Black man who has lived in France for a length of time returns radically changed. To express it in genetic terms, his phenotype undergoes a definitive, an absolute mutation." (Fanon, 1986: 19).

“proper” French and adopts the white world along with its language. The white man, on the other hand, continues to communicate with the native (even a highly cultivated one) as if with a child or an uncivilized savage, whose supreme expression of will is a satisfied “ya bon Banania” at the sight of ripe fruit (Fanon, 1986: 112, *passim*).⁵⁹

The Black woman desires the white man since from her perspective he has more attractive skin and a more prestigious social status. A mulatto woman would never stoop to marrying a Black man because of his supposed brutality and lack of sophistication. Racism is not merely some cruel excess of local colonial administrators, but a principle permeating the entire society: the stares of passers-by on the street, the terrified cries of children,⁶⁰ the myths about the Black man (savagery, cannibalism, unbridled sexual energy), genetic theories about the harmfulness of race mixing, the attribution of emotion to the native and reason to the white man, all these are manifestations of the discourses of white supremacy and of the obsessive neurosis of Blacks.

Fanon’s radical dismissal of some of the central tenets of the Négritude movement is also essential as well as his rejection of Sartre’s phantasms of the Black man as “the great male of the earth, the world’s sperm.” The author also explicitly takes issue with Sartre’s notion of Négritude as a transitional dialectical stage that must culminate in a reconciliatory synthesis: “Black consciousness is immanent in its own eyes. I am not a potentiality of something, I am wholly what I am. I do not have to look for the universal.” (Fanon, 1986: 135)⁶¹

By contrast, Sartre’s *Réflexions sur la question juive*⁶² served as a symbolic prefigurement of indigenous neuroses for Fanon. In an effort to avoid anti-

59 “Y a bon banania.” (Fanon, 1952: 110, *passim*).

60 “Maman, regarde le nègre, j’ai peur!” (Fanon, 1952: 110) / “Mama, see the Negro! I’m frightened!” (Fanon, 1986: 112).

61 “La conscience noire est immanente à elle-même. Je ne suis pas la potentialité de quelque chose, je suis pleinement ce que je suis. Je n’ai pas à rechercher l’universel.” (Fanon, 1952: 129).

62 In addition to *Réflexions sur la question juive*, Fanon routinely engaged with other Sartrean texts (Orphée noir, *L’Être et le Néant*, *Critique de la raison dialectique*), even lecturing on them to Algerian combatants of the National Liberation Army. He was so obsessed with the French philosopher that he bombarded Claude Lanzmann and Marcel Péju with requests to arrange meetings with him. Fanon and Sartre finally met in Rome in the summer of 1961, with Sartre interrupting his usual work schedule for a few days which spent talking with Fanon. Lanzmann later wrote about this extraordinary event: “We listened to Fanon for three whole days. [...] It was a physically and emotionally exhausting three days. I have never seen Sartre so enchanted and shaken by one man.” / “Nous avons écouté Fanon pendant trois jours. [...] Ce furent trois journées éreintantes, physiquement et émotionnellement. Je n’ai jamais vu Sartre aussi séduit et bouleversé par un homme.” (Lanzmann, 2009: 503).

Semitic attacks against their person, some Jews became committed anti-Semites. Likewise, Blacks are threatened by hatred of their own skin color, or at the very least, an obsession with a stigmatizing exterior:

As I begin to recognize that the Negro is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. But then I recognize that I am a Negro. There are two ways out of this conflict. Either I ask others to pay no attention to my skin, or else I want them to be aware of it.

FANON, 1986: 197⁶³

Both of these seemingly contradictory responses, the shameful ignoring of one's Blackness and the ostentatious display of it, in fact represent a trap, as they indicate a persistent deep dependence on the gaze of the white colonizer.

Another interesting polemic worth mentioning here in relation to Sartre and the European "center" was Fanon's partial correction of Hegel's dialectic from postcolonial positions. While the author of *Peau noire, masques blancs* acknowledged the general validity of the philosopher's reflections on the dynamics of the Master-Slave dialectic (he had, after all, applied it himself to the struggle of proletarians against capitalists as well as to the emancipatory efforts of Blacks living in the United States), the specific Martinican experience, in his view, defied these schemata.

In his book, Frantz Fanon emphasizes several times that the colonial system is not based on equality or reciprocity, which Hegel automatically assumes in the first stage of his dialectic.⁶⁴ Indeed, the positions of colonizer and colonized did not historically arise from an ancient struggle in which the future Master would show the courage to put his life on the line while the Slave (the Colonized) would cautiously withdraw and accept the Master's rules of the game. Moreover, even later, the white colonizer does not desire any "recognition"⁶⁵

63 "Comme je m'aperçois que le nègre est le symbole du péché, je me prends à haïr le nègre. Mais je constate que je suis un nègre. Pour échapper à ce conflit, deux solutions. Ou bien je demande aux autres de ne pas faire attention à ma peau; ou bien je veux qu'on s'en aperçoive." (Fanon, 1952: 178).

64 According to the German philosopher, individual consciousness is formed through a conflicting relationship to the other. Consciousness arises only where there is a real confrontation, a life-and-death struggle (whether physical or mental) between two originally equal entities. The power imbalance between Master and Slave is only determined by victory/defeat in this original struggle. In other words, without some degree of initial equality and reciprocity, the dialectic has no basis upon which to develop. (Hegel, 2018: 263–277).

65 "Chez Hegel il y a réciprocité, ici le maître se moque de la conscience de l'esclave. Il ne réclame pas la reconnaissance de ce dernier, mais son travail." (Fanon, 1952: 199).

from the Black colonized, in whom he sees an inanimate object or animal without his own consciousness.⁶⁶ Neither does the colonized feel the slightest pride in a job that does not liberate him: “The Negro wants to be like the master. Therefore he is less independent than the Hegelian slave. In Hegel the slave turns away from the master and turns toward the object. Here the slave turns toward the master and abandons the object.” (Fanon, 1986: 221)⁶⁷

Fanon bitterly notes that (at least in Martinique) one cannot speak of any national liberation struggle waged by the Slave against the Master. In his view, the highest ambition of the local natives has always been to timidly imitate the colonizers, so that any reforms, concessions or improvements in living conditions have historically come from the initiative of the white French. Such externally imposed rules and octroi freedoms have only reinforced the indigent population’s passivity, complexity and obsessive neurosis.

No wonder that in *Les Damnés de la Terre* (1961), his last book published a few days before his death, Fanon came to believe that only revolution could bring about the true political liberation and cultural emancipation of colonized peoples. Given that the colonizers themselves routinely used a pervasive “atmosphere of violence” (Fanon, 1963: 71) to maintain power over the Blacks, these modern-day Slaves have every right, indeed an obligation, to use the same level of violence, this time to liberate themselves from colonialism.

In France in the early 1960s, *Les Damnés de la Terre* did not meet with sympathy.⁶⁸ In the following decades, however, Fanon’s works along with those of Edward Said inspired influential intellectuals such as Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha and Judith Butler. Canadian philosophers Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka have assessed Fanon as one of the main precursors of the idea of multiculturalism, and political scientist Glen Sean Coulthard has recently published his sequel to one of Fanon’s seminal works (*Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 2014), in which he applies his national liberationist ideas to the situation of First Nations in the Americas today.

66 According to Article 44 of the *Code noir*, a slave is a movable property (*un bien meuble*).

67 “Le nègre veut être comme le maître. Aussi est-il moins indépendant que l’esclave hégélien. Chez Hegel, l’esclave se détourne du maître et se tourne vers l’objet. Ici, l’esclave se tourne vers le maître et abandonne l’objet.” (Fanon, 1952: 199).

68 Alice Cherki even refers to Fanon as a “cursed philosopher” who unbearably reminded the French of the extent to which their modern republican institutions are permeated with racism. (Cherki, 2011: 127).

6 Conclusion

A gradual shift of artistic, then ideological initiations from central impulses to peripheral outpourings can be traced: from Art Nègre, to Négritude, from Leiris and Camus to Memmi, from Sartre to Fanon. The interplay of spatial factors and the tension between center and periphery can be read in the biographies and thought trajectories of the main exponents, for whom the horizon of the periphery constitutes the key stimulus for the necessary transformations of the center in relation to the periphery and of the periphery to the center. Without the universalist resonance of the center, this social, ideological and cultural movement would not have been given the necessary dynamism and incisiveness. The center not only needs and creates its periphery, but it can also initiate its transformation and contribute to it by its own share, triggering a deperipheralizing movement with a partial or substantially predominant transfer of deperipheralizing activities to the peripheries, even to their autonomization and the eventual creation of new centralities. In the case of Paris and France, this gravitational center-periphery dialectic is situated predominantly in the period of the 1920s–1970s, when it gradually transitioned into a situation of globalization and regrouping of centralities within new cultural and linguistic hierarchies.

It is necessary to reiterate what has already been described above in the subsection on the deperipheralization of African Lusophone space (see above Part 1, Chapter 11) in the context of Lusophone Négritude: The Parisian center, with its magazine and publishing house *Présence africaine*, was also active outside the Francophone sphere, and the processes in the Lusophone sphere to some extent replicate what was happening in the Francophone sphere. This would be one indication of the semi-peripheral nature of Portuguese centrality—open to Paris while at the same time dominant towards Angola and Mozambique, with the African intellectuals using the Parisian center as a fulcrum for their own decolonization and deperipheralization. Finally, the power and worldliness of Parisian centrality can also be measured by its influence on Anglo-Saxon and North American postcolonial and multiculturalist reflection.

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Innovation and Networks in the Spanish Novel of the 1960s: Juan Goytisolo

José Luis Bellón Aguilera

1 Introduction

The work of Juan Goytisolo Gay (1931–2017) is today usually considered “high literature.”¹ The Barcelona-born novelist is not only accepted as a canonical writer, but practically a classic. This is paradoxical considering that the lines of his work gradually move towards a rejection of everything, a distancing from his social world and cultural centers, almost a complete denial of his origins: Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, Paris. He finally seems to abandon narrative itself a few years before his death in Marrakech, where he had taken up residence since the mid-1990s. Despite being a slayer of the mythology of National Catholic Spain and chauvinism of all kinds, he did not renounce literature or his way of life, which he saw as somewhere between the accursed artist and the heterodox intellectual. He cultivated both narrative and the essay, then took on poetry. His literary practice was characterized by his cultivation of the dominant novelistic genres in the literary field, from Realism to the New Novel, at the different historical moments of the field, participating decisively in its transformation around the mid-1960s. This can also be said of the prematurely deceased Luis Martín-Santos (1924–1964) and Juan Benet Goitia (1927–1993), although Goytisolo did not maintain a friendship or even significant contact with them. Over time, the narrative experimentalism of Goytisolo would become more radical.

My contribution reflects, firstly, on the place of Goytisolo in the transformation of the Spanish literary field in the mid- to late-1960s. A second consideration is the notion of literary innovations on a transnational level in the conflicts surrounding Social Realism,² commitment, and literary autonomy, during Goytisolo’s irruption from the periphery of Latin American writers into the

1 This chapter is based on the present author’s article *Innovación y redes en la novela española de los sesenta*. Juan Goytisolo, *Études Romanes de Brno*, 43, 1: 81–94.

2 The term Social Realism here indicates the Spanish “realismo social” from 1950s to the mid-60s, a movement deeply influenced by Sartre and by the ideas of Lukács on the political role of literature to influence social change.

already conflictive peninsular literary panorama as articulated around the centers of Madrid and Barcelona. One of the theses presented here is that until the 1960s the Civil War and the Franco regime blocked the ongoing construction of a pan-Hispanic literary space. This chapter has three parts: a methodological section; the second and most extensive section frames the literary transformations in Spanish literature since the end of the 19th century; the third part is dedicated to situating Juan Goytisolo on the general literary map, first and foremost as a hinge between Social Realism and the New Novel.

2 Innovation and Transnational Intellectual Networks

To talk or write today about literature without taking into account the internationalism of the literary space seems outdated, as Harold Bloom and Pascale Casanova already pointed out nearly 30 years ago in two almost contemporary, although quite different books.³ However, with both their views in mind, this international literary space can be also understood as a transnational “literary norm” attached to a specific ideology (semiconscious or unconscious), as did in 1984 professor Juan Carlos Rodríguez Gómez in his book *State, Stage, Language: The Production of the Subject* (2008); from his perspective, this literary Norm [orig. *norma literaria*] is linked to cultural forms that sprang at the dawn of Modernity (Rodríguez, 2008, see also 2002), and intimately connected to the creation of Modern subjectivities. It goes without saying that by “Modernity” Rodríguez meant “Capitalism” (Western), similarly in a certain way to Wallerstein’s (1983) World-System. This historically determined totality was reduced to an international “autonomous” space of conflict over symbolic capital by Casanova (2004). The positions of both Rodríguez and Casanova have their strengths and weaknesses.⁴ However, despite the fundamental theoretical disagreements, both paradigms could complement each other, since the two recognize the relative autonomy of literary creation. Both prisms consider the multiple determinations of literary autonomy, first by the institutional

3 *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (1994) and *The World Republic of Letters* (1999). During the same period, Randall Collins’ historical analysis *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (1998) was published (Spanish translation available, April 2021).

4 Guerrero’s (2013) criticisms of Casanova’s book include failing to mention Jorge Luis Borges as an innovator. To a list of shortcomings one might add the fact that the French work does not point to the decisive importance of Italy or Spain in the formation of the transnational literary space from the 16th–17th centuries onwards, even with regards to the modern notion of “literature.”

and cultural policies of modern states; secondly by the culture and ideology of each social formation, and finally by the conflicts around the monopoly of what “literature” means within the different national fields. Both also accept that literature, as a creation of Modernity from the 16th and especially 18th century onwards (see Casanova, 2004: 11; Rodríguez in 1974, transl. 2002), has an internal history of its own that usually runs askew to the corresponding political and social history. In both views—and this is essential—literature can only be understood by combining an internal and external analysis in which sociology and the social history of literature and knowledge play a central role.

Transnational literary space and conflict over the symbolic capital of the literary field are two of the axes to be used here to reflect on literary creation and creative innovations in Spanish literature. The other axis is the literary Norm and its basic condition of possibility: its transgression. The literary Norm and its transgressions are sustained by the same literary ideology whose pillar is the literary Canon (with a capital “C”).

3 The Hispanic Literary Space, from Modernism to the New Novel⁵

In 1964, Octavio Paz published the essay *El caracol y la sirena* (The Siren & the Seashell), a work that greatly influenced perspectives on the “Prince of Castilian Letters” Rubén Darío (Paz, 1976). In this text, Darío’s work was presented as a break and a radical innovation that transformed poetry in the Spanish language. As in the lectures that Pierre Bourdieu devoted to the painting of Édouard Manet (1832–1883), the concept of “symbolic revolution” can be applied to Darío’s poetry, by which is meant an alteration or disruption of cognitive structures and, to a certain extent, of social structures (Bourdieu et al., 2013). Still, without denying the social role of literature, Bourdieu’s characterization in this case may be seen as an exaggeration. Regarding Darío/Paz, perhaps instead we should speak of refracted “ideological production.”⁶ Sapiro’s

5 The following exposition is a general mapping in which the specialist will find many gaps and weaknesses. The problem of discussing periodization is undoubtedly a tricky one due to a tendency to enclose everything within a putative linearity of teleological appearance. Here the strategy is merely to point out the radical ruptures such as avant-garde, war, post-war, etc.

6 It would be useful to note here, in this respect, the reflections of the unjustly undervalued Hungarian art historian Arnold Hauser (1892–1978) and his *Social History of Literature and Art*, produced in the early 1950s, especially vol. 2, “From the Rococo to the Age of Cinema” (Hauser, 1998). Especially interesting are Hauser’s reflections on the Naturalist and Impressionist revolutions, which he deals with in a different way than does György Lukács. Never-

explanation—“The concept of ‘symbolic revolution,’ forged by Bourdieu, designates the redefinition of the space of possibles through innovative works”⁷—fits better with Paz’s approach: the idea that with Darío a radical transformation of Spanish-language poetry takes place in Spain, the scope and impact of which seems clear. Octavio Paz showed that Spanish literature had been merely transformative in the so-called Golden Age during Spain’s cultural heyday in the 16th and 17th centuries:

The lucid delirium of Cervantes, Velázquez, Calderón. Quevedo’s labyrinth of conceits. Góngora’s jungle of verbal stalactites. And then, suddenly, the stage was bare, as if the whole performance had been a magician’s show rather than historical reality. Nothing was left, nothing but ghostly reflections.

1976: 17⁸

Afterwards, Spain became an imitator—an importer, one might say—of foreign innovations. The creative indigence of the 18th and 19th centuries was interrupted only by “timid patches of green: Bécquer, Rosalía de Castro” (Paz, 1976: 17). Spanish production during this period cannot be compared to the fruits of European creativity elsewhere; there is no Coleridge, Hölderlin, Leopardi, Poe, or Baudelaire in Spain. Paz introduces the painter Velázquez into the list of writers (but fails to mention Goya). In reality, the Mexican writer was characterizing the incorporation of Spanish literature into modernity through the innovation of Darío as inspired by French poetry.⁹ Beyond a search for reentry to the centers of economic power on the part of Spanish Americans (of all

theless, mechanisms aside, the discussions of the two Hungarians conclude in a similar way, with the artistic and ideological break in the transition from the 18th to the 19th century and the crisis of the *fin de siècle*. For a view relatively close to the perspectives proposed later by Bourdieu, the reflections on the “conflict of canons” of the German Norbert Elias (1897–1990) can also be cited.

- 7 “Le concept de ‘révolution symbolique,’ forgé par Bourdieu, désigne la redéfinition de l’espace des possibles par les oeuvres novatrices” (Sapiro in: Bourdieu, 2014: 79).
- 8 “Delirio lúcido en Cervantes, Velázquez, Calderón; laberinto de conceptos en Quevedo, selva de estalactitas verbales en Góngora. De pronto, como si se tratase del espectáculo de un ilusionista y no de una realidad histórica, el escenario se despuebla. No hay nada y menos que nada” (1964: 4).
- 9 It must be reiterated that the Spanish Enlightenment is a copy (or an attempted copy) of the French Enlightenment. Cultural examples are numerous, including Feijoo, Jovellanos, Cadalso. Once again, all this is beyond the scope of the present text. Creative imitations of English poetry also found their way into Spanish verse, e.g. Byron’s influence on Espronceda.

social classes) or a rejection of outside influences within those centers,¹⁰ ultimately “the modernists did not want to be French, they wanted to be modern” (Paz, 1976: 20).

Consecration and canonization processes are always slow and conflictive, with literary or aesthetic “value” at all times relative and debatable. The endless and often tense discussions involve scholars who insist on a pre-modernist peninsular Hispanic tradition, including José de Espronceda, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer and Rosalía de Castro, onto which Darío’s significance is mapped (Olmo Iturriarte & Díaz de Castro, 2008). Modern approaches are represented in anthologies such as Acereda (2001) and Schulman (2002). The received view is that Darío represents an enormous literary talent, with only Antonio Machado, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti and Vicente Aleixandre having brought Spanish poetry to an international level and exerting such a lasting impact.¹¹

A factor which might go unnoticed in *The Siren & the Seashell* perhaps has to do with its essayistic nature: Paz writes of Spanish poetry, not of narrative or theatre, despite his quotations from Cervantes and Calderón (and Velázquez).¹² In a point which may be debatable, not even the eminent critic Pedro Salinas was correct when he said in 1940 referring to works before the 1940s and 1950s that “the sign of literature had been lyrical” (Martín-Santos, Benet, in: Jalón, 2020: 16). The fact that Salinas was also a major poet undoubtedly influenced his opinion, and, admittedly, poetry was the prevailing pole of literary consecration in the literary field. Nevertheless, for the period 1890–1936, it is not out of place to recall the numerous avant-garde novelists and prose writers who

10 “Spanish writers, despite their nearness to that magnetic center that was French poetry—or, perhaps, because of their nearness—were not attracted by the adventures of those years.” (Paz, 1976: 20).

11 It would perhaps be illuminating to conduct a sociological study on university positions in this respect, e.g. exploring the possibility that such positions—considering social and historical moments in the academy since the 1980s—are due to the influence of disparate institutional and geopolitical locations (center/periphery) to which homologues of (once) heterogeneous academic positions and traditions (Anglo-Saxon post-colonial or European philological) might correspond. As explored in several chapters of this book, such moves can be seen as establishing (or redrawing completely) axes which influence the consecration of writers. Tracing the evolution of forms or ruptures linked to identity politics, social movements and even political confrontations regarding consecration would make tempting a subject for qualitative (or even quantitative) research.

12 Vol. 9 of the *Historia de la literatura española*, entitled *El lugar de la literatura española*, contains 809 pages (Cabo Aseguinolaza, 2012). One creative space is that of nineteenth-century Realism (or Naturalism).

influenced not only Spanish literature but also the culture of the countries to which they were forced to emigrate after the Spanish Civil War. Such exiles included Francisco Ayala (1906–2009), author of the great “dictator novel”¹³ *Muertes de perro* (1958) and who emigrated to Buenos Aires. A crucial remark can be found in Octavio Paz’s essay: “There is nothing and less than nothing,” written precisely at a time in 1964 when the first arrival of Hispanic American writers into the Spanish literary field was taking place. If such an evaluative attitude, for example towards Boom literature or center/periphery in general, is not taken into account, the question becomes blurred.

In a book devoted to Realism, the well-known philosopher and theorist Fredric Jameson (a disciple of none other than Erich Auerbach), studied the influence of Benito Pérez Galdós on works of Eliot, Tolstoy and Zola, pointing out the importance of Galdós in global literature:

If Zola is the Wagner of nineteenth-century realism (and George Eliot perhaps its Brahms), then Benito Pérez Galdós is its Shakespeare, or at least the Shakespeare of the late comedies and romances. The absence of Galdós from the conventional nineteenth-century list of the “great realists”—even one limited to Europe—is more than a crime, it is an error which seriously limits and deforms our picture of this discourse and its possibilities.

JAMESON, 2013: 95

The construction of a literary canon—in any definition of the term—is elaborated by means of inclusions and exclusions. On a transnational level, Modernism may be defined as a reaction to Realism within the framework of the crisis of Positivism and Historicism. In the Iberian context, Modernism may be framed within a general crisis rooted in the political, economic and cultural debacle of the end of the 19th century in Spain, for example results of the global Great Depression of 1873. An older literary generation at the dominant pole—Galdós, Bazán, Valera, Clarín in narrative, de Castro and Campoamor in poetry—was overthrown by the generation of Modernism led by the Nicaraguan Darío and the Noventayochistas (Generation of 98). Clearly the emergence of formalism and the ideology of “art for art’s sake” served as

13 Perhaps we should recall the creator of this subgenre Ramón del Valle-Inclán and his *Tirano Banderas. Novela de tierra caliente* (Tyrant Banderas. A novel of the hot earth, 1926). This author of subversive drama, fiction writer and member of the Generation of 98 was a close friend of Rubén Darío.

an asset in conflicts over symbolic capital. It must not be forgotten that such struggles over symbolic capital, recognition, etc. take place not only between peripheries and centers, but also among individuals and groups within centers. Miguel de Unamuno (a Basque who chose to write in Spanish) adopted a radical political position close to Marxism and Anarchism in his youth parallel to an anti-realist aesthetic position *because* he found himself in a dominated position in the literary and intellectual field. Unamuno later drifted towards more conservative positions, even supporting the Nationalists, a position which he is said to have called a mistake right before his death in 1936. Valle-Inclán was a modernist from the beginning; as a Galician, he naturally wrote in Castilian. Politically he was anti-establishment due to his *Carlismo*, later evolving to more radical, anarchist positions, although his rebelliousness was always extremely aesthetic and bohemian. The aforementioned complexities of conflicting positions and opinions reveal a great deal about what is central to revolutions in the literary field as well as what leads to misconceptions (willful and otherwise) of political and literary positions. Be that as it may, at least since Romanticism the literary space has always been more international than it would seem, a claim which also can be made for the Hispanic area. The life of the renowned Cuban Romantic writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (1814–1873) bears witness to this.

Following the transformation that began in Spain with Modernism, the innovations of the avant-garde emerged, among them Surrealism from Paris. Through poets such as Lorca and Alberti as well as artists like Buñuel in cinema and Dalí in painting, the formally and conceptually innovative surrealists had an international impact. The median Generation of 14 and the Spanish avant-garde had reacted a few years earlier against the Noventayochismo of their predecessors, with whom they shared space in the literary field. Coexistence in permanent creative conflict is the *raison d'être* of the field, which represents a stasis, i.e. an always contradictory and polemical “dynamic, dialectical standstill.”¹⁴ As far as the Spanish-speaking Hispanic area was concerned, Barcelona and above all Madrid were characterized by exceptional creative energy and a spectacular concentration of talent due to the unique political characteristics (*fin de siècle*, the Second Republic) which generated spaces of enormous

14 The concept of stasis as presented by Tatiana Gajic (2019) is useful for understanding cultural struggles and their linkages to politics. In its forms of participation and struggles in which the use of language is crucial, the contemporary literary field may be compared to Athenian democracy. The fundamental difference today regarding this analogy, however, is force of the mass publishing market, which is heavily influenced by macroeconomic considerations that in turn determine modes of autonomy.

creativity around the world. The *Junta de Ampliación de Estudios* (Board for Expansion of Studies) of the Second Republic granted scholarships for students to study abroad in France, Germany, Italy, England and elsewhere. In addition, numerous Hispanic American writers were active in Madrid and integrated within intellectual networks. These include the Peruvians César Vallejo (1892–1938), one of the greatest innovators in 20th century poetry as well as Rosa Arciniega (1909–1999), a recently discovered journalist and author of the 1933 dystopian novel *Mosko-Strom. El torbellino de las grandes metrópolis* (Moscow-Strom. The whirlwind of the great metropolises), inspired by Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, which had been published a year earlier. In short, the national field was expanding with external innovations, including an integrated presence of Hispanic American creators.

The Spanish Civil War brought this pan-Hispanic development to a screeching halt. From 1936 to the end of the 1950s, Spanish novels and poetry were marked by political polarization on the one hand and cultural isolation on the other. This period was marked by the exiled diaspora of literary elites, including Ramón J. Sender, Max Aub, Francisco Ayala, Rosa Chacel, León Felipe, Luis Cernuda, Alberti, Salinas. Some of the philosophers who were forced to live and work abroad were María Zambrano (originator of the concept of “poetic reason”), José Gaos, Eugenio Imaz, Ferrater Mora, and Joaquín Xirau. The literary field was torn down, then reconfigured by the effects of the Civil War and the subsequent control of cultural output. This reconfiguration took place differently in literature than in philosophy and academia, where the consequences of the victory of the Nationalists soon became radically apparent (Moreno Pestaña, 2013). In literature, the effects came more slowly. Even after the end of World War Two in 1945, isolation and censorship continued to block internationalization, creating effects that were exacerbated by the ongoing internal political and artistic repression.

Spanish culture under Francoism, however, was not a complete wasteland. The culture of the Republic precariously survived for a short period until it was subsumed by the emerging National Catholicism which underpinned Franco. Underground dissident currents culturally and politically opposed to the regime would emerge throughout various periods, especially in the late Francoist era through the intellectual networks linked to the Ortegiano node. The history of the novel goes through a Neonaturalist phase, for example the traditional narrative form Tremendismo (tremendousness), and then continues after the importation of the problematics of Sartrean commitment and Social Realism. This well-worn story should be retold avoiding the traditional dualism of pure literature / impure literature. Nuances can be drawn by showing parallels among Spanish works of the period and international ones, for

example links can be shown between *La colmena* (1951) by Camilo José Cela—a censor of the Franco regime—and *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) by John Dos Passos, or between Juan Goytisolo's *Duelo en el Paraíso* (1955) and *Lord of the Flies* (1954) by William Golding.

Scholars seem to have developed a wide consensus regarding the transformation of the Spanish literary field around the 1960s. In poetry, commitment was abandoned (with Gabriel Celaya and Blas de Otero as paradigms), and a more introspective, ironic, individual poetry was introduced by Gil de Biedma, Ángel González, Gloria Fuertes, and other writers. In Gil de Biedma, the influence—or *imitatio*—of English poetry is key. In narrative, while at the end of the 1950s Social Realism entered a phase of scholastic repetition or exhaustion, the publication of Luis Martín-Santos's *Tiempo de silencio* in 1962 brought new inspiration. Pascale Casanova speaks of a "Faulknerian revolution" that took place in Paris which came through Juan Benet, who read the American author in French. Casanova's argument is that Benet does with Faulkner what Darío did with French poetry: Benet goes to Paris, a place sanctified by revolutions, to break Spanish literature out of stagnation and "liberate" the stagnation of his own literature by incorporating the Spanish novel into Parisian literary and artistic Modernity. Benet projects into the rural and brutal Spanish North (León), a synecdoche of Spain, the primitive and superstitious South of the United States. We should consider Benet's literary construction as a "refraction" of reality, not a reflection. The illusionism of the writer's craft comes through hiding and constructing myths within fictitious worlds parallel to (the) real ones. As far as the transformation of the field is concerned, it is true that the introduction of the "revolutionaries" Proust, Joyce, Faulkner, Kafka is decisive in the reconfiguration of the field, but why Benet and not Martín-Santos or Goytisolo?

The Faulknerian revolution that took place in the Spanish novel in the 1960s is the result of a combination of factors and of an internal dynamic accelerated by the irruption of the Hispanic American writers. It should be recalled that Paz's essay was published in 1964, and that his "less than nothing" comment coincides with the Hispanic American Boom. The other key question is also potentially controversial: why is the abandonment of Social Realism a "liberation"? The argument has to do with the autonomy of the field with respect to political polarization, yet it is important to nuance this without inadvertently deriving the point into the simplistic dichotomy of pure / impure that it is intended to avoid: until around the 1970s, writers such as Cortázar, García Márquez, Goytisolo, Marsé, despite their distances and disparities (Marsé's antipathy for intellectuals), maintain political positions close to the extreme left. The fact that Benet, disenchanted with the Second Republic, has accord-

ing to Casanova a different vision does not mean that his position “liberates” the field. Casanova argues: “[But] while in the centers, and especially in Paris, the technical innovations of the American novelist were understood and valued only as formalistic devices, in the outlying countries of the literary world they were welcomed as tools of liberation.” (Casanova, 2004: 336) Are Madrid and Barcelona “outlying” or decentered positions? Perhaps with Paris as the crucible, with respect to the avant-garde literary Norm? Casanova seems to forget that it would be necessary to ascertain whether or not writers who seek consecration in the centers of transnational economic and political power—New York, London, Paris, Madrid—maintain their putative dominating / dominated position within their places of origin. This scheme is clarified by the notion of “homology of positions,” applicable to dominating / dominated positions within the fields of so-called centers:

Writers and artists situated at the economically dominated (and symbolically dominant) pole of the literary field, itself temporally dominated, can doubtless feel a solidarity (at least in their rejections and rebellions) with the occupants of economically and culturally dominated positions in social space. Nevertheless, since the homologies of position on which these alliances of act or thought are built are also associated with profound differences in economic and social conditions, they are not exempt from misunderstanding, or even a sort of structural bad faith.

BOURDIEU 1996: 251

To take another line of argument, is it simply imperative to recognize a polycentric transnational system. Casanova’s system is absorbed by the field’s blurring of creative autonomy and political freedom despite the fact that it has been firmly established over the years that the literary field has its own logic and its own special political economy. There is no ultimate “liberation”—Hegelian or otherwise—but simply conflict, transformation, stasis, as this is the dynamic of the literary field. It is far more useful to describe the mechanisms of the “refraction” of the political and the ideological, and how the political effects of literary works and ideological production are manifested. Certainly creative autonomy is crucial, yet through heteronomous creators: Marsé and Goytisoló react against cultural Stalinism (Biedma and Ángel González in poetry). Nevertheless, former Fascist intellectuals such as the Hellenist and essayist Antonio Tovar, the poet and literary critic Dionisio Ridruejo and the novelist Gonzalo Torrente Ballester reacted against the interference of National Catholicism in creative autonomy. It is beyond the scope of the present work to reflect on these questions, responses to which must be embedded within dense and profusely

complicated layers.¹⁵ Let us rather concretize the issue in the case of one writer who contributed to the transformation of the literary field—Juan Goytisolo.

4 The Man of a Thousand Masks

The human individual and the subject of the field are not the same thing. The man of flesh and blood is already immersed in the traditions, languages, practices and challenges of the field before the moment the writer begins to write. It is not possible to separate the work from the author if the aim is to understand the genesis of the man and his transformation into myth. As Sapiró (2020: 232) points out, the commentator has a responsibility to produce truthful results. Still, absolute, sober, cold candidness may not please the university reader—the scholar—from an ethical, political, or formal point of view. The conclusions may not help to answer reasons “why,” which is the meaning of intellectual work. For the purposes of this chapter, we shall provide some very basic biographical data (from Dalmau, 1999), to sketch out the author’s dispositions and class habitus as well as the nature of the high educational and cultural capital his works were endowed with.

Juan Goytisolo was born in 1931 into a family of the Barcelona haute bourgeoisie who had inherited a fortune that previous generations had amassed on plantations in Cuba that basically operated with slave labor. It is also possible that his family was involved in the slave trade. In 1938, Juan’s mother was killed during an Italian bombing raid during the Spanish Civil War, a conflict that brought the family lower social status; they managed to maintain a comfortable livelihood, but not without some suffering. After an exceptional education by the Jesuits, all three of the brothers Juan, José Agustín and Luis became writers. The family was bilingual, but Juan chose to write in Spanish and he studied law without taking a degree. An important period was his residence at the Colegio Mayor Universitario Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Madrid, an

15 The official political positions taken by academics and intellectuals in putatively dissimilar political environments may appear the same in terms of their relationship with institutional power in different cultural fields (that is, influenced by the norms or positions of particular systems in processes that may work against the values of universalism). These official positions may not coincide with the reality on the ground: thus, the anti-communism position of many intellectuals and writers in the countries within and outside of the USSR with respect to the State may be seen as quite similar to the anti-Francoism projected by intellectuals linked to the PCE (Spanish Communist Party) during the same period. See e.g. “For a Corporatism of the Universal” (Bourdieu, 1996: 339–348501).

Ibero-American establishment with twenty percent Spanish students, where he met future writers such as José Ángel Valente, Emilio Lledó and Ernesto Cardenal. For a time, Ana María Matute was his mentor during his nascent writing vocation. He would realize that he was a homosexual at an early age, but would have bisexual relationships. He even shared a large part of his life with the writer and scriptwriter Monique Lange in Paris, a city in which he eventually settled in 1957 to work as an intermediary literary consultant at the Gallimard publishing house. Goytisolo's first published novel was *Juegos de manos* (*The Young Assassins*) in 1954. He lived intermittently in Paris, Tangiers, Marrakech, and he lectured in California, Boston, and New York.

Some of the characteristics present in his work are directly related to these details: a deep aversion to nationalist Catholic Spain and his rejection of his class of origin, perhaps because of guilt (about slavery) and because he was a homosexual. Goytisolo also tended to spurn elitism as well as tendencies towards avant-garde creation. Gradually, his life as a writer and lecturer became nomadic until he settled as far as he seemingly could outside Europe, in North African cities with a strong Arab culture. These were aestheticized in his novels *Don Julián* and *Makbara*. His life was one of continuous uprooting and searching for a new space through writing. In his quest to achieve this place, he had to rebel against the dominant pole of the literary field from which he came, but also, finally, against the literary tradition of his origin.

Three figures embody Goytisolo's vision of the world, one author and two literary characters on whom the writer projected himself: Blanco White, Estebanillo González, and Don Julián. In 1967, Goytisolo published an essay (republished by Seix Barral in 1976) on the *Vida y hechos de Estebanillo González, hombre de buen humor, compuesta por él mismo* (*Life and facts of Estebanillo González, man of good humour, composed by himself*). *Estebanillo González* is one of the last picaresque novels, published in Antwerp in 1646. It is not known whether the text is an autobiography or a work of fiction, its author being anonymous. Of possible noble origin, the title character writes about his life as a court jester, soldier and messenger who travels all over Europe and finally settles in Italy to run a gambling house. In 1972, Goytisolo wrote the prologue to the collection *Obra inglesa de Blanco White* (*The English Works of Blanco White*). José María Blanco White (born in Seville in 1775, died in Liverpool in 1841) is considered one of the great Spanish heterodox writers. Blanco White is introduced as such by Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, scholar and progenitor of National Catholicism in his voluminous *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (1880–1882). Blanco White was a poet, intellectual and secularized Catholic priest converted to Protestantism who ended his days abroad. White's works include *Cartas de Juan Sintierra* (Goytisolo would publish the novel *Juan sin*

tierra [*John the Landless*] in 1975) and the 1814 nonfiction work *Bosquejo del comercio de esclavos y reflexiones sobre este tráfico considerado moral, política y cristianamente* (*Sketch of the slave trade and reflections on this traffic considered morally, politically and Christianly*). It must be remembered that the wealth of the Goytisolo family came largely from the slave trade in Cuba in the late 19th century, as mentioned above. Finally, Juan Goytisolo's landmark novel *Reivindicación del conde don Julián* (*Count Julian*), published in Mexico in 1970 and revised in 2000 under the title *Don Julián* makes use of an eponymous legendary character, perhaps a Visigothic or Byzantine "comes Iulianus" or a Berber warlord from Ceuta or Tangiers (cities in which the writer spent long periods). The historical figure is said to have aided Táriq's Muslim troops in crossing the strait and conquering Visigothic Hispania in the early years of the 8th century. The legend of Don Julián inspired numerous medieval romances as well as a number of Romantic writers—Walter Scott among them. The character was brought into the theatre in 1839 by Miguel Agustín Príncipe (1811–1863) as *El conde Don Julián: drama original e histórico, en siete cuadros y en verso* (*Count Don Julián: an original and historical drama, in seven scenes and in verse*). Goytisolo also dedicated essays to other writers and characters, such as the poet of the generation of 1927 Luis Cernuda (a homosexual), Francisco Delicado (author of a Renaissance dialogue in which his protagonist is a prostitute in Rome), Fernando de Rojas and Padre las Casas. The three aforementioned authors, except perhaps Blanco White, mix legend, history and literary creation.

Goytisolo's life and work features elements of nomadism, Third Worldism (with some years of sympathy for the Cuban revolution and Marxism), marginalized and marginal characters, sexual transgression, aestheticized autobiographical elements (*Señas de identidad* / *Marks of Identity*, 1966), mythical biographies, along with radical criticism of institutions and of the West in general. Goytisolo bordered on Malditism and symbolic activism. As can be seen, he labored on the construction and maintenance of a mythical, purely literary autobiography, thus the man and his literary shadow become blurred. Goytisolo's literary status was reconsecrated when he won the Cervantes Prize in 2014.

5 From Barcelona and Paris to the Great Refusal

Goytisolo would partake in the transformation of the Spanish literary field in 1966 with *Señas de identidad*. This work followed in the wake of Luis Martín-Santos' *Tiempo de silencio* (*Time of silence*, 1962), Juan Marsé's *Últimas tardes*

con Teresa (*Last Evenings with Teresa*, 1965) and his contemporary Juan Benet's 1967 novel *Volverás a Región* (*Return to Región*). Nevertheless, Goytisolo's transgression of the realist norm had been a long time coming, as *Duelo en el Paraíso* (*Duel in Paradise*, 1955) is an allegory of the Civil War, not a realist novel. Despite Goytisolo's earlier experiments, however, the impact of Luis Martín-Santos had been enormous.

The year 1962 represented a turning point for the novel in Spanish: Seix Barral published Juan García Hortelano's *Tormenta de verano* (*Summer Storm*) in May after Hortelano had won the Premio Formentor; the same publisher awarded the Premio Biblioteca Breve to Mario Vargas Llosa's *La ciudad y los perros* (*The Time of the Hero*), published in 1963 and winner of the Premio de la Crítica Española. These authors can be seen as importers of the "Faulknerian" or "Joycean revolution" (Casanova, 2004: 336), with the exception of Marsé, who eludes labels.¹⁶ Published in Mexico in 1962, Carlos Fuentes's *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (*The Death of Artemio Cruz*) is intertextually connected with William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930). One novel narrated with the technique of interior monologue is less experimentally daring: *La plaza del Diamant* (*The Diamond Square*) by Mercé Rodoreda.

Goytisolo had been reading Faulkner (as well as Hemingway and Capote) since his youth at the Ibero-American hall of residence. He felt trapped and paralyzed by his reading (Dalmau, 1999: 252), like all those possessed by what Bloom called "the anxiety of influence" (Bloom, 1997). Neither "influence" nor *imitatio* need be terms loaded with negativity, lack of originality or creative autonomy: a struggle is always apparent against the dominant poles of the field; this conflict simply represents a dialectical process to free oneself from the models of youth. Benet and Martín-Santos, friends and drinking buddies in Madrid, were also fascinated readers of Faulkner (and of Conrad, Proust and Kafka). Martín-Santos borrowed Faulkner's books to devour them, as Benet recounts (Martín-Santos & Benet, 2020: 183). This leads one to think that Benet's true assessment of *Tiempo de silencio* was not so enthusiastic and

16 Marsé, self-taught and unsophisticated in theory and philosophy although an extraordinarily insightful writer, remarked on Luis Martín-Santos' landmark novel: "I have said it many times: I read *Tiempo de silencio* a long time after its publication and I was not enthusiastic about it; and relatively recently I reread it and the truth is that I didn't like it at all. It seems too conceptual and it's not the kind of novel I'm interested in. The characters are not flesh and blood." (Marsé in: Cuenca 2015: 305). In his biography, Cuenca does mention this opinion of Marsé's on *Tiempo de silencio*. In note 37, the biographer comments on Marsé's praise of the novel in a 1962 interview, perhaps out of courtesy towards Seix Barral, transcribing Marsé's comments: "Realism is not exclusive to objectivism. The novel, as Baroja says, is a sack in which everything fits [...]" (ibid. 659).

that the friendship between the two writers had deteriorated, something that Martín-Santos's early death would eventually leave up in the air.¹⁷ Literary history is the fruit of discontent.

Published by Seix Barral, *Tiempo de silencio* would be translated into French by Alain Rouquié for Éditions du Seuil (1963), where it had been sent directly by Carlos Barral (Cuenca, 2015: 310). Goytisolo was working at the time as a literary advisor at Gallimard, which gave him considerable literary power as an intermediary between authors and editors. Goytisolo was among those responsible for the reconfiguration of the classical Spanish literary canon, as well as its expansion of what was seen as deserving translation and publication in France. This relationship is more complicated than it would seem, as Gallimard's Spanish operation did not go entirely smoothly.

Goytisolo began travelling to Paris in 1953; he came into contact with the Gallimard publishing house in 1955 and, after a parenthesis during his military service, began to work full time there in 1957. In 1955, he was connected with the publisher through an American Hispanist who informed him that the Princeton scholar Maurice Coindreau, Faulkner's French translator, was interested in him (Dalmau, 1999: 305). Even for the Catalan writer this came as a surprise, as he felt at the time he was, in his own words, "a beginner and provincial." The two met and later arranged another meeting at Gallimard. This time he was received by Monique Lange, then in charge of the translation department, together with the writer and communist sympathizer Dionys Mascolo, a Gallimard reader. They were interested in Goytisolo as a young and promising author who was also fluent in French, but the main reason was probably political and literary affinities: Goytisolo then considered himself a fellow traveler and dissident, if not a communist. Perhaps Coindreau's recommendation was enough, something Dalmau does not comment on, but the biographer does admit that "in theory, those at Gallimard were waiting for a young author from Barcelona who had incorporated the aesthetics of the new American novel into Spanish fiction" (ibid.). At a dinner party at Monique's house, Goytisolo met Jean Genet, and one of those vital moments that transform a person took

17 "Luis immediately sent him *Tiempo de silencio*, although Benet's opinion was delayed for some months in 1962. They spoke at last; but 'it didn't work out well because I, with my silence, had so strained the situation that I could no longer resolve it by keeping quiet. I told him that I did not like the book, and perhaps I sketched out a sort of clumsily spun and somewhat acrimonious critique.' In 1969 he would admit that he had not been interested in the novel in the past and that 'the biggest bump in our friendship was caused by my rather discourteous and inattentive opinion of *Tiempo de silencio*'" (M. Jalón y Benet en Martín-Santos & Benet, 2020: 15).

place: according to Dalmau (305) Goytisolo confided in Genet that he was a homosexual. Monica and Juan, however, lived as a couple.

Goytisolo began his work as a consultant by drawing up a list of post-war authors to be translated into French. A literary journalist close to the Franco regime nicknamed him “the customs officer” (Dalmau, 1999: 333). A few years later, however, Goytisolo did not include among his recommendations the recent winner of the 1965 Biblioteca Breve prize, Marsé’s *Últimas tardes con Teresa*. Among the complex reasons for this omission seem to be literary rivalry, but also, as Goytisolo recounts in his memoirs, aesthetic and political judgments related to the rise of the nascent Hispanic American Boom. This passage sums up well Goytisolo’s position and his development in those years:

Maurice-Edgar Coindreau’s discovery of the new values prompted Claude Gallimard to consult me on the subject and, in agreement with him, we drew up a list of works that in our opinion were worthy of translation. Over the course of a decade, the publishing house released some twenty or so novels of unequal value, representative of the existing literary scene in Spain. Although ideological factors and personal friendship played a part [...] it also took into account Coindreau’s tastes [...] not all the authors [...] reached an acceptable level [...] but [...] the country could not do any better. The only significant and regrettable absence [was] Martín-Santos: his novel reached me late and, by the time I read it, it had been contracted by Seuil. [...] Her commercial career was a failure. [...] The new readers were rightly oriented towards the nascent Hispano-American boom and although I intervened sporadically in favor of authors who would soon become famous, such as Carlos Fuentes and Cabrera Infante, and contributed to the publication of Valle-Inclán, Max Aub and Mercè Rodoreda, my opinion was no longer decisive.

in: CUENCA, 2015: 310–311¹⁸

18 “El descubrimiento de los nuevos valores por Maurice-Edgar Coindreau incitó a Claude Gallimard a asesorarse conmigo al respecto y, de acuerdo con aquél, establecimos una lista de obras que en nuestra opinión eran dignas de traducirse. Por espacio de una década, la editorial publicó una veintena y pico de novelas de desigual valor, representativas del panorama literario existente en España. Aunque factores ideológicos y de amistad personal incidieron [...] esta tenía también en cuenta los gustos de Coindreau [...] no todos los autores [...] alcanzaban un nivel aceptable [...] pero [...] el país no daba más de sí. La única ausencia significativa y lamentable [...] Martín-Santos: su novela me llegó con retraso y, cuando la leí, la había contratado Seuil. [...] su carrera comercial fue un fracaso. [...] Los nuevos lectores se orientaban con razón al naciente *boom* hispanoamericano y

Goytisolo does not indicate that Barral had sent Martín-Santos's novel directly to Seuil, not Gallimard. This passage shows one of the possible motivations for the Barcelona writer's interest in the awarding of the 1965 Biblioteca Breve Prize to Manuel Puig instead of Juan Marsé. A total of 86 novels had been submitted, with works by Puig and Marsé judged as finalists: *La traición de Rita Hayworth* (*Rita Hayworth's Treason*) and *Últimas tardes con Teresa* (*Last Evenings with Teresa*), respectively. Luis Goytisolo, who had won in 1958 with *Las afueras* / *The Outskirts*, was a member of the jury along with Vargas Llosa and the famed literary critic Josep Maria Castellet. These three judges and others vehemently opposed the prize being awarded to Marsé; Barral had fought for the novel by Marsé, which eventually won. The likely reasons for this overall decision were, on the one hand, personal and political, as Marsé in the novel cruelly mocked the "señoritos de mierda" ("f***ing rich kids") who were supposedly left-wing dissidents.¹⁹ Nevertheless, there were also literary considerations, as Marsé represented the end of Social Realism, not because of the style, which showed both lyrical and realist influences, and featured a number of monologues, but also because of the subject matter. Social Realism in this case was opposed to the experimentalism of Puig, who embodied the literary avant-garde and the scope of the Boom. It should be remembered that between 1962 and 1964 the prize-winning novels had been *La ciudad y los perros* (Vargas Llosa), *Los albañiles* (*Bricklayers*) by the Mexican Vicente Leñero, in 1963, and *Vista de amanecer en el trópico* (*View of Dawn in the Tropics*) by the Cuban Guillermo Cabrera Infante the previous year (followed by *Tres tristes tigres* / *Three Trapped Tigers* in 1967, the first year without censorship). By 1964 the essay *The Siren & the Seashell* had been published. Goytisolo was facing a publishing crisis at Gallimard, and he had passed Puig's manuscript to his brother to submit it for the prize. Moreover, Carlos Barral had rejected a first version of *Reivindicación del conde don Julián* as a candidate for the same prize; the well-connected Marsé was also the clear favorite of Seix Barral. This

si bien intervine esporádicamente en favor de autores que pronto serían célebres como Carlos Fuentes o Cabrera Infante y contribuí a la publicación de Valle-Inclán, Max Aub y Mercè Rodoreda, mi parecer dejó de ser decisivo" (in Cuenca, 2015: 310–311).

- 19 With this expression Marsé was ridiculing the leftist university students who had taken part in the 1956 and 1957 riots in Barcelona, even with *roman à clef* allusions to real individuals: Luis Goytisolo (likely with reason) felt he was being alluded to in one of characters, as did Castellet. Galvanized by the death of the internationally renowned philosopher Ortega y Gasset in 1955, the political unrest began in part with the internal opposition to the regime. This soon catalyzed activity in other left-wing organizations, with the PCE (Partido Comunista e España) at the front. In his novel of 1965, Marsé refuses to problematize or reflect in depth upon the social and political ramifications of these activities.

episode is well known and, although the venom seems to have been exaggerated, it shows that the radical creative autonomy of the Faulknerian-Joycean style, which represented the new current that would embody the nouveau roman and the literary “liberation” in Spain, was not immune from the influences of the publishing market, the critics and the internal conflicts among the “revolutionaries” themselves. It also exemplifies the tension, first, between the networks of writers linked to Seix Barral (Marsé, Barral, Gil de Biedma, etc.) and Destino (Delibes, Cela, Gaité, etc.), where Goytisolo had published his first four novels; second, between the two centers of enormous concentration of talent, Paris and Barcelona, with the mythical prestige of the former out of the question; third, the relationship of these centers in the arrival of Hispanic American writers throughout the 1960s. The pockets of resentment left by this literary fray would linger until the 1990s (Cuenca, 2015: 510–512). Goytisolo always felt neglected and forgotten, an attitude reflected in the transformation of his self-perception from that of a myth or legend without social determinants into the figure of the uncreated, pure, rebellious author. This figure emerged as Estebanillo-Blanco-don Julián in Goytisolo’s mythical autobiography. Along with all the (at times playful) venom and maliciousness in the work, another literary dimension can be seen in the narrative and critical potential of this self-mythicization based on a denial of origins. The fact that Goytisolo also represents the survival of part of the culture of the Republic—for example as seen through the vision of the controversial historian Américo Castro (1885–1972)—should also be intriguing for readers and commentators. *Señas de identidad* in 1966 signals the radical turn that would lead to 1970s’ *Reivindicación del conde don Julián*, the moment of the Great Refusal, to use the expression of the philosopher Herbert Marcuse in *One-Dimensional Man* (1964). It is curious that this break Goytisolo chose to make came at a time when his career as a writer had been consolidated and he was acquiring international fame.

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From Migrant Literature to Contemporary Literature of Transcultural Italy: Forms and Effects of a Strategic Marginality

Chiara Mengozzi

1 Introduction

The Italian case presents numerous specific features with respect to the linguistic and cultural areas considered in this monograph. Involved in the long process of the Risorgimento which led to unification in 1861, Italy began an aggressive policy of colonial expansion much later than the other European countries. And yet, although less extensive chronologically and spatially than the British, French, Spanish, and Portuguese empires, Italy's possessions in Africa played a crucial role in cohesion and consolidation of the Italian national identity, as historians of Italian colonialism have shown starting with the pioneering research of Angelo Del Boca (1965; 1976–1987) and Giorgio Rochat (1972).¹ As Nicola Labanca recalls, for post-Risorgimento liberal Italy and later during Fascism the overseas territories served as “politically, diplomatically, economically and even culturally one of the great driving myths” (Labanca, 2002: 25).² Disparate propaganda elements contributed to this narrative: the rhetoric of the legitimate “place in the sun” (why should Italy alone among major European countries renounce the profits that the empire can guarantee?), the legacy of the glorious “gladius of Rome” (revived with great pomp during Fascism), the dreams of exotic/erotic adventures in tropical territories to stimulate popular adhesion to the colonial project, and finally, “the pride of a proletarian nation that redeems its own children and those of distant lands” (Guerri, 2012: 651).³ Let us not forget that alongside the ideological motives of colonization as an instrument of redemption and civilization of inferior peoples, and the politi-

1 Studies on Italian colonialism are now numerous. See e.g. Goglia and Grassi (1993); Palumbo (2003); Ben-Ghiat and Fuller (2005); Andall and Duncan (2005); Calchi Novati (2011); Srivastava (2018).

2 “[l’Oltremare fu] politicamente, diplomaticamente, economicamente e persino culturalmente uno dei grandi miti trainanti.”

3 “l’orgoglio della nazione proletaria che riscatta i suoi figli e redime quelli di terre lontane”.

cal and economic motives of prestige and wealth, Italy also had its own unique reasons compared to other European countries, namely, to find a “solution” to the enormous problem of Italian emigration abroad (in the years of the Great Migration, 1861–1915, about 20 million Italians left the country). With the possibility of migrating to Italian colonies and thus enriching their own country through colonization, Italians would have no longer been forced to leave for foreign countries and territories, where they often suffered from discrimination and abuse.

In the post-World War Two era, two pivotal issues must be considered jointly. On the one hand, Italian emigration abroad, which had slowed down during the war, began again on a large scale, regulated by bilateral agreements with various European and extra-European States through which Italy undertook to send thousands of workers every week. This massive presence of Italians abroad led to the birth of a literature written in Italian by emigrants with a prevalently testimonial character (*Gastarbeiterliteratur*, to use the German label), although these works never really affected the evolution of the national canon, entering only sporadically into dialogue with it. On the other hand, the colonial issue, which had engaged first liberal and then Fascist Italy, quickly disappeared from national public debate after World War Two. This removal of the colonial question from Italian public debate occurred despite Italy’s continuing ties with its former colonies. Indeed, it should not be forgotten that the United Nations had given Italy the trusteeship of Somalia from 1950 to 1960 with the aim of accompanying the country toward independence, and that other countries, such as Albania, remain from the postwar period to the present day closely linked linguistically and culturally to Italy.

In other words, while Italian emigrants abroad maintained a somewhat consistent literary and testimonial production, they generally assimilated into the cultures of the countries they arrived in. Emigrants were therefore disconnected from the Italian national context and production, with works by Italians abroad finding only occasional recognition in Italy and even in their country of immigration. For their part, postcolonial voices in Italy were quite slow to assert themselves primarily because, as mentioned just above, in postwar Italy the colonial question disappeared from public attention. The reasons for this removal from public discourse are in fact multiple: the absence of post-war trials of those responsible for war crimes in the colonies as well as at home; the simplistic and historically false equation between colonialism and Fascism that erased from the national consciousness for many years the decades of colonialism carried out by the liberal State; the edulcorated view of Italian colonialism, represented as less aggressive and less racist than that of other European countries; the loss of the colonies by military defeat and not as a

result of the anticolonial movements which had confronted the other former colonial empires; the difficult transition from the Dictatorship to the Republic after World War Two that catalyzed much of the national energy and attention. To this intertwining of factors, another crucial one must be added: in the post-war period, Italy experienced very limited immigration from its former colonies. Unlike other European countries, where the arrival of people from former empires helped to focus public attention on colonialism, Italy was entering a long phase of historical amnesia regarding its colonial heritage which lasted until the 1980s.

Between the 1970s and the 1980s, this situation slowly began to change, driven by two decisive factors. First of all, the Italian colonial archives were finally opened to independent historiographic activity, which until then had been monopolized by the Committee for the documentation of Italy's activities in Africa (Comitato per la documentazione dell'opera dell'Italia in Africa), a body made up of a number of scholars, but above all of high officials of the MAI (Ministero dell'Africa Italiana; Ministry of Italian Africa, abolished in 1953). Established in 1952, the declared aim of the *Comitato* was to valorize Italy's colonial past: "The work [of the Committee] must constitute the true and lasting monument of what Italy has done in Africa, that is, of a distinguished work of civilization, of which not only the great works that remain, but also and above all the feelings of the native populations towards Italy are witnesses" (Morone, 2010: 30).⁴ Second, Italy was entering a phase of transition regarding migration when in 1973 for the first time a positive migratory balance was registered, i.e. the number of immigrants to Italian territory exceeded the number of Italians emigrating abroad. From this moment, Italy became a country of permanent immigration, although immigration was not immediately recognized as a social and political problem as such. In fact, as Abdelmalek Sayad writes in his seminal book *La double absence. Des illusions de l'émigré aux souffrances de l'immigré* (Sayad, 2004), a social problem may be recognized as such long after the emergence of the phenomenon itself, while even as the phenomenon subsists, the perception of the social problem may disappear as such. Migration would only become a social issue and a matter of concern in Italy in the early 1990s, a decade during which, in parallel with the very rapid increase in the rate of immigration, the media, politics and legislators would turn a spotlight on the phenomenon. It is precisely within this social, political, media, and legislative

4 "L'opera [del Comitato] deve costituire il vero e duraturo monumento di quel che l'Italia ha fatto in Africa, cioè di un'insigne opera di civiltà, di cui sono testimoni non solo i grandi lavori che rimangono, ma anche e soprattutto i sentimenti delle popolazioni native verso l'Italia."

context that literature by immigrants in Italy first gained prominence. Within what was called “migrant literature” (a label that separates these authors from the national canon, but also provides an opportunity for visibility), early post-colonial voices and second generations would also converge.

To summarize briefly, two preliminary considerations stand out from this introductory framework: 1) in the territories of the former Italian colonial empire an *autonomous* literature in the Italian language has never emerged, that is, a sufficiently important production in quantitative and qualitative terms that would allow an analysis of the dynamics of autonomization and deperipheralization with respect to the literature of the former colonial motherland; 2) literature in the Italian language written by Italian emigrants in the world, although consistent from a quantitative point of view, not only has never had a real influence on production in Italy, but is also by its very nature transitory, as emigrants tend in successive phases to adopt the language of their country of arrival.

Based on these premises, the corpus relevant to this monograph which allows us to enter into a dialogue with postcolonial issues that run through other Romance language literatures will consist of production written in Italian by immigrants to Italy, within which we can also place the literature by authors from former colonies along with succeeding generations.

In the following pages, I will first present the conditions of the emergence of this literary production not only in relation to the Italian social, political, and publishing context, but also to the discursive possibilities for subaltern subjects that opened up between the 1980s and 1990s in the international publishing market. As migrant literature in Italy appeared later than similar productions elsewhere, it may offer a laboratory case study to observe how a new literary current emerges in relation to national and international cultural dynamics as well as the tensions between the centers and margins of a literary system. Next, the focus will be on the role played by literary criticism in the emergence and circumscription of migrant literature in the Italian language as a textual area distinct from both foreign literature in translation and contemporary Italian literature *tout court*. Although arguments have emerged supporting the total abolition of these boundaries, i.e. that migrant literature should be considered simply as part of the contemporary literature of transcultural Italy, it is in my view important to emphasize the “strategic marginality” of these writings and thus the important role played by their circumscription as a distinct current within Italian literature. In particular, I will show that this literature and the fields of studies related to it have opened up a range of new discursive possibilities both inside and outside the Italian university. Indeed, it has been thanks to this once marginal area of contemporary Italian literature that

Italian literary criticism has progressively deperipheralized itself, finally integrating into the national space certain debates long been underway in other contexts, such as those related to the revision of the canon, the colonial past, and the very identity of national culture. Finally, after presenting the effects of this strategic marginality not only on the field of study but also on narrative forms (through some emblematic examples), I will explain why the distinction between migrant and Italian literature has progressively lost its meaning, and then move on to suggest which discursive fields are now the most promising directions for future research.

2 The Conditions for the Emergence of a New Discursive Field: International Context and Models

It has become canonical to place at the origin of immigrant literature in Italy a tragic episode, the murder of 29-year-old South African Jerry Essan Masslo which occurred on the night of August 24, 1989 in the southern commune of Villa Literno on the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea. Engaged in the seasonal harvest of tomatoes, Masslo was classified as political refugee by the UN, but not by the Italian State, which then recognized only Europeans from the Eastern Bloc as official refugees. When Masslo's funeral was broadcast on RAI TV, with several politicians solemnly taking part in the ceremony, the seemingly racist matrix of the murder deeply shocked the Italian public. A short time later a major anti-racist demonstration was organized.⁵ Following this episode and its enormous media coverage, the first organic law on immigration in Italy was passed (Law No. 39 of February 28, 1990). Among other features of what became known as the Martelli Law, the official status of political refugee was extended to people who did not come from the Eastern Bloc. In this politically charged environment the first works written in collaboration between Italian journalists and immigrants were published and disseminated.

In 1990, three texts similar in premise, narrative development, and editorial format came out almost simultaneously: *Immigrato* by Salah Methnani (Tunisian) and Mario Fortunato, *Io, venditore di elefanti* (I was an Elephant Salesman) by Pap Kouma (Senegalese) and Oreste Pivetta, and *Chiamatemi*

5 In a survey of the press of the time, it becomes clear that the Jerry Essan Masslo case was far from isolated. Nevertheless, the murder of Masslo resonated more than others, probably because Jerry Essan Masslo was quite well known and active in associationism.

Ali (Call me Ali) by Mohammed Bouchane (Moroccan), Daniele Miccione, and Carla di Girolamo. At once singular and exemplary, these three life narratives intend to communicate the dignity of the individual and his community of origin; to emotionally engage the reader through frequent second person appeals to a “you” who is asked to listen and empathize; to convey ethnological information and curiosities about the country of departure; and to denounce the marginalization and discrimination suffered in the country of arrival. These texts also present a peculiar topographical or cartographical organization of narrative material (see Boelhower, 2001), a strategy which will be extensively exploited in the examples which would follow. The three narratives prefigure in fictional or diaristic form positively framed scenarios of peaceful coexistence between Italians and foreigners, with everything sealed in a happy ending that coincides with the very decision by the protagonists to narrate their own experience: “This is the story of a Senegalese man, the life I have known for what seems like a very long time, but basically lucky because, as they say in my country, if you can tell about something, means it has brought you luck” (Khouma-Pivetta, 1990: 143).⁶ In terms of literary genre, these three narratives represent “first-person heterobiographies” (Lejeune, 1980): the immigrant informant is pictured and nominated on the cover as co-author (or even sole author), although the texts have actually been solicited and drafted by the Italian journalist/author. The latter not only provides transcription and linguistic editing, but also ends up in some cases appropriating the story: “I had written it [states Mario Fortunato in the preface to the second edition of *Immigrato*] as if it were my own story” (Methnani in: Fortunato, 2006: vi).⁷ The final drafting of the narrative hides the traces of the dialogue from which the story took shape, while in order to achieve an effect of greater authenticity the essential intervention of the Italian writer is portrayed in merely an introductory or concluding note.

A short time later, this textual typology, one characterized by a peculiar and potentially insidious sharing of authorial function, is brought again to the public’s attention with two raw and poignant tales set in prison: *La tana della iena* (The hyena’s den, Hassan-Curcio, 1991) and *Princesa* (Farías de Albuquerque-Iannelli, 1994). These two narratives owe their notoriety mainly to popular songs inspired by them, recorded respectively by the group The Gang and *cantautore* Fabrizio De André. Two biographies of women should also be added

6 “Questa è la storia di un senegalese, la vita che conosco da un tempo che mi pare lunghissimo, ma in fondo fortunato perché, come si dice al mio paese, se una cosa la puoi raccontare vuol dire che ti ha portato fortuna.”

7 “lo avevo scritto come se si trattasse di una storia interamente mia”.

to this list: *Volevo diventare bianca* (I wanted to become white, Chohra-Atti di Sarro, 1993) and *Con il vento nei capelli* (With the wind in my hair, Salem-Maritano, 1993). Unlike the previous examples, these tales center on the childhood of the protagonists in a conflictual relationship with the patriarchal society to which they belong (Algerian and Palestinian, respectively). The narratives conclude with the arrival of the young women in Italy, where motherhood marks the beginning of a path of integration. Finally, the two fictional novels *La promessa di Hamadi* (Hamadi's promise, Moussa Ba-Micheletti, 1991) and *Pantanella* by Mohsen Melliti (1992) should also be mentioned, as these works found a place in the Italian publishing context of those years precisely by virtue of their implicitly testimonial character. The image on the cover of an author who experienced migration firsthand reinforces the personal nature of the stories. Based on a text originally written in Arabic and published only in Italian in Monica Ruocco's translation, *Pantanella* is an eminently choral novel in which different voices alternate seamlessly. The setting is a polyphonic immigrant community temporarily housed in the eponymous abandoned pasta factory located in the heart of Rome, eventually cleared out by the police.⁸

All these texts were published in the wake of Masslo's murder, and indeed many of the works make explicit reference to it. Still, it is clear that no single event can alone explain the birth of a new literary current, the emergence of which must be traced back to the broader Italian and international political, social, and cultural context of the time. As mentioned in the introduction, despite the widespread perception of a country totally caught off-guard by the arrival of immigrants, Italy had already experienced a wave of immigration between the 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, it was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that the topic of the influx of refugees and immigrants emerged as a constant presence in the mass media and public debate. This new awareness was due to several factors: the change in the international political scenario following the fall of the Iron Curtain (removing the main obstacle to immigration from Eastern Europe), the considerable increase in migration flows (in 1970, 144,000 immigrants; by 1990, one million), and the growing understanding among representatives of public and private institutions that immigration in Italy had brought on permanent structural changes. Asher Colombo has commented on how "few areas of public policy can boast an evolution and growth

8 To complete the list, mention should also be made of *Lontano da Mogadiscio* by Shirin Ramzanali Fazel (1994) and *Aulò. Canto poesie dall'Eritrea* by Ribka Sibhatu (1994). These are texts in which the name of the migrant is listed on the cover as sole author, but for which the role of the ghostwriter-editor-translator was also crucial.

of regulations and measures as wide and rapid as that of migration" (Colombo, 2012: 159).⁹ The change, however—and this is the crucial point—is not only quantitative in nature. Rather, it invests the public and media thematization of immigration, which proceeded through two main transformations.

First, it is between the 1980s and the 1990s that immigration becomes in Italy a widely-recognized social problem. In other words, it is only in this decade that the notion of "immigrant" appears and gradually becomes institutionalized as a "catch-all category, combining ethnic and class criteria, into which foreigners are dumped indiscriminately, though not all foreigners and not only foreigners" (Balibar, Wallerstein, 1991: 221). Studies conducted on the appearance of this term in daily and periodical newspapers and magazines are particularly eloquent in this regard:

In 1982–1985, an individual with certain given characteristics had almost a one-in-five chance of being referred to by the press simply as a "foreigner." In the years 1989–1991, his or her chances in this area were reduced to less than one in ten. In contrast, the same individual, who in the first period had only a three-in-a-hundred chance of being called "immigrant" by the journalist, has at the end of the decade a one-in-three chance of being so defined.

COLOMBO-SCIORTINO, 2004: 109¹⁰

The label of "immigrant" is both unifying and differentiating, since it establishes on the basis of ethnic and class criteria a precise hierarchy within an "apparently 'neutral set of foreigners'" (Balibar-Wallerstein, 1991: 221). Such variation in linguistic and framing strategies had numerous consequences, including the very possibility of circumscribing a new literary category (the "immigrant or migrant literature in Italian") that, on the one hand, amalgamates and encompasses heterogeneous human and writing experiences while, on the other, distinguishes itself from both "Italian national literature" and "foreign literature."

9 "pochi ambiti delle politiche pubbliche possono vantare un'evoluzione e una crescita di norme e provvedimenti ampia e rapida quanto quella migratoria".

10 "Nel periodo 1982–1985, un individuo con le caratteristiche date aveva quasi una probabilità su cinque di essere definito dalla stampa semplicemente 'straniero.' Negli anni 1989–1991, le sue possibilità in questo campo si sono ridotte a meno di una su dieci. Al contrario, lo stesso individuo, che nel primo periodo aveva solo tre possibilità su cento di venire definito "immigrato" dal giornalista, ha alla fine del decennio una possibilità su tre di essere definito in questo modo."

Second, it was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that migration became in Italy a terrain of political controversy, a major issue in electoral campaigns, and a steady source of social conflict. This rapid politicization was accompanied by a further shift in discursive frames: the terms of media and institutional debate shifted from the issue of labor (still prevalent until the mid-1980s) to that of security, public order, and border control. While the public debate had until the 1980s focused mainly on strategies to regulate foreign labor; by the 1980s and 1990s it had become focused on an anxiety-provoking image of immigration as a catastrophe to be dealt with, thus immigrants came to be seen as the enemies of Italian society.

It was against this kind of public perception that some Italian publishing houses—certainly exploiting to their own advantage the wave of media success from the migration theme—opened up a new discursive arena at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. The new focus was on the first-person narratives of immigrants who, often in collaboration with an Italian author or journalist, would recount their own experience. The publishers' intent was to provide an alternative image of immigration irreducible to the themes of degradation, invasion, and crime.¹¹

The creation of this new discursive space, however triggered by the social and political urgency of the migration issue in Italy, would not have been possible if the Italian publishing terrain had not already been prepared to welcome these kinds of narratives into its circuit. A number of foreign textual models that had appeared in Italian translation beginning in the late 1980s contributed greatly to paving the ground in Italy for the new immigrant literature. While a systematic survey of European and other international antecedents is not possible here, three internationally successful texts may be noted that demonstrate how the emergence of initially marginal production in a national context can be embedded in and triggered by global dynamics: Günter Wallraff's *Ganz Unten* (*Lowest of the Low*, German and English versions 1985), translated from German into Italian in 1986; Tahar Ben Jelloun's *La plus haute des solitudes* (*The Highest of Solitudes*, 1977), first translated into Italian in 1988; and *Moi, Rigoberta Menchú* (*I, Rigoberta Menchú*) by Elisabeth Burgos and Rigoberta Menchú (1983), which landed in Italy in 1987.

11 A number of novels on the theme of immigrants by Italian writers also appeared in the same years, although these attracted much less attention than the works written in collaboration with immigrants featured in this chapter. Cf. Marco Lodoli's *I fannulloni* (*The slackers*, 1989), Edoardo Albinati's *Il polacco lavatore di vetri* (*The Polish window washer*, 1989), Giulio Angioni's *Un'ignota compagnia* (*An unknown bunch*, 1992).

In an effort to expose the difficult conditions of foreign workers in the Federal Republic of Germany and the rampant xenophobia, Journalist Günter Wallraff literally put himself into the shoes of a Turkish worker by disguising himself and adopting a Turkish accent, working with immigrants for two years, and later turning this experience into a book which would sell more than two million copies two months after publication. Wallraff writes in the *Preface*: “Of course I was not a real Turk. But disguises are indispensable for unmasking society, and deceptions and fictions also serve to uncover the truth” (Wallraff, 1986: 2). Wallraff’s journalism can easily be compared to some of the collaborative writings mentioned earlier. It is no coincidence that in an interview with Graziella Parati (1995: 117) Pap Khoum states that he was inspired by Wallraff’s text during the writing of *Io, venditore di elefanti* together with Oreste Pivetta. Most of the first texts marked as Italian migrant literature were initiated by journalists who intended, like Wallraff, to use storytelling or fiction to expose “reality” and to raise public awareness. The first texts of migrant literature in Italy are the results of a solicited collaboration between an immigrant who is able to provide a narrative of his/her experience and a journalist who then transcribes, translates, and presents this story to the Italian public. *Ganz Unten* is notable in that Wallraff attempts to embody both of these roles simultaneously.

Tahar Ben Jelloun’s unexpected success *La plus haute des solitudes* (1976) is also a significant antecedent to the first works written by Italian journalists in collaboration with immigrants. The text represents a reworking of Ben Jelloun’s doctoral thesis in social psychiatry concerning the problem of sexual impotence among North African immigrants in France. Ben Jelloun experiments with an atypical form of mediation and appropriation of the voice of Maghrebi immigrants who sought counseling at the Dejerine psychosomatic medicine center in Paris while the author was doing residence there. As Ben Jelloun writes in the introduction: “I was uncomfortable, constantly wondering what my role, my function was” (Ben Jelloun, 1976: 21).¹² The author’s unease manifests itself throughout the text via a tension between the search for authenticity, objectivity, and distance (“None of the ideas and even the phrases that appear in it were invented.” [Ben Jelloun, 1976: 169]¹³), and the awareness of the necessary personal involvement of the observer-listener (“It is because I was involved that I claim for this work the right to subjectivity, the right to difference.”

12 “Je n’étais pas pour autant à l’aise. Je m’interrogeais en permanence sur mon rôle, sur ma fonction.”

13 “[...] aucune idée, voire aucune phrase n’y sont inventées.”

[Ben Jelloun, 1976: 169]¹⁴). The multigeneric text includes social-historical commentaries and transcripts of interviews conducted by the author, but also a transcription of a patient's clinical diary as well as a fictional first-person narrative in which the author recounts "the feelings, thoughts, and impressions of the North African impotent" (Ben Jelloun, 1976: 166).¹⁵ This appropriation and re-inscription of the voice of Maghrebi immigrants anticipates the later texts co-written by Italian journalists who have translated, reformulated, and, finally, sealed the testimonies of individual immigrants. A macroscopic difference, however, may be detected: the French Moroccan Ben Jelloun imparts an explicitly paratextual and metatextual reflection on the legitimacy of the operation itself, thus *La plus haute des solitudes* moves beyond pathos and didacticism to engage the reader through multiple layers of discourse. In the other texts mentioned above, such levels of awareness regarding the production (and reception) of the text can rarely be discerned, if only because the modalities of the collaboration are not explicitly clarified, much less explored.

It is precisely on this question of collaboration and authorship that the third work, *Moi, Rigoberta Menchú*, may be illuminating. Originally published in 1983 by Venezuelan anthropologist Elizabeth Burgos (who "transcribed" Menchú's Spanish testimony), this text was published in Italian in 1987 and often reprinted, especially after 1992 when Rigoberta Menchú Tum was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.¹⁶ Although the work opens with a first-person account of Rigoberta Menchú, a Guatemalan woman of Quiché ethnicity, the cover of the volume bears only the anthropologist's name as author. Menchú traces the stages of her own childhood and adolescence by interweaving her

14 "La parole que je rapporte, j'en garantis l'authenticité, mais je ne sais pas quelle part mes phantasmes ont pris dans cette retranscription. Je ne la rapporte pas impunément. C'est parce que j'étais impliqué que je revendique pour ce travail le droit à la subjectivité, le droit à la différence."

15 "les sentiments, les pensées et les impressions de l'impuissant nord-africain en France".

16 The book has sparked a great deal of controversy. Accusations of exaggerations and even the complete fabrication of incidents and people were made by American anthropologist David Stoll (1999). After more than a decade of interviews with more than 120 people of the region in research originally unrelated to Menchú, Stoll noted the presence of a number "falsehoods" in the book, e.g. Menchú is in fact not illiterate, having been educated in the local Catholic grammar school; her brother was not burned in the square; another brother who she said died of starvation never existed at all, etc. The evidence in Stoll's book *Rigoberta Menchu and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (1999, republished in 2008 by Routledge in an extended edition with a foreword by Elizabeth Burgos herself) has been responded to by commenters such as the Guatemalan writer Dante Liano who argue that these "inaccuracies" do not weaken the testimonial value of the work. For further discussion, see Arias (2001); Le Bot, Rousseau (2000); Moreiras (2001, pp. 208–238).

own experience with that of the Mayan people subjected to repression and exploitation by the *ladino* population. In the Preface to the French edition (unincluded in the English and Italian versions), Burgos states that her intervention was limited to transcribing their conversations and then expunging the questions, which made it possible to form the narrative material into a long monologue, precisely as in the “first-person heterobiographies” referred to above.¹⁷ However, in her text, Burgos does not reveal either the precise circumstances that allowed the meeting with Menchú,¹⁸ or the fact the material had been reorganized, manipulated, and otherwise subjected to linguistic maquilage. This authorial self-suspending allows the writer “a double advantage: she can disappear, and by doing so have an even freer hand in shaping the material” (Damrosch, 2003: 248). Such a position can be delineated in many of the early texts of Italian migrant literature such as those mentioned here.

The Italian translation of Burgos-Menchú’s book was published by Giunti, the firm that also put out Salem and Maritano’s *Con il vento nei capelli* (1993), a text originally written in Italian and subsequently translated into many languages for international distribution. Regarding the composition of the latter work, an initial phase in which anthropologist Laura Maritano records and transcribes Salwa Salem’s account from her years in Palestine until her arrival in Italy is followed by two subsequent revisions of the text, the second of which was made in the absence of the Palestinian woman, who disappeared after she was diagnosed with cancer. During this time Laura Maritano reworked the material, accentuating, for example, the thematic arrangement according to an anthropological slant, while maintaining the dominant chronological scansion in the oral narrative. Like Burgos, Maritano disappears from the written text by erasing her interventions (questions, solicitations, requests for clarification) to achieve a sense of naturalness, spontaneity, and authenticity desired by Salem herself. This effect seems to have also been sought by the publisher and built up progressively through precise choices made by the actors involved.

17 Burgos’ intervention was certainly massive, which is clearly demonstrated by the index that anticipates the dual framework within which Menchú’s life is framed, on the one hand ethnographic and synchronic (*La famille, Sur la femme au Guatemala, Sur la mort*), while on the other (auto)biographical and diachronic (*Premier voyage à la capitale, Mort de son petit frère et isolement, L’exil*). The ethnographic framework, far from dampening the autobiographical pathos, enhances it by projecting the individual drama of Rigoberta and her family onto the living conditions of an entire people.

18 Burgos has since revealed that the first meeting between herself and Menchú was mediated by a common acquaintance—historian Arturo Taracena, a Guatemalan in exile in Paris at the time.

The first edition in 1993 (and the reprint in 1994), for example, places Salwa Salem's name at the top center of the cover, followed below by the title, the subtitle *Vita di una donna palestinese (Life of a Palestinian Woman)*, and the words "edited by Laura Maritano." Finally, the text opens with an *Introduction* written by the anthropologist. Interestingly, however, starting with the 2001 edition, Maritano's name has vanished from the cover, the subtitle changes to *Una palestinese racconta (A Palestinian woman tells all)*, the cover no longer features a painting by a Palestinian artist, but a very close-up photograph of a young woman with her hair blowing in the wind. Maritano's Preface to the book becomes an Afterword. These are all strategies that minimize the authorial intervention of the anthropologist. Similarly, the anthropologist's Preface disappeared in translations of Burgos and Menchú's book, even (and perhaps especially) in the English version which saw the work become a huge international success.

To understand, then, the possibility of the emergence of Italian migrant literature as a textual area distinct from foreign literature in translation but also partially autonomous within Italian literary production, it is essential to extend our gaze across borders and consider the translations that between the 1980s and 1990s fostered the circulation of models that inspired Italian publishing houses. These texts, however, must in turn be situated within a broader international context during which what Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith call a "memoir boom" took place in "the last decades of the twentieth century [which] witnessed the unprecedented rise in genres of life-writing, narratives published primarily in the West but circulated widely around the globe" (Schaffer, Smith, 2004: 1). These stories of migration, forced deportations, wars, and genocide from peripheries but published in major European languages at Western publishing houses reframed situations of trauma, enabling new identities to be claimed. The participation of new populations was affirmed in the public sphere and human rights campaigns were created and extended. Nevertheless, these narratives also became commodities for the use and consumption within the Western cultural industry. This dependence on the market, which has been tracked in many ways by various commentators affects both the choice of stories to be written and published as well as the final forms these stories take. Those who tell them, then, must not only negotiate the urgency of first-person discourse with the rules of the publishing market in search of authenticity and/or exoticism but

can neither know nor control how that story will be received and interpreted. A story can generate recognition, empathy, critical awareness, advocacy, and activism [...] The same story can become a commodity, and

the teller a celebrity on a world stage [...] as the narrative is dispersed through book clubs, radio and television interviews and talk shows, classrooms and living rooms, picked up by independent documentary filmmakers, and distributed internationally. The same story can become a “scandal” [...].

SCHAFFER, SMITH, 2004: 18

To measure these kinds of effects it would certainly be useful to follow the publishing history and reception of individual texts, but this is not the path to be followed here. Rather, what interests me is to understand what effects have been elicited in the Italian literary, cultural, and academic context by this production as it relates to the writing practices of ethnic minorities in Italy, including second and subsequent generations.

3 “Strategic Marginality” and Its Effects

Early texts in the 1990s, written in Italian in collaboration between an Italian author and an immigrant, were quickly differentiated from the simple auto/biographical accounts solicited and published as part of sociological or anthropological studies. Italian critics and publishers created the category of migrant literature precisely with the intention of emphasizing the literary and not exclusively testimonial character of these narratives. As indicated above, through the double name on the cover, the migrant is in fact presented not only as an informant, but also as a co-author. Through the combination of three criteria (biographical, thematic, and linguistic),¹⁹ Italian critics introduced the label of “migrant Italian literature” (later variously defined), which makes it possible to identify a partially autonomous textual category within Italian literature.

Although now much criticized, the circumscription and definition of this textual area through the efforts of critics, small and large publishers, competitions, associations, festivals, and conferences has been decisive. Numerous authors from diverse backgrounds have found a channel of expression and affirmation. This operation is certainly ambivalent since, while the label unites and protects, it also separates, excludes, and marginalizes these works with

19 To be named as part of this corpus, a text must typically involve a non-Western author by background and origin, focus on migration or immigrant cultures of origin, and be written directly in Italian.

respect to Italian literature *tout court*. The fact remains, however, that without this timely mobilization of various social actors in the promotion of these writings, their presence on the market and in the Italian cultural landscape would have been much more ephemeral. Instead, over the years the corpus has only widened and diversified in terms of forms, genres, and themes. For instance, since the 2000s two distinct, though in some cases converging, narrative strands have emerged and consolidated: texts documenting the difficulties experienced by second and subsequent generations, and texts focusing on the implications of the (post)colonial condition. It is once again due to the prior circulation of foreign models that new discursive possibilities have opened up in Italy. The novels centered on the identity doubts of second generations²⁰ in Italy followed (and simplified) a narrative canvas that had first been pioneered in France, in the so-called *littérature beur*,²¹ and in England, in some examples of Black British novels (such as Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*). In Italy, the corpus consists mainly of short stories and novels that stage the existential journey of a young man or woman initially torn between two identities in irremediable conflict—the identity nested in Italian culture and that of his/her parents' country of origin. In most of these narratives, the protagonist is able to integrate the two identities and can claim with varying degrees of irony and pride his/her own dual or multiple belonging. An exception to this ultimate quest for integration can be found in the Italo-Indian Gabriella Kuruvilla's *È la vita, dolcezza* (2008), a short story collection that has also been called an "episodic novel" (Quaquarelli, 2010b: 51). Kuruvilla, who is also a painter, prefers to dwell on the fractures and moments of incommunicability between individuals and cultures without ever arriving at a static resolution of conflict. In most cases, however, there is a more peaceful resolution of identity conflicts. The examples are numerous: from Igiaba Scego's hilarious short story *Salsicce* (Sausages, 2005), Laila Wadia's *Curry di pollo* (Chicken curry, 2005), and the lighthearted *Porto il velo, adoro I Queen. Nuove italiane crescono* (I wear the veil, I love the Queen. New Italians are growing up) by Sumaya Abdel Qader (2008), which immediately became a best-seller particularly among young

20 This strand was anticipated in the mid-1980s by *Inchiostro di Cina* (China ink, 1986) by the Italian-Chinese Bamboo Hirst, who has continued producing fiction and autobiographical writing with texts in Italian, English, and Chinese. The novel *Inchiostro di Cina* was ascribed only belatedly to the corpus of "migrant writings."

21 "Beur literature dates from the early 1980s: its writers are from the second generation of North African immigrants." / "La littérature beur date du début des années 80: ses écrivains, issus de la seconde génération d'immigrés maghrébins (beur = arabe en verlan) développent un discours de références culturelles, d'appartenance à une communauté parentale avant d'être une auto-analyse." (Toumi-Lippenoo, 1998).

female readers, to the more pained and intimate *Andiamo a spasso? / Scirscir'n demna?* (Let's go for a walk, 1990) by Maria Abbebù Viarengo, who was born in Ethiopia to an Oromo mother and a Piedmontese father, and Jadelin Mabila Gangbo's autobiographically inspired Rasta-metropolitan novels, *Verso la notte Bakonga* (Towards Bakonga night, 1999) and *Due volte* (Twice, 2009). A strand with more typically postcolonial themes and forms also emerged and consolidated during the first decade of the 2000s (cf. Ponzanesi, 2004; Derobertis, 2010; Venturini, 2010; Contarini et al., 2011–2012; Lombardi-Diop, Romeo, 2012; Sinopoli, 2013). A number of critics such as Daniele Comberiati (Comberiati, 2010) propose expanding the corpus of Italian postcolonial literature to include authors born in Libya (Luciana Capretti, Arthur Giorno, David Gerbi, Victor Magiar), the Dodecanese islands (Giorgio Mieli), and Albania (Ornela Vorpsi, Elvira Dones, Anilda Ibrahim). Nevertheless, it is especially with the publication of novels by authors from former Italian colonies in the Horn of Africa or from mixed families, such as Garane (2005), Martha Nasibù (2005), Gabriella Ghermandi (2007), Cristina Ali Farah (2007), and Igiaba Scego (2008, 2010, 2015, 2020) that Italian postcolonial literature has been identified as such. In the latter texts in particular a new form of articulation between biographical provenance and narrative material emerges, with Italian colonial history and its legacy the focal axis of these narratives, all of which share a common “artistic program” (Di Maio, 2009: 137).

Instead of examining all the phases of this production, a theme on which several exhaustive syntheses are available, I would rather like to assess the position of this literature and its effects in the Italian cultural context thirty years after its first appearance in order to better understand what I call the “strategic marginality” of this production.

The first aspect to consider is the projectuality that has accompanied from the start the development and promotion of this literature in its various articulations, the birth of which may be framed within a kind of dialectic between immigrants who felt a strong urge to communicate their experiences (often highly educated people already engaged in cultural activities in their own country), and academics, publishers, and associations who rapidly responded to this urgency. In fact, Italian critics, editors, journalists, and sociologists did not merely provide a space and voice to those who wished to testify directly about their migratory experience, but actively promoted and encouraged these writing practices. These forms of solicitation for migrant writing show that critics of Italian literature (whether active in Italy or abroad) had glimpsed the possibility, precisely through migrant literature, of bringing Italy and Italian Studies into the arena of important debates that had already been going on for some time in other countries, such as those related to multiculturalism in its various

meanings, the revision of the identity of national culture, the canon, and the colonial past. It is no coincidence that these pushes for change within the confines of Italy and Italian studies have often come from scholars active in Italian studies departments abroad, for example in the United States, France, Belgium, and Quebec.

The proliferation of labels that have been proposed to define this literature in Italy confirms this hypothesis. Drawing mainly from similar attempts at categorization from abroad, critics have proposed the most disparate denominations, including “immigrant/migrant” literature (Gnisci, 1996, 1998a; Quaquarelli, 2010a) “Italophone” (Parati, 1995), “Afro-Italian” (Portelli, 2000; Brancato, 2009), “minor” (Parati, 1995; Ponzanesi, 2004; Burns, Polezzi, 2003), “creole,” “hybrid,” “mestizo” (Gnisci, 1998b, 2003), “multicultural” (Orton, Parati, 2007), “intercultural” (Chiellino, 2006), and “transcultural” (Kleinhans, Schwaderer, 2013). Each of these definitions emphasizes a different, albeit partial, aspect of the object of study: from the political implication of choosing Italian as a language of writing, to the didactic-transformative function of patterns of coexistence inferable from the texts, to the intrinsic “hybridity” of the works in terms of content and form.²² These efforts at demarcation have above all allowed for the establishment of links with other corpuses, such as Afro-American literature, *littérature beure* in France, *Gastarbeiterliteratur* in Germany, *testimonio* in Latin America, as well as the sundry literatures in various European languages deemed as “postcolonial.” In other words, through the strategic marginality of migrant literature, Italian criticism has found an opportunity to de-provincialize itself. This move also brought the possibility of revitalizing the study of Italian literature along with its history in light of political and cultural issues than have emerged in Anglo-American academia since the 1980s.

The legitimizing effect between criticism and these writings has been bilateral. Sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, critics have defined “migrant literature” as a new form of engaged literature, in the strong sense of the term. It has been said that it is an engaged literature because it has a manifest and urgent socio-political referent; because it is a literature that wants to trigger concrete social changes; that renews the tradition of Italian neo-realism insofar as it advocates a “return to reality” after the supposed self-referentiality of post-modern literature; and because its authors would be the “new working class,” capable of finally taking the floor in the first person to write counter-narratives

22 For an overview of terminological issues, see Benvenuti, 2011; Mengozzi, 2013: 33–108; Quaquarelli, 2015: 9–34 Fracassa in Comberiati, Mengozzi (2022: 39–60).

to the dominant media, political, and legislative discourse on migration, providing a more truthful and multifaceted representation of marginal cultures and identities. The question here is not only whether migrant literature can be actually considered as a whole as a form of engaged literature. On the one hand, this is undeniable; on the other hand, however, it can be argued that this notion of engagement, being strongly author-oriented, is based only on an assumed social and political positioning of authorial figures. In many cases, in fact, these writers are not representatives of poor immigration at all, so much so that many of them have questioned from the outset their legitimacy to give space and voice to a type of immigration that they may not even know personally, but which they are called upon to “represent” for the needs of the publishing market.

In my view, however, the main point of this debate concerns once again the role of strategic marginality that this production and the related field of study have assumed in the Italian cultural landscape. It is not coincidental in this regard that commentators during the early stages of this production made recurrent use of the metaphor of the “fragility” of these writings, i.e. a vulnerability inhabiting the works that demands that the critic actively intervene in the promotion and development of this literature, striving for its canonization. Nor is it a coincidence that this promotion of the role of the literary critic in relation to migrant literature occurred at a time when the discipline was repeatedly declaring itself in crisis. Indeed, it was precisely in the 1990s—i.e. when the first texts signed by immigrants appeared—that debates on the state of criticism became heated in Italy, often expressed in apocalyptic terms: some critics have spoken of a crisis of the univocal systems of reference and methodologies dominant in the 1960s and 1970s (Segre, 1993); others of a “euthanasia of criticism” that has become alienated from readers due to its excessive proliferation and specialization (Lavagetto, 2005); still others have spoken of a general collapse of critical thought in a system dominated by the rules of the culture industry that transforms criticism into its opposite, i.e. advertising (Mordenti, 2007; Giglioli, 2009). Nevertheless, just as necrologies of literary criticism were proliferating in Italian academic circles, instances of renewal were slowly making their way into Italy, albeit initially in more marginal circuits, through cultural and post-colonial studies. Migrant literature as a new field of study served precisely as an opportunity to (re)launch the value of criticism and the study of literature at a crucial time of loss of confidence in the role of criticism and literary studies in Italy. Hence, while there are now increasing reasons to question the distinction between migrant and Italian literature *tout court* (and we will return to this shortly), it is nevertheless worth acknowledging the positive and driving effects that the circumscription of migrant writings has exerted on the Italian

literary field. Thanks to the contribution of theories and approaches from other contexts, Italian studies has been able to take on fundamental problems regarding not only its own evolution, but its very existence. The goals have involved rethinking curricula and the canon, not only with a view to its inclusive broadening, but also by viewing the postcolonial and transcultural through a cross-epoch approach, one useful for reinserting the classics into a discursive circuit that has more meaning and relevance for the present. Another task has been a self-reflexive transformation of the perception of the field of study towards a conception of Italian studies not as a closed and self-referential circuit, but as a field in constant dialogue with other disciplinary fields. Significant strides have been made towards creating a synergy of historical, ethnographic, and literary studies by which the Italian colonial past has been explored through several new paradigms; towards redefining Italian literary corpus from a transnational perspective, taking into account the nomadic, multilateral, and multilingual nature of much literary production of today. Similarly to processes taking place in literary narrative, this move towards the internationalization of Italian Studies involved a reconsideration of what is produced within and outside Italian borders by authors and critics of Italian and foreign origin. Nevertheless, the grafting of new theories, many of these from the Anglophone area, should not be seen as a passive alignment of Italian studies towards theories and practices derived from hegemonic academic and cultural contexts. This inside/outside stance, again, reflects strategic marginality: the use of theories derived from postcolonial and cultural studies, for example, has shown the ability of Italian studies to incorporate these influences to re-invent itself based on its own theories and traditions. One notable example may be seen in the diffusion, circulation, and re-interpretations of Gramscian studies, which from Italy passed through India, the United States, and South America (Filippini, 2011). These exchanges have allowed Italian studies to reposition itself within the international context in line with pertinent issues that younger generations of scholars around the world have raised in the humanities and social sciences in recent decades.

4 Forms of Emancipation and Literary Legacies

Thirty years after the publication of the first texts, does it still make sense to define “Italian migrant literature” as separate from contemporary Italian literature in general? Should this migrant literature be considered as a specific subset of the national literature? This is an issue often raised by several scholars, for example by Daniela Brogi in her article *Smettiamo di chiamarla letteratura*

della migrazione? (Should we stop calling it migration literature?) published 2011 in *Nazione Indiana*. Here I will try to list just some of the many reasons these boundaries have ceased to make sense in the eyes of many.

First of all, it must be acknowledged that examinations of this production are no longer confined only to specialist studies, as assessments have also been featured in surveys and histories of Italian literature, including the recent work *Il romanzo in Italia* (The novel in Italy, 2018) edited by Giancarlo Alfano and Francesco De Cristofaro. This four-volume collection traces the evolution of the novel in Italy from the early 19th century to the end of the 20th century. This ambitious work includes a chapter by the present author on migrant and postcolonial literature, representing a clear sign that this production is now acknowledged as an integral part of national literary history.²³

This is not merely a matter of critical-academic legitimacy, since analyses of contemporary literary production in the Italian language reveal that convergences between migrant and non-migrant writers are numerous. On the one hand, migrant writers have experimented with various “strategies of emancipation” from the “ghetto” of migrant literature (Fracassa, 2012). Among these strategies, three are worth mentioning: intertextual dialogues with the national canon, such as in Jarmila Očková's *Occhio a Pinocchio* (Watch out for Pinocchio, 2006), a rewriting of Collodi's famous novel; the interpolation of Italian dialects with Italian and other languages in works by Tahar Lamri, Amara Lakhous, Igiaba Scego; and genre-bending fiction such as Lakhous's four successful novels poised between Mediterranean noir and Italian-style comedy. On the other hand, migratory or postcolonial themes are no longer the exclusive preserve of migrant writers, as since the early 2000s they have steadily entered non-migrant Italian fiction in novels by both established and up-and-coming authors. While these attempts have not always proved convincing in aesthetic terms, a number of these works have enjoyed commercial success and media resonance; these include Maria Pace Ottieri's *Quando sei nato non puoi più nasconderti* (Once you're born you can no longer hide, 2003), Giuseppe Catozzella's *Non dirmi che hai paura* (Don't tell me you're afraid, 2014), Margaret Mazzantini's *Mare al mattino* (The sea in the morning, 2011), and Francesca Melandri's *Sangue giusto* (Pure blood, 2017).

Moreover, these convergences between migrant and Italian literature not only concern the themes and content of the works, but also their formal

23 The fourth volume of *Il romanzo in Italia* closes with the chapter “Il romanzo degli altri. Postcoloniale e migrazione” (The novel of the others. Postcolonialism and migration, Mengozzi, 2018: 435–447).

and structural aspects. In what remains to date the most articulate presentation of ultra-contemporary Italian literature as a whole—Gianluigi Simonetti's volume *La letteratura circostante. Narrativa e poesia nell'Italia contemporanea* (The surrounding literature. Narrative and Poetry in Contemporary Italy, 2018)—Simonetti identifies recurring traits of the literature that is most read and sold in Italy: the prevalence of testimonial narratives and the overexposure of the narrative self; the flattening of the literary to current events and news stories; the insistence on themes with a strong reality effect; the use of a simple, colloquial language, and hurried syntax; the exotic-tourist trope; generic hybridity between fiction and non-fiction; and the use/abuse of the raw documents in fictional narratives (newspaper excerpts, trial transcripts, interviews). These formal dominants, the risks and limits of which Simonetti emphasizes,²⁴ are not only the local effects of a much broader restructuring of the global system of literature (including developments in markets), but they have also characterized migrant literature since it was first delineated as such.²⁵ Reflecting trends in Italy that would later become dominant in the 2000s, migrant writers (like authors in general), adapted to public tastes and expectations along with the concomitant demands of a publishing industry in search of sales. For migrant authors however, this was a necessary condition for acquiring a public voice from a disadvantaged position. For all these reasons, while at first the separation of the corpus of migrant literature from Italian literature played a strategic and productive role, this distinction has now become superfluous, if not confusing or even misleading.

Besides the repositioning of Italian studies as described above, what about the linguistic, narrative, and other literary effects of this literature? Shortly after the emergence of the first texts written by migrants, many critics emphasized the revitalizing, desecrating, and / or hybridizing effects that migrant literature would have had on the Italian language. By the beginning of the 2000s, other voices were alluding to something like the eventual appearance of an "Italian Salman Rushdie," as if such a messianic descent would finally make contemporary Italian literature worthy of competing with putatively more vibrant and modern Anglophone and Francophone literatures. Despite the positive intentions, there had always been something suspect about this rhetoric of palingenesis of Italian language and culture by the Other. Alain Mabanckou, a French

24 Incidentally, in his volume, Simonetti focuses mainly on more schematic texts, while less space is reserved for works that openly play with these market dynamics, no doubt because these texts are less numerous.

25 For this reason, the lack of a discussion of migrant writings in Simonetti's volume is surprising, especially since the author alludes to several "scrittura di categoria."

writer of Congolese origins, put it clearly in a 2007 essay: why should Francophone, Italoophone, Anglophone or Lusophone literatures be seen merely in terms of their usefulness, of what they bring to European languages and cultures? And why should postcolonial authors take pride in assuming this subordinate role and be happy to contribute to the struggle for hegemony among different European languages and cultures seeking assertion in the global marketplace? “No literature can be content with the role of housekeeper. One does not write to save a language, but precisely to *create* one.” (Mabanckou, 2007: 56).²⁶

The creation of a unique literary language is never the prerogative of one genre or current as a whole, but of voices taken individually. Due to their peripherality, often certain cultural productions such as migrant literatures, genre literatures, and other forms in varying degrees suffer from an overgeneralized treatment by reading and critical audiences. It should be noted, instead, that the relationship with the Italian language on the part of migrant writers is always declined in the singular. The writers themselves have insistently returned to the choice of Italian as the language of writing and the significance of this appropriation. A wide array of positions emerges, sometimes quite divergent. Authors such as Amara Lakhous have chosen to continue composing in the language of their childhood, in this case Arabic, then to self-translate. Julio Monteiro Martins, already an established writer in Brazil, simply made what was to him the obvious choice of Italian after his migration. Others speak of an oxymoronic choice, accentuating in their works a sense of laceration (Christiana de Caldas Brito, of Brazilian descent), or the positive effects of “integration” into the community of arrival (Jarmila Očkayová, Slovakian). Finally, the Algerian-born writer Tahar Lamri positions the choice of Italian as a liberating gesture from a language of colonial imposition (in his case French) as well as an opportunity to express his language of origin alongside literary Italian and other dialects, which therefore all live and coexist in his writing. If we turn from the motivations for linguistic choice to the effects, we may note once again that the strategies employed are diverse. If the long-awaited renewal of the Italian language by migrant writings has not taken place, it is simply because the works as such do not constitute a homogeneous corpus. It is true that, in some cases, we have seen a drive to desecrate the language (Ali Farah, 2005), to contaminate it with different linguistic codes or among different languages, as in Christiana de Caldas Brito’s “portuliano” (a mixture of Italian and

26 “[...] aucune littérature ne peut se contenter d’un rôle d’officier d’ordonnance. On n’écrit pas pour *sauver* une langue, mais justement pour en *créer* une.”

Portuguese), in the multilingual experiments of Tahar Lamri and Cristina Ali Farah, as well as in the alternation of dissonant registers in the novels of Jadelin Mabiala Gangbo and Igjaba Scego. In contrast to this (often playful) tendency to hybridize the Italian language, just as many texts display an opposite trend toward standard Italian, which may represent a way of performatively affirming membership in the target community, or because the imperfect mastery of Italian may foster a sense of reserve on the part of the writer toward the new language. Finally, as described above, textual and content editing as well as other outside interventions may carry texts towards established linguistic and cultural norms.

Although so far I have tried to show that the works of migrant literature must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and not as a corpus, the question about the overall legacy of migrant literature is not a futile one. Today, thirty years after the appearance of the first texts, it must be emphasized that in terms of a putative linguistic, stylistic, and narrative renewal the effects produced by migrant literature on Italian literature do not seem so preponderant. First of all, as indicated, the position that we have taken is that such a distinction between two modes is itself an artificial one. Moreover, migrant writers have had to place themselves within the existing Italian publishing market, accept its dynamics and compromises in order to carve out a space in the context of the host society from which they can be heard. It is thus unfair to inpart to migrant writers an inability to revolutionize national letters through experimentation, as others such as Salman Rushdie and Zadie Smith have done in Anglophone and Francophone contexts. It would perhaps be more reasonable to ask whether the Italian literary, publishing, and receptive context is/was sufficiently propitious to allow the emergence of voices as unique and powerful as that of Rushdie. As Nadeesha Uyangoda writes in *L'unica persona nera nella stanza* (The only black person in the room), a narrative essay on racial questions in Italy: "If being niche is the ultimate stage for many intellectuals, this is not a luxury one can afford when one is Black: to be niche for a BME²⁷ is to be marginal" (Uyangoda, 2021: 11–12).²⁸

Even without resounding literary revolutions, migrant literature (which we should now simply call "contemporary literature of transcultural Italy") certainly deserves credit for having introduced new themes and new forms of articulation of biographical experience in intersections of anti-colonial his-

27 Black and Minority Ethnic.

28 "Se essere di nicchia è lo stadio definitivo per molti intellettuali, questo non è un lusso che ci si può permettere quando si è neri: essere di nicchia per un bme equivale a essere marginale."

tory/geography/anthropology in Italy. Innovative narrative devices are featured in these discourses, of which three brief examples will now be presented here. Each of the texts that I discuss entertains a particular relationship with another discursive sphere, configuring itself as a “talking back” (hooks, 1989) with respect to: 1) colonial history from the perspective of the African resistance, 2) tourist guides to Italian cities through the legacy of colonialism, and 3) ethnography, to problematize what may be seen as traces of the colonial gaze.

The first example text is *Regina di Fiori e di perle* (*Queen of Flowers and Pearls*) by Italian-Ethiopian Gabriella Ghermandi (2007, English version 2015). In this novel, the writing moves in opposition to the withdrawal of colonialism from Italian public discourse from the postwar period to the present. History is thus retold “from the perspective of those who resisted colonization” (Benvenuti, 2012: 112), a strategy supported by a powerful narrative structure. The composition of the text was preceded by the assiduous work of the author in collecting testimonies from Ethiopians and others involved in various situations and environments. The novel presents a number of distinctive features of the postcolonial novel such as an intertextual dialogue with the national literary canon, in this case with the great classic of 20th century Italian literature, Ennio Flaiano’s *Tempo di uccidere* (1947); *The Short Cut* (1994). Another distinctive structure is the interweaving of individual and collective memory, here figured through the protagonist Mahlet, who serves as an alter ego for Ghermandi. The narrator Mahlet, who travels in space (from Ethiopia to Italy and back) and in time (through the stories told to her), is predestined from the opening pages of the text to become the keeper and the storyteller of her people (“You will cross the sea [...] you will bring our stories to the land of the Italians. You will be the voice of our history that does not want to be forgotten”; Ghermandi, 2007: 6). A plurality of voices flow through the tale in the form of a series of narrators who in the first person convey to Mahlet events from the Italian occupation of Ethiopia so that the girl can honor the vow she made as a child to the elders of her family to relate the stories of her people. Finally at the end of the novel the reader is addressed: “And that is why today I am telling you her story. Which is then also mine. But yours as well” (Ghermandi, 2007: 251).²⁹ This strategy of directly engaging the reader, a frequent *topos* in such works, seals the desire to mend the divided memory between the two shores of the Mediterranean to finally bring together Italy and its former colonies (*A Time to heal* is the title of Cristina Lombardi-Diop’s afterword to the text). In addition to

29 “Attraverserai il mare [...] porterai le nostre storie nella terra degli italiani. Sarai la voce della nostra storia che non vuole essere dimenticata”; “Ed è per questo che oggi vi racconto la sua storia. Che poi è anche la mia. Ma pure la vostra.”

representing a kind of manifesto of Italian postcolonial literature and inaugurating this strand of the Italian neo-historical novel (Benvenuti, 2012), *Regina di fiori e di perle* was also brought to the theatrical stage by the writer herself as a performer. Ghermandi's performance was inspired both by Ethiopian oral culture as embodied by the *azmari* (singer-musician, literally "one who praises") as well as Italian narrative theatre (il Teatro di narrazione), a form in which the narrator directly relates the tale instead of actors presenting the events.

The second example is *La mia casa è dove sono* (My Home is where I Am, 2010) by Igiaba Scego, born in Rome to Somali parents.³⁰ In the first chapter, Scego recounts the occasion from which the autobiographically-inspired novel originated, a reunion among members of her family in diaspora that took place in Manchester at her brother's house. The protagonists indulge in "memories of [their] old land" (Scego, 2010: 12),³¹ Somalia, leading them to sketch out a map of their former home of Mogadishu, a city now destroyed by years of civil wars, but still living in their memory. The narrator Igiaba soon realizes that the map is not complete, since "her city," as her mother points out to her, is not (or not only) Mogadishu, but also Rome, where Igiaba was born and spent most of her life. Igiaba then describes how she then buys post-it notes ("I did not want a sheet of paper—the narrator says—I wanted something temporary and detachable"; Scego, 2010: 34)³² and sticks them on the drawing of Mogadishu, writing on each of them the names of neighborhoods, squares, and monuments in Rome. The result is a disorderly, but the map is "finally complete" (Scego, 2010: 34). From this drawing of Mogadishu upon which memories linking Igiaba Scego to Rome are scattered haphazardly, we move on to the city of Rome itself as traveled by the protagonist in search of the traces of what she considers Italy's repressed past, i.e. its colonial history. As a sort of parody of tourist guides of Rome, each chapter is dedicated to a well-known place or monument in the capital (the Sistine Theater, Piazza Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, Piazza di Porta Capena, Roma Termini, etc.). Each of these sites, however, is invested with a new meaning, with each becoming a theater of individual, family, and collective narratives related to the memory of Italian colonialism and its long-term effects, including Somali immigration to Italy. Through these tales, the narrator sketches out a new map of the Urbe made up of transnational trajectories with the intention of familiarizing Italian readers with Mogadishu as well as transforming their view of Rome. Like other works discussed here, this novel gave

30 For a more in-depth analysis of this work by Scego and the relationship between postcolonial literature and cartography, see Mengozzi, 2016.

31 "ricordi della [loro] vecchia terra".

32 "non volevo un foglio di carta, volevo qualcosa di provvisorio e scomponibile".

rise to other texts. In 2014 the author together with Rino Bianchi published a volume entitled *Roma negata (Rome denied)*, in which through an alternation of words and images certain locations and sites of the capital are re-formed, connecting them, directly or indirectly, to Italian colonialism.

My third example is *Traiettorie di sguardi. E se gli altri foste voi?* (Trajectories of gazes. What if the others were you?, 2001) by Geneviève Makaping, a Cameroon-born intellectual, journalist, writer, and anthropologist. This work combines scientific/anthropological and narrative/autobiographical discourse in an original way through an assemblage of diverse materials, mainly anecdotes and nonfiction texts. The result is a metatextual work that defies classification, at once individual and collective autobiography, essay, travelogue, and Bildungsroman: “I really like the idea of considering this diary an exercise. I think it will come in very handy in the ongoing construction of my identity” (Makaping, 2001: 30); “I believe that this exercise of mine is not pure field research, of the kind that anthropologists put in place with the suggestive methodology of participant observation. The fact is that part of my life is mixed up with my research” (Makaping, 2001: 66). Through this narrative structure, Makaping exercises an ethnographic “writing back.” This manifests itself well in the text at precise moments, for example when Makaping stages the frames that formed her as a subject in her journey before and after migration. In taking on the paradoxical condition of one who must understand the social, cultural, and political constructions that have marked her with a double stigma (Black and woman), she uses these same languages and disciplines to comment on her development toward a position of strength: “I did not have tools—she writes—to decode or encode what was being said or done around me with respect to me or to others. Paradoxically, Europe itself would provide me with the material and tools to observe and study myself and the West itself” (Makaping, 2001: 9).³³

It is precisely this double bind that Makaping explores in her text in various ways. If Makaping’s *Traiettorie di sguardi* did not receive at the time of publication the attention it deserved, in recent years her textual model is being taken up by authors through several types of text, such as the aforementioned

33 Makaping: “mi piace molto l’idea di considerare questo diario un grande esercizio. Credo che tornerà molto utile al continuo costruirsi della mia identità”; “Credo che questo mio esercizio non sia pura ricerca sul campo, di quelle che mettono in atto gli antropologi con la suggestiva metodologia dell’osservazione partecipante. Il fatto è che parte della mia vita si confonde con la mia ricerca”; “Non avevo degli strumenti per decodificare o codificare quanto veniva detto o fatto attorno a me, rispetto a me o agli altri. Paradossalmente proprio l’Europa, in seguito, mi avrebbe fornito il materiale e gli strumenti per osservare e studiare me e lo stesso Occidente.”

2021 narrative essay on racism in Italy *L'unica persona nera nella stanza* by Nadeesha Uyangoda, which is quickly becoming a best-seller thanks to the resourcefulness of 66thand2nd, a dynamic independent publishing house in Rome. Nadeesha Uyangoda is a freelance Italian-Srilankan journalist whose writing has been published in several venues, including *Al Jazeera English*, *The Telegraph*, and *Open Democracy*. Uyangoda maintains her militant approach by remaining active on social media. Compared to the early 1990s—when public discourse by immigrants or minorities was forced to come through official channels such as the national press, television or print publishing—the possibilities for personal and artistic expression have increased and diversified, for example by self-publishing and podcasting. Young second-generation migrant writers, for example, have a strong presence on social networks, where they are able to express new forms of self-narrative, some of which eventually reach distribution in print through micropublishing houses or traditional corporate publishers. One emblematic case is that of Antonio Dikele Distefano, born in Busto Arsizio to Angolan parents. Originally becoming known as a rap artist, Distefano has produced several novels published by Mondadori aimed at a young adult audience which have together sold more than 300,000 copies. These fiction works have also been the basis for the Netflix TV series *Zero*, the first episode of which came out in April 2021. This Italian-language series was among the very first mainstream corporate productions to feature a cast composed mainly of second-generation Black Italians. Over the past 10 years the number of Distefano's followers on Instagram has increased exponentially, now reaching several hundred thousand.

Migrant literature in Italian continues to transcend peripherality through all the strategies explored in these pages. In recent years, this journey has also been facilitated by increasing exposure on social networks and through trans-media narratives. This change in the frames within which migrant or second-generation voices are expressed has also profoundly affected the narrative and linguistic forms of texts and is therefore significant for both sociology of literature and comparative studies. If an impression has been created of a stagnation of Italian migrant literature (Pezzarossa, 2015) thirty years after the first works emerged, this is perhaps because mainstream publishing continues to offer the same types of text to the public over and over again, or because literary critics continue to focus on the same handful of texts and authors. Perhaps a more useful hermeneutic orientation would be toward fields contiguous and interconnected to literary discourse, such as social media but also music, comics, theater, and television series. These forms now represent real laboratories of artistic experimentation in constant transformation that incorporate, but also transcend, the experimental forms of literary narratives of the 1990s

and 2000s discussed in this chapter. And it is precisely through an approach that is attentive to the entanglements between literature and other languages or media that it is possible to grasp the vibrant dynamics of today's transcultural Italy.³⁴

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34 An important part of the volume *Storie condivise nell'Italia contemporanea. Narrazioni e performance transculturali* (Shared stories in contemporary Italy. Transcultural narratives and performances, Comberiat and Mengozzi, 2022) is devoted to the analysis of all these new discursive fields hitherto neglected in Italian comparative studies.

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PART 3

Case studies



Introduction to Part 3: Case studies

Petr Kylvoušek

Unlike the section on deperipheralization, in which the subchapters are arranged according to geographical and linguistic area, this part of the book offers comparative insights across languages and literatures to reveal potential similarities and contrasts. The linguistic situation may develop a complex center-periphery structuring with implications for cultural identity, as evidenced by the example of Louisiana (see below Part 3, Chapter 15). Besides its role as a diachronic feature of cultural identity, a language—even one in a peripheral position—influences not only modes of expression but also locution, discursive themes and the depiction of reality. As shown in the chapters of this book, peripheral or formerly peripheral spaces at the intersection of languages, cultures, states of orality and literacy often stimulate new aesthetic impulses. Such spaces bring significant cultural enrichment through conversations with otherness (perceived as peripheral or central), as we can see in the Caribbean (Part 3, Chapter 16), the Maghreb (Part 3, Chapter 17) as well as in many other fields. Biculturalism is a common phenomenon often associated with the construction of a cross-cultural “third space,” as shown by studies on the encounters and clashes between the Anglo-American centrality and Hispanic American cultures, as seen in chapters Part 3, Chapter 18, Part 3, Chapter 19 and Part 3, Chapter 20. On both a thematic and existential level, the “third space” may be connected to nomadism experienced as a new identity, creating an exciting new aesthetic categorization based on an ancient phenomenon (see below Part 3, Chapter 21). The last two case studies presented in this section address the center-periphery question directly: in areas where a new centrality has been constituted, new peripheries or minority spaces emerge with which the centrality must then negotiate its relations. The centrality (or remnants thereof) must be transformed internally, including in terms of axiology (see the case of Brazilian literature, Part 3, Chapter 22, Part 3, Chapter 23). On another level, similar issues can be detected upon analyses of the globalized book market in the context of the relationship of a national literature to *Weltliteratur* (see below Part 3, Chapter 24).

“Lâche pas la patate”: French Language Cultures in Louisiana

Daniel Paul Sampey

Entrepreneur Jennifer Ledet (2011) describes the resiliency represented in the old Louisiana French adage “Lâche pas la patate” (Don’t drop the potato), or as she translates it “‘Hang in there!’ or ‘Finish strong!’”¹ The idea of perseverance under seemingly impossible conditions has resonated throughout Louisiana for centuries through challenges including social and economic upheaval, floods and hurricanes as well as man-made environmental disasters such as oil spills. This text will sketch out a few details about the development of French cultures and language in Louisiana, featuring the 20th-century schism between what has been called “Cajun” and “Creole,” and, finally, the possibilities entailed in the narrative of Louisiana Créolité, which problematizes several periphery / center binaries.

1 A Gumbo with Hundreds of Ingredients

Carl A. Brasseaux refers to the “cultural landscape” of Louisiana as “one of the most complex, if not the most complex, in rural North America [with] at least eighteen distinct groups, each with subgroups.” (Brasseaux, 2008: 1–2) When in 1536 the Spanish first reached (what came to be called) the Mississippi River where it meets the Gulf of Mexico, people had already been living there for at least 10,000 years. Archeological excavations show “an enormous trading network [built] with impressive engineering skills” among “mound-building cultures [which] existed as early as 4,500 BCE.” As European colonization began in earnest in the early 1700s, an indigenous population of approximately 14,000 people were living throughout the territory of present-day Louisiana, with the many tribes, notably the Houma, Choctaw and Tunica-Biloxi, communicating

1 This “*appel à la persévérance*” was also the title of a well-known song from 1976 on the La Louisiane record label by Jimmy C. Newman (Jimmy Yves Newman, the “C” stands for “Cajun”). The upbeat recording also became popular across French Canada, earning “gold” status by selling 40,000 units.

among themselves using 22 or more languages. (National Park Service)² From 1719 until 1820, chattel slaves were imported into Louisiana, mostly directly from West Africa (“listed as *brut* in French or *bozal* in Spanish”), but also from French and Spanish colonies in the Caribbean. (Louisiana Slave Database 2000) Further, Brasseaux lists some of the numerous immigrant groups that have flavored the gumbo of life in Louisiana over the centuries:

les voyageurs; the 1699 Canadian settlers; voluntary immigrants of the John Law era; forced immigrants of the early eighteenth century; *les filles à la cassette*; French military personnel (many of whom opted to remain in the colony); Alsatian religious exiles; Acadian exiles; Saint-Domingue refugees; refugees from the French Revolution; Bonapartist exiles; waves of nineteenth-century French (known within Louisiana’s Francophone community as *les français étrangers*); Belgian and Swiss immigrants seeking economic opportunity; French Jews fleeing religious persecution in provinces along the German border; French, Belgian, and Canadian Catholic missionaries; Alsatian and Lorrainer refugees from the 1870 Franco-Prussian War; Lebanese Christian immigrants; twentieth-century French and Belgian war brides; European and French-Canadian teachers in the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana’s bilingual programs; and Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees fleeing the communist takeover in their homelands.

BRASSEAU, 2008: 2–3

Articles and books have been published on many of these groups within the disciplines of Louisiana Studies,³ Creole Studies and Francophone Studies as well as other academic fields such as ethnography and comparative linguistics.

2 The United Houma Nation was consolidated during the 19th century from several different tribes, with the French language as one unifying factor: “Between 1830 and 1860 women in the new Houma community intermarried extensively with French speaking men of the region, and it appears that the group’s principal language became Cajun French as a result of exogamy during this period.” Brasseaux has documented how the Houma played a unique role in preserving the French language in Louisiana due to “the group’s increasing marginalization in local society” beginning in the mid-19th century as well as the legal denial of the right to attend “white educational facilities” in the early 20th century. (Brasseaux, 2008: 125–128) The irony should not be lost on us that, in this respect, discrimination and racism (certainly not only against the Houma) served as a factor in preserving French in Louisiana at a time when pressures were increasingly being placed on all residents to “Americanize” to English in the first decades on the 20th century.

3 Established in 1973, the discipline of “Louisiana Studies involves issues relating to researching and preserving those aspects of Louisiana that speak to our cultural, economic, geographi-

As pointed out by Barry Jean Ancelet (Ancelet, 2007: 1248–1249), retired director of the *Centre de folklore acadien et créole* at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, “[t]he development of the Francophone Studies program has been naturally interdisciplinary from the beginning.” All of the diverse populations listed above were acculturated to the French language in Louisiana.⁴ In fact, this cultural environment was the very reason that over the centuries many immigrant populations chose Louisiana instead of, for example, a(nother) place in the new nation of the United States. (Ancelet, 2013: 320–322) This was the case even as late as the second half of the 20th century in the case of refugees from former colonies in Southeast Asia, as Louisiana had a “French influence, a similar climate, and a fishing industry.” (Donato, Hakimzadeh, 2006)

Ancelet (2007: 1237–1238) marks out “three main currents” of the French language before the US Civil War: the “colonial French” of the original settlers beginning in 1699; the Creole French of the descendants of settlers, indigenous peoples and African slaves; and the Cajun French of the descendants of exiled Acadians (1753) and other later immigrant populations.⁵

By the end of the 19th century, the majority view is that the first group above was largely assimilated either into the second two groups or into the mainstream English-speaking culture of Louisiana. Regarding the second two linguistic currents, a claim can be made that their populations and culture overlapped so much that a strict differentiation between them did not come about until after Louisiana was purchased by the United States, when an English-speaking population with a widely different language, culture and worldview

cal, biological, sociological, artistic and historical contexts [including] the local, regional and global realms with many potential social, educational, economic and policy implications.” (University of Louisiana at Lafayette 2022).

- 4 The Spanish colonial period (1762–1801) of the entire Louisiana territory should not be underestimated in terms of influence on the cuisine and architecture (for instance in the “French Quarter” of New Orleans, largely rebuilt after the great fires of 1788 and 1794). French culture continued to dominate, although the Spanish seemed to tolerate this, perhaps due to their similar Romance language-based *Weltanschauung*. (Gregory, 2002) This is in huge contrast to the cultural misunderstandings and clashes that occurred as economic speculators and, eventually, permanent settlers from the United States began to trickle into the area following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, by which the size of the new country was increased by a full one-third. (Ancelet, 2007: 1237–1241, *passim*; Bernard, 2003: xvii–xxi, *passim*; Blyth in Valdman (ed.), 1997: 26–28, 31–33).
- 5 Cécyle Trépanier (Trépanier, 1991: 161) designates “at least four major French subcultures”: white Creoles, black Creoles, “French-speaking Indians,” and “descendants of the Acadians.”

began to show more and more influence in the region.⁶ Today there are many “white” Louisianans who speak variations of what linguists call Creole French (kréyòl la Lwizyàn), and many Louisianans that identify as “Black” use Cajun French (français de la Louisiane) (Valdman et al., 2010: xii).⁷ While in this text the distinction between Creole and Cajun French will be maintained, in practice the situation is much more complicated, as French-based language is used in Louisiana in dozens of interconnected regiolects. Speakers among the language variations can generally understand each other with no difficulty (Klinger et al., in: Valdman (ed.), 1997: 173–177; Ancelet, 2007: 1237–1238).

2 The Colonial Period until the Civil War

Before and after European and North American women arrived, the original groups of settlers—mainly fur trappers, later farmers and ranchers—mixed considerably with Indians and African slaves. During the first decades of colonization, the children born in Louisiana and their descendants came to be called Créoles (from Spanish *Criollo* or Portuguese *Crioulo*) simply to distinguish them from those not born there. (Spitzer 1985) One subsection of the original population eventually developed into the affluent planter class who used the “Colonial French” language current listed above. This landed wealthy included many families of *gens de couleur libres* (free people of color), groups of mixed race descendants of the original settlers, indigenous peoples and slaves who lived throughout Louisiana (Brasseaux, 2005: 12–16; Ancelet, 2007: 1238–1240).

The Créoles created poetry and belles lettres which can be closely related to trends in France of the period. This gentry class was able to secure private instruction for their children based on materials and pedagogy from France

6 Numerous fiction and nonfiction writers have detailed the conflicts in Louisiana between the basic features of a pragmatist Protestant worldview (e.g. Weber) versus the strong Catholicism—including syncretic elements of mysticism—that was predominant in Louisiana until the mid-20th century. (King, 1921: 164–176; Brasseaux, 1992: 84–85; Bernard, 2003: 38–41).

7 Notably, the title of the source cited here is *Dictionary of Louisiana French As Spoken in Cajun, Creole, and American Indian Communities* (Valdman et al. (ed.), 2010), i.e. in the entries section no distinction is made among the many varieties of French used in the area. In the Preface, however, the editorial team of the dictionary does make this clarification: “The presence of Louisiana Creole adds to the complexity of the linguistic situation of South Louisiana. Although much of its vocabulary overlaps with that of Louisiana French, major differences in

(Peknik, 2019: 172), or in rare cases even send their sons and daughters to France to be educated, as was the case for young Marie Hachard in 1726. (in: Robentstine, 1992: 199) They also appreciated opera at Théâtre St. Pierre (opened in 1792) and several other opera houses in New Orleans, often experiencing the latest works from France and elsewhere in Europe before New Yorkers or Philadelphians had the chance. (Belsom, 2006) Many *gens de couleur libres* also owned “slaves and extensive landholdings” on plantations which their slaves worked. This *gens* population “enjoy[ed] most of the legal rights but few of the social privileges of whites [and] modeled their existences upon the lives of Louisiana’s white Creole elite.” (Brasseaux, 2005: 12–16) This period is today often idealized by contemporary residents of Louisiana as one during which race was not the divisive issue it became after the initial mass influx of *les Américains* and especially following the US Civil War.

The Civil War also threw black Creole society into an uproar that would last at least for the better part of a century. The complexity within the black French-speaking community was in effect eliminated by the same laws that freed the slaves. After Reconstruction, one was simply white or not. The descendants of landed, educated, and cultured *gens de couleur libres* suddenly found themselves legally below the lowest whites, including many subsistence-farming Cajuns. The tensions that understandably developed strained the cultural and social exchange that had previously characterized the relationship between Cajuns and yeoman black Creoles, who after all shared a common language and similar economic conditions.

ANCELET, 2007: 1239–1240

In the last decades of the 20th century, invoking the unique legacy of the “free people of color,” or simply the “free people,” a population came to reclaim the term “Creole” for themselves as a distinct cultural marker. This will be briefly discussed below (Dominguez, 1997: 23–25, 135–136, *passim*; Hall, 1992: 257–270, *passim*; Brasseaux, 2005: 13).

A landmark narrative of wide-spread notoriety outside of Louisiana is that of the *Grand Dérangement*, literally the great “upheaval” or “disturbance,” but which is usually translated as “Expulsion” or “Deportation of the Acadians.”

grammatical structure make it an autonomous language.” (xii) Among other experts, Sylvie DuBois acknowledges the existence of the “extreme position [...] that there is no real distinction between CF [Cajun French] and LC [Louisiana Creole], just an artificial classification based on race.” (Valdman (ed.), 1997: 54).

This series of events became valorized by a population who became known as “Cajuns” (derived from “Acadians”).⁸ In 1753 approximately 11,500 French colonists were brutally forced from their homes by the British and deported from the Port-Royal area on present-day Nova Scotia.⁹ Over the next few years half of this population died, many at sea, less of starvation and disease. Some were scattered throughout British-American and French colonies and a few were sold into bondage, including children (Bernard, in: Breaux, 2011b). Some returned to France for good and others left France again. By 1800 about 4,000 members or descendants of the original population (and their new families) had arrived in Louisiana, generally moving into rural areas to continue their traditional subsistence farming and fur trapping (Faragher, 2005, *passim*; Bernard, 2003: xvii–xviii, 50–53; Ancelet, 2007: 1235–1236).

The *Dérangement* narrative, which features French heroes and victims along with cruel British villains, has taken on elements of legend among lay residents of Louisiana, with many details over the centuries simplified, ignored or forgotten. It does not diminish this etiological narrative (nor the possibilities for storytelling and merchandizing) to admit that it marginalizes every other group who immigrated to or was brought to Louisiana before and after. When the Acadians arrived, Louisiana was a Spanish colony where the French and Spanish mixed freely with few conflicts, united by the Catholic religion. When the Louisiana Purchase was completed and even after the tiny boot at the end was made a US state in 1812, nothing much changed in the region for decades. Nevertheless, as the 19th century progressed, the Romance-based culture of Louisiana became a source of frustration for *les Américains* as the newcomers gradually began to assume political and economic power (Dessens, 2015: 174–174, *passim*; King, 1921, *passim*; Hubbs, 2021: 619–620).

The French cultures of Louisiana continued to prosper for 60 years after the US purchase of the territory in 1803. Yet a separation steadily began to form, with English used for official, legal and commercial activities, “French for family, entertainment and cultural purposes” (Heylen, 1993). It seems that the French in New Orleans looked somewhat bemusedly upon the uncul-

8 As a bit of anecdotal perspective, the author of the present text is himself from Louisiana, with 100% Louisiana French ancestry on both his mother’s and father’s sides of the family. I do not remember any of my family ever identifying themselves as “Cajun.” I recently (2022) discussed this issue with my 80-year old father, both of whose parents spoke French as their first language and who has himself been fluent in French his entire life. My father identifies simply as “French.” He has no animus towards the “Cajun” trope, but does not use that term to describe himself. The commodification of the marker “Cajun” will be touched upon below.

9 Award-winning musician and poet Zachary Richard calls these events “largest ethnic cleansing in the history of North America” (in: Cross, 2017).

tured strangers, for instance taking advantage of the language barrier to gently ridicule the values and customs of the newcomers from the United States, itself a nation only a few decades old (Hubbs, 2021: 619–621; King, 1921: 250–252).

The contemporary written literary output of post-colonial Louisiana in French represented a thriving culture of verse, journalism, nonfiction and, by the late 19th century, a bit of fiction, all derivative of European models. Perhaps a sample of “Afro-Creole” poetry from a New Orleans newspaper of the mid-1800s would demonstrate one popular style, which as we can see exudes an ebullient Romantic idealism not unlike works of the period in other literary fields:

“Poésie! Vox Dei!”
 N’entends-tu pas sonner à l’horloge lointaine
 L’heure de tant d’espairs, l’heure sainte et certaine
 De la pure Fraternité?
 N’entends-tu pas vibrer ces voix mystérieuses
 Qui passent en courbant ces têtes sérieuses,
 Ces voix fortes de Liberté?

LÉLIA D. [ADOLPHE DUHART] in: Bruce trans. 2020¹⁰

In English nuanced by French influence, Local Color fiction of the period, for example that of George Washington Cable and Alice Dunbar-Nelson, portrays in fine detail the language *négociations* (not to mention those of class, race, and gender) unfolding in late-19th century New Orleans:

[Q]otation marks and phonetic spellings representing speakers’ French accents mark out their occasional English exclamations; otherwise, English is provided by the stories’ third-person narrators, who translate characters’ words and thoughts from French. When Creoles blast English as “a vile tongue,” [from Cable’s “Madame Délicieuse”] they almost never voice their condemnation in English.

HUBBS, 2021: 619

10 From *Afro-Creole Poetry in French from Louisiana’s Radical Civil War-Era Newspapers. A Bilingual Edition*

(Bruce trans. 2020).

“Poetry! Vox Dei!”/ Do you not hear, distantly ringing, the chime/ Of the hour of hopes, the sure and sacred time

Of purest Fraternity?/ Do you not hear these enigmatic voices/ That speak to heads weighed down with serious choices,/The forceful voices of Liberty?/

Written literary production and reception in French on a significant scale would not be created in Louisiana again until the 1970s, when a major attempt at the formal codification of French grammar and vocabulary was undertaken (Barry, 1989: 47). Outside of (literary and literate) urban areas, throughout the 19th century there was practically no contact at all between native Louisianans and the new merchant and investor class that represented the first Anglo-Americans who ventured into the newly declared state. For centuries rural Louisianans had maintained a healthy French oral literary culture of folk tales, nursery rhymes, songs and games passed down through the generations (Ancelet, 1988a: 36–39; Brasseaux, 1992: 29–30, 115; Peknik, 2019: 1–21, *passim*). Here is a verse from a traditional folksong, versions of which were made into popular recordings throughout the 20th century. The song is still performed today, sometimes by a male singer, sometimes by a female:

Jolie blonde, tu croyais qu'il y avait juste toi,
 Il y a pas juste toi dans le pays pour m'aimer.
 Je peux trouver juste une autre jolie blonde,
 Bon Dieu sait, moi, j'en ai un tas.¹¹

“Cleoma Breaux and her brothers” recorded 1929, in: PEKNIK 2019, 48

While culturally (including linguistically) the situation for most of Louisiana had barely changed in the six decades since it was incorporated into the United States, a major inflection point came with US Civil War, as it did for the entire country not yet one century old. Even after the occupation by Federal troops was officially ended in 1877, pressures remained upon the French-speaking population towards total acculturation to the customs, values and language of the United States. These efforts would culminate in Federal and State educational initiatives in the early 20th century (Ancelet, 2008: 1240–1242).

These transitions from French to “American” are depicted in literary works in several genres, including belles lettres as well as the Local Color of writers like Cable and Dunbar-Nelson as mentioned above. (Hubbs, 2021: *passim*). Nearly all regional French-language newspapers such as *Le Pionnier De L'assomption*, *La Sentinelle De Thibodaux* and *Le Louisianais* folded during the Civil War or Reconstruction periods. (Library of Congress) By the end of the 19th century there was much less space or patience in the new, progressive ethos of Realism for the difference once brought by Louisiana French cultures.

11 Pretty blonde, you thought you were the only one/ That you were the only one I could ever love/ I can find another pretty blonde/ The good Lord knows, I've got plenty. (Peknik, 2019: 48. Trans. Peknik).

3 “I Must Not Speak French on the School Grounds.”

In several of the contributions to this book it has been documented how during the era of colonialism a particular Romance language in an area was privileged to the detriment of local languages and cultures. The Romance language and European ethos associated with it often came to dominate educational systems to form an elite class of administrators who accumulated cultural and economic capital. In the mid-20th century, as colonialism waned and the English language gradually began to dominate internationally, with Anglo-American mass cultural products (including literature) penetrating so many markets around the world, new layers of periphery/center relationships began to develop. New negotiations had to be made among local languages, the Romance language of the former colonizer, and English, often resulting, on the one hand, in homogenization according to Anglo-American models, and on the other, the emergence of sometimes provocative hybrid cultural artifacts incorporating influences from multiple streams. These moves can be related to what has been called “Janus-headed Postmodernism” (Jansen, 2016)—the desperate loss of “truth” versus the playful creation of new models. The evolving status of French in Louisiana reflects these types of complex negotiations in potentially surprising ways. In contrast to the colonial (mis)uses of French, in Africa for example, in Louisiana it is the Romance language that was and remains under threat of absorption and even annihilation.

David Barry (in Breaux, 2011a) points to three factors that heavily influenced French in Louisiana in the 20th century: the discovery of oil in 1901, the legal imposition of English as the only language of school education in 1921, and the experiences of French-speaking Louisianans serving abroad during World War Two. We will now briefly explore the first two negative influences on Louisiana French, followed by the third factor, which is positive.

As outlined above, after Louisiana became the 18th state in 1812, the increased economic activity of large cities like New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport created a strong incentive for residents to incorporate features of the largely Protestant-based culture of the United States, including the English language, into their lives (Brasseaux, 2005: 75–76; Ancelet, 2007: 1236–1240). Large populations who did not speak French became a major part of the population, eventually dominating sections of urban areas such as new neighborhoods west of Canal Street in New Orleans, in contrast to the older sections of the city such as the Vieux Carré, (Faubourg) Tremé, and Faubourg Marigny. In rural areas, however, the oral French culture continued to dominate, with music and food serving as two primary ways of transmitting the language from generation to generation (Brasseaux, in: Bernard, 1996: xvii–xviii; Gutierrez,

1992: 121–138; Peknik, 2019: 68, 94). As fiddle-player and *chanteur* Marc Savoy has commented, "Music is the glue [*le coll*] that holds the culture together."¹² (in: Lomax, 1991)

In the first decades of the 20th century, several educational initiatives were introduced to more closely acculturate the monolingual and largely illiterate residents of rural Louisiana into the United States (Ancelet, 1988a: 35–40). One of the first of these projects was the institution of mandatory school attendance in 1916 for children until the age of fifteen for females and sixteen for males (Harris, 1916: 96).¹³ This was difficult to accept for subsistence farming and trapping communities in which the seasonal labor of sons and daughters was vital to providing basic food needs. As Ancelet describes, children and adolescents "regularly were kept home to help with plowing, planting, hoeing, and harvesting." In terms of preconceptions about school education itself, "traditional societies such as that of the Cajuns often considered formal education outside the home to be threatening to the natural transmission of information from one generation to the next" (Ancelet, 2007: 1240).

12 Dozens of books have been written exploring the traditions and development of music in Louisiana over the centuries. Shane Bernard deals with influences on and from Rhythm and Blues in *Swamp Pop* (1996), and a fine recent work overviewing the 20th and early 21st century is Patricia Peknik's *French Louisiana Music and Its Patrons* (2019). Two prominent categorizations can be identified. Zydeco (after the song "Les haricots sont pas salés") features the accordion and rhythm instruments (*vest frottoir*, etc.), incorporating Afro-Caribbean and blues influences. Cajun music is marked by ballads and songs of exile, and in the classic version uses no percussion instruments. Music for fast and slow dancing is also fundamental in both streams. As with everything else in Louisiana, all the musical styles have always flowed into and out of each other. Since the incorporation of non-acoustic instruments in the 20th century, the music has been influenced by other Francophone cultures as well as by genres such as rock, jazz, reggae and hip-hop (Peknik, 2019: 1–3; Bernard, 1996: 75–95).

13 In the context of "Americanizing the American Indian," Katherine Jensen (1984: 155, *passim*) has defined certain dialectical processes involved in the imposition of school education and literacy on a colonized population. The initial stages of education (are planned to) acculturate the target population (periphery) to the norms and values of the colonizer (center), leading to the formation of new elites linked to the system and its advantages. Eventually the tools of literacy provide individuals and groups among the population the means to absorb and communicate more advanced knowledge, which they share among themselves as well as with other subjugated populations, i.e. within their own periphery and among other peripheries. This accumulation of perspectives facilitates the recognition by the target population of problems and issues (for example, exploitation of local resources) associated with the colonizer, leading to unrest, rebellion and, sometimes, revolution. In several chapters of the present book this paradigm has been explored, for example *Négritude* and the movements that it inspired around the world.

Further feeding the qualms of the local residents, in 1921 the Louisiana State Constitution was amended to impose English as the only language of school education. The pupils, many of whom had never used English before or even heard it spoken, were now not allowed to use any other language.

Several generations of young Cajun and black Creole first-graders, forced to wet their pants at school because they could not ask permission to go to the rest room, soon associated their native language and culture with social stigmatization. Those who could joined the headlong rush toward the language of the future. Soon speaking French was considered not unlike picking your nose: it was something well-raised people did not do in public.

ANCELET, 2007: 1240

At school children were chastised and even beaten for speaking French. These tales of whippings, kneeling on rice and rapping on knuckles became legendary. Still, most of these stories seem a bit exaggerated, with the heavier corporal punishment coming mostly from *enseignants américains* who themselves could not understand this “foreign” language. Pupils who were caught speaking French were generally punished in less violent ways, for instance they were made to write the line one-thousand times “I must not speak French on the school grounds.” (Breaux, 2011b)

Children who used their native language at school were also stigmatized in other ways such as labeling with epithets such as “coonass.” This pejorative signified the working-class population—low education, lazy, intractable—equating Cajuns¹⁴ with American stereotypes of French- and Spanish-based cultures. The term was applied to members of the local population to indicate their lower economic and social status as compared to those who wholeheartedly personified and accepted the values and the superiority of the culture of the United States (Ancelet, 2007: 1241). The coonass was assigned a similar or even a lower status than that of Blacks in Jim Crow-era Louisiana (Bernard.

14 For the next few pages the term “Cajun” will be used as shorthand for the entire population. The educational measures and especially the employment opportunities later provided by the oil industry as described below were possible only to those who were white or could pass as white, in the vernacular “*passé blanc*” (Cazabat, 2012; Hobbs, 2014: 151, *passim*). As a side note, primary and secondary education for all in the state, notably including Blacks, was strongly supported (and in some areas created) by the administrations of Governor (1928–1932) and later US Senator (1932–1935) Huey P. Long, a controversial figure in Louisiana and US history. The educational vision of Long, however, did not include French in the curriculum (Jeansonne, 1992: 266–267).

1997).¹⁵ This stigmatization was similar to the derogation imposed on Irish and other immigrant groups, for example in metropolitan areas across the United States in the mid-19th to early 20th-century. The difference is that in Louisiana the target was a population who had thrived in the area for centuries before the existence of the legal authority instigating the acculturation, the United States Federal Government. Parallels with other colonizing efforts around the world can easily be drawn.

Today such a legal prohibition of language might sound draconian, but the truth is that for all but a few *couillons*,¹⁶ this and other policies only encoded the attitude of inferiority that many Louisianans already felt. The anti-French mentality was internalized and reified by native Louisiana teachers, many of whom also spoke only French at home with their own families (Ancelet, 2008: 139–140; Blyth, in: Valdman (ed.), 1997: 31–32). Until the 1960s, speaking and especially reading and writing French was seen as useless in a school system based on the classic pragmatism of John Dewey. In other words, as was the case all over the United States, children were to be educated simply to get the best job at the highest possible wages and to otherwise serve the economic system. French was simply not a part of that equation. Brasseaux points out how “Louisiana’s French-speaking communities were almost entirely forgotten in state histories and historical textbooks” (Brasseaux, 2005: 132). Many Louisiana natives resented this attitude and instinctively rebelled against it, for example through Cajun and Zydeco music, as outlined in note 12 above. Jean Arceneaux voiced his *Schizophrénie linguistique* in a poem, this version from 1978:

On a pas réellement besoin de parler français quand même.
 C’est les États-Unis ici,
 Land of the Free.
 On restera toujours rien que des poor coonasses.
 I will not speak French on the school grounds.
 I will not speak French on the school grounds.

Coonass, non, non, ça gêne pas.
 C’est juste un petit nom.

15 “[Barry Jean Ancelet] has suggested that the word [...] derived from the belief that Cajuns frequently ate raccoons. He has also proposed that the term contains a negative racial connotation: namely, that Cajuns were ‘beneath’ or ‘under’ blacks (or coons, as blacks were often called by racists).” (Bernard, 1997).

16 “1. imbecile; fool. 2. crazy person. 3. funny person. (adj.) 1. foolish. 2. crazy. 3. funny.” (Le Fleur 2005).

Ça veut rien dire.
 C'est pour s'amuser, ça gêne pas.
 On aime ça, c'est cute.
 Ça nous fait pas fâchés.
 Ça nous fait rire,
 Mais quand on doit rire, c'est en quelle langue qu'on rit?
 Et pour pleurer, c'est en quelle langue qu'on pleure?
 Et pour crier?
 Et chanter?
 Et aimer?
 Et vivre?

ARCENEUX, in: Hamilton et al., 1987: 251–252¹⁷

Regarding the discovery of oil in Jennings in 1901, while this event happened earlier than the mandate against French in schools, the full influence on Louisiana was felt only decades later. David Barry (in: Breaux, 2011a) outlines two effects of the burgeoning oil business on French in Louisiana. First, there were gradually more and more *Américains* in the area who were speaking English in the local communities. Many of those working in management and engineering remained in the area to start families by finding a local wife, thus themselves were acculturated to Louisiana culture since their children used French at home with their mother. The second effect—or, rather, incentive—was economic. Suddenly the mostly rural population had an opportunity to earn large salaries by working in the oil fields. Many were ready to leave their traditional lifestyle of seafood, trapping, farming if they could afford the materials to build a comfortable house (with the help of their neighbors), purchase a car, or by the post-WWII period even take holidays outside of Louisiana (Ancelet, 2007: 1241; Brasseaux, 2008: 76).

It is vital to keep in mind that the first decades of the 20th century was also the period of Nativism, for example Theodore Roosevelt's "Hyphenated American" speech delivered at the 1915 national meeting of the Knights of Columbus—a national Catholic organization. Nevertheless, while the possi-

17 "We don't really need to speak French anyway./ It's the United States here./ Land of the Free./ We will always be nothing but poor coonasses. I will not speak French on the school grounds./ I will not speak French on the school grounds./ I will not speak French on the school grounds.// Coonass, no, no, it's okay./ It's just a nickname./ It does not mean anything./ It's for fun, don't bother./ We like it, it's cute./ It doesn't make us angry./ It makes us laugh/ But when you have to laugh, what language do you laugh in?/ And to cry, what language do we cry in?/ And to shout?/ And sing?/ And love?/ And live?"

bility of becoming a "non-hyphenated" American does not seem to have persuaded the Cajuns and Creoles in Louisiana to acculturate, with all the oil money now available, economic interests finally came to dominate (Ancelet, 2007: 1237–1239). The oil and gas industry finished the job of Americanization-modernization on rural Louisiana that the Civil War had started.

According to Professor Barry, however, the seminal impetus for the eventual revival of French language and culture was the travels of Louisiana soldiers during World War Two. A total of 25,000 French-speaking Louisianans served in Europe, North Africa and the Pacific theater. When the young men at one recruiting center were asked if they could speak a foreign language, the lowly private Bernie LeJeune responded that he could speak French. The recruiter assured him that bastardized Louisiana French "would be of no benefit to the US Army" (Kube, 1994: 345). Once abroad, however, it was soon clear that the Louisianans could communicate with French soldiers and French-speaking populations, which became extremely useful in several environments (Hamilton et al., 1987: 383). In Casablanca, for example, when the United States and French commanders were having a dispute, LeJeune overheard French being spoken. LeJeune inquired about the situation, and was immediately called in to aid in communication. One French soldier later approached LeJeune to ask "Where did you learn to speak English?" (Kube, 1994: 346). The language that the soldiers had been punished for speaking at home became an important asset abroad in the war.

When the Louisiana troops came home, they returned with a new respect for their native French language. They also sought "comfort in 'old-time' music," as the joyous accordion began to dominate over the (at times) plaintive fiddle (Bernard, 1996: 44–45). The veterans explained—in French—to their family and friends how their language skills were valuable in a world where not everybody speaks English (Kube, 1994: *passim*). The people were surprised that "*notre mauvais français*" would have any value outside their own family and community. Still, throughout the 1950s and much of the 1960s a nonchalant attitude regarding their own language and culture remained the norm for most of the population, thus "serious efforts would be necessary" if the language was to be preserved (Ancelet, 1988b: 345).

4 Renaissance

By the mid-1960s, as dissatisfaction with consumerist and militaristic values came to prevail in much of the Western world, Louisianans—especially the younger generations—began to recognize that something they already had

at home could represent an apposite response to the dominant culture. The enthusiastic reception of a performance by a group of Cajuns at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival in Rhode Island led the musicians as well as those back in Louisiana to realize that there was commercial potential in sharing their cultural artefacts outside of the region (Bernard, 1996: 75–77). Brasseaux marks the year of 1968 as “the beginning of the Cajun cultural renaissance” (Brasseaux, 2005: 132). Anything in French, but especially folklore and music, could satiate the need for authenticity in reaction to modern industrial society, and a multi-generational movement developed to revive various forms. This was also a direct “reaction to the Anglo-conformism of previous times” (Bernard, 2003: 87). All of the money to be made in the oil fields could not satisfy the yearning to nurture and celebrate the connection to nature that folk cultures represent.¹⁸

The evolution of the term “coonass” can be taken as a sign of the changes in self-perception of the Louisiana French-speaking population during this period. Once a derogative label othering Cajuns as outsiders to mainstream US society, by the 1960s the term was reclaimed as one of pride, including the use of the French language. The sociolinguistics concept of William Labov “covert prestige” can be applied here, i.e. “the positive social significance lies in the local culture of social relations.” (Green, in: Finegan and Rickford (ed.), 2004: 71) The rehabilitation of the term echoes the reclamation of formerly pejorative indicators by other marginalized identity groups based on sexual and gender orientation, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and race, etc. for example, “Wop,” “Mick,” more recently “nigga” and “queer” (Brontsema, 2004). By the 1970s, the self-label “coonass” began to be taken by certain Louisiana residents as a marker of defiance against a perceived center of American English, consumerist values, and the post-wwII homogenization of culture by mass media, all of which seek to eliminate difference. This was also the height of the era of white flight to the suburbs and the destruction of urban ethnic neighborhoods—with traditional Catholic and other religious communities especially decimated, including neighborhoods in New Orleans and Baton Rouge (Jones, 2004: 555–557, *passim*). As we will see below, later this period also saw the revival of the term “Creole.”

This is when the colorful figure of James “Jimmy” Domengeaux emerges. A lawyer and politician from the city of Lafayette, Domengeaux’s Wikipedia page

18 By the late 1960s similar “roots” reactions were occurring all over the United States, for example the revival of traditional acoustic blues instead of commercial RnB, folk music over rock and roll, the reemergence of bluegrass in reaction to mainstream pop country music (Cohen, 2002: 16–20; Escott, 2003: 56–57).

also calls him a “cultural activist,” and indeed for decades he battled to promulgate the French language culture of southwest Louisiana (Wikipedia, “James R. Domengeaux”). In 1968, the Governor of Louisiana formed CODOFIL, the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (*Conseil pour le développement du français en Louisiane*), appointing Domengeaux as its president. Until his death in 1988, Domengeaux dominated the organization, initially with an approach based on so-called “French French” from the metropolis. The obvious implication was that the French spoken in Louisiana was peripheral at best, embarrassing at worst. Teachers from France, Belgium and Quebec were recruited and brought to Louisiana to teach the French language. Louisiana teachers were sent abroad to “learn” French and pedagogy. A backlash soon came from parents and others that Louisiana French was not being preserved, but replaced. Calls for the localization of language instruction began (Ancelet, 2008: 138–144). This brought a standard response from CODOFIL spokespersons: “Why should we perpetuate illiteracy in the classroom by teaching Cajun French? It’s an oral language. It doesn’t have a grammar. It doesn’t have a written form.” (Ancelet, 1988b: 347)

While the president of CODOFIL Jimmy Domengeaux’s first language was French and he had fought for decades to preserve Louisiana French language and culture, he was also interested in bringing business and financial capital to the state. The old fields hit their peak of production in 1969, and by the 1980s tax revenue (and thousands of jobs) were being lost when production was curtailed (Austin et al., 2013: 37–65). The funding for CODOFIL was threatened. Budgetary sources for the programs were shifted from the Louisiana Department of Education to the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. Today it is telling that CODOFIL is officially administered under Culture, Recreation and Tourism, although “it acts as a partner to the Department of Education” (Wikipedia, “CODOFIL”).

The underlying intent of CODOFIL and Domengeaux was positive, but the initial solution of basing language education on variants of French from outside of Louisiana was potentially dangerous, threatening to substitute the periphery of the local languages with some center—be it Paris or Montreal. On the other hand, the public felt a sense of unity with other French-speaking peripheries, conveyed especially in a gestures of solidarity with some features of *Révolution tranquille* in French Canada. The most famous of these expressions was the song of defiance “Réveille” by Zachary Richard. As Richard performed this “Acadian national anthem” at the 1975 Louisiana Festival de Musique Acadienne “he and the members of his band waved a flag and held their fists in the air.” As Bernard (2003) describes, in the hymnal “Réveille,” Richard “transferred his militancy from protesting the Vietnam War to saving

Cajun French culture.” In the text, allusions to the *Grand Dérangement* of 200 years earlier can be mapped onto the contemporary situation of the domination of the United States / English center over the Louisiana / French periphery.

C'est les goddams
 qui viennent
 Voler les enfants.
 Réveille! Réveille!
 Hommes acadiens
 Pour sauver l'héritage.

in: BERNARD, 2003: 72¹⁹

The 1975 performance of “Réveille” and the response to it attracted the attention “of the rest of the French-speaking world, especially in Quebec and the Acadian Maritimes where politics and culture were deeply intertwined” (Ancelet, 2007: 1252–1253).²⁰

The local responses to CODOFIL’s philosophy of discounting the French language already spoken in Louisiana soon reached the tipping point, with protests by natives eventually bringing about a change of educational policy. A shift was made by CODOFIL towards teaching—or attempting to teach—authentic Louisiana French. But whose Louisiana French? Decisions had to be made regarding codification and standardization to turn an essentially oral language into a written one (Ancelet, 2007: 1241–1246). Towards the end of the 1970s, various efforts were undertaken to create study materials for students written in Cajun French, for example an ultimately unsuccessful textbook by James Donald Faulk in 1977 which featured a “pronunciation guide based on

19 “The goddamns (nickname for British soldiers who carried out the Great Expulsion in the 1750s)/ Are coming

To steal your children./ Wake up! Wake up!/ Acadian men/ To save our heritage.”

20 Domengeaux, on the other hand, was angered at this display of political and cultural rebellion, which might frighten commercial interests from investing in Louisiana and CODOFIL. Richard was banned from performing at all CODOFIL-related events for 20 years. Since CODOFIL was financially affiliated with nearly all of the French cultural and music festivals in Louisiana, this ban effectively prevented Richard from reaching a broader Louisiana audience, although the global resurgence of French-speaking cultures created a fair market for his music and writing around the world (Bernard, 2003: 72). In 1995 Richard made a triumphant return to the Festival de Musique Acadienne to perform “Réveille” again, this time in a commemorative atmosphere (Ancelet, 2007: 1252).

English phonetics to more immediately reach his students who could already read English.” Surveys and documentation of language variations were carried out across the state. Creating teaching materials remained a challenge, but it was still a possibility with a few “lexical, syntactic, and stylistic negotiations” (Ancelet, 2007: 1246). Finally effective textbooks and other educational materials in Cajun French were created and put into classroom use by the mid-1980s. Nevertheless, “the connection that could have been made to the living laboratories in the experience of virtually every student was lost” in the first 15 years or so of school education in French in Louisiana through CODOFIL (Ancelet, 2008: 141–144).

Artists and creative writers also contributed to the revival of French in Louisiana. What David Barry (1989) calls a “French literary renaissance” began to appear, especially with the poetry collection *Cris sur le Bayou* (1980) curated by Barry Jean Ancelet (who also contributes under the *nom de plume* Jean Arceneaux). The themes that emerge include age-old motifs such as exile and rebellion along with more recent tropes such as liminal linguistic and cultural identities. Here we may provide two representative examples.

Mo connais premier fois-à yé pelé mo
 créole
 Yé dit pas parler ça
 C'est di vilain moyèr

Yé rete tout quichoce, tout ça m'olé fait
 Fait pas ça comme créole c'est di vilain
 Yé pas donné mo choix
 Yé gain force, yé gain loi
 Yé ça massacrer tout
 pis déclarer toi fou
 Mo suivi yé chemin
 Mo té tracassée plein
 Mo pas trouvé moyen
 Vini bon 'méricain

DEBBIE CLIFTON, Voyageur, in: *Cris sur le Bayou*, 1980: 76²¹

21 “I know the first time I was called creole/ They told me not to talk like that/ It's ugly talk/ They took everything, everything I did/ Don't act like a creole, it's the ugly way/ They didn't give me a choice/ They had the force, they had the law/ They massacred everything/ Then called you crazy/ I followed their road/ I worried a lot/ But I didn't find a way/ To become a good American.” (Trans. by the poet).

Zachary Richard here takes a more plaintive approach.

Devenu étranger à ma propre langue,
Parler français, parler anglais,
caméléon de culture,
c'est quoi, quoi c'est ça
la culture.

...

Dans toutes les langues
Du monde, tout l'monde
Criant d'une seule voix
"J'su que j'su."
Fin de la tyrannie.
Délivrance à la paix.²²

Poème Pour La Défense De La Culture, in: *Cris sur le Bayou*, 1980: 45

Gradually the local language varieties—codified as Cajun French—became taught in schools. In the mid-1980s Domengeaux oversaw the institution of immersion education, through which all subjects are taught in French. In addition, from 1985–1993 CODOFIL and Louisiana Public Broadcasting produced the weekly television program *En Français*, a series “entirely in French [which] highlighted the culture of Francophone Louisiana” (LMDA, 2018). Though this multivalent approach remained successful for decades in terms of attracting national and international attention (including tourism), students gradually began to show less interest in learning the language in schools (Lindner, 2013: 461; Trépanier, 1991: 169–170).

Efforts continue to be made locally and with global partners to support French education in Louisiana. Formed by a plan established through the cooperation of the French government Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, CODOFIL as well as other partners, in 2022 a program was announced by which teachers from France can live in Louisiana for as long as two years “to teach the French language or their subject in French.” Thus far, 41 French teachers have been recruited under this program for positions in immersion schools (France Éducation internationale, 2022).

22 “Having become a stranger to my own language,/ To speak English, to speak French,/ A cultural chameleon,/ It's what, what is / Culture?/ In all the languages/ of the world, of all the world,/ Crying out as a single voice,/ “I am, I am.”/ The end of tyranny./ Deliverance and peace.” (Trans. by the poet).

5 The Commoditization of "Cajun" and a Challenge to It

Scholars have reacted in various ways to what Pascale Casanova (2004) has termed a globalized "World Republic of Letters." Taking a longer view, however, there has always been a tug-of-war of influence between putative centers and peripheries even before the ages of colonialism and globalization. And as Pierre Bourdieu (2002) has outlined, it is not only financial capital that is exchanged in sets of power relations, but also social, symbolic and cultural capital, for instance through the commoditization of artefacts. These types of negotiations represent a recurrent theme in several chapters of this book.

During the late 1980s it was Cajun culture's turn to be commodified, including "[n]iche marketing, the structuring of recreation around the modern work week, and the establishment of personal identity through the purchase of symbolically rich commodities" (Bankston, 2000; Henry, 2000: 377). Suddenly rural south Louisiana "Cajun Country" became a popular tourist destination as an addendum to a holiday in urban New Orleans (Ware, 2003: 160). Even today thousands of products and services (books, toys, restaurants, food items, sports teams, mass media products) that bear the name "Cajun" are ubiquitous throughout Louisiana. It can be safely said that a significant percentage of these artefacts have little to do with French Louisiana culture (Bankston, 2000; Henry, 2000: 385–387, 393–400). Corporate fast food chains such as McDonald's and Pizza Hut created "Cajun" or "Cajun Spice" versions of their products, along with national and international marketing campaigns promoting them. Hollywood movies with large budgets (*The Big Easy*, McBride 1986) as well as smaller, independent films (*Southern Comfort*, Hill 1981) featured Louisiana settings and characters, with locals often ridiculing the actors' attempts at regional accents. Cajuns were marketed as either Rousseau's pure noble savage, or as wild, violent killers of anyone who intruded into their territory. The reification of these stereotypes and the homogenization of the complex layers of Louisiana culture into a simplified image of "Cajun" frustrated some local activists and made a number of local entrepreneurs rich (Ancelet, 2007: 1242–1244).

But the Cajuns were not the only Louisianans to be dismayed by this commoditization (or what we might call "centering") of Cajun French culture. By the 1980s a challenge to Cajun French had emerged from a population identifying itself as "Creole" who began to more widely project their own French-based culture as distinctive and worth celebrating and preserving (Istre, 2018: 209). By the mid-20th century the term Creole had moved towards a cultural marker of racial differentiation in opposition to the category of "Cajun," with the latter "white" group marked as variously inferior (to the often "mixed" tra-

ditional landed class who had spoken a more refined “Créole” French based more closely on European models), or superior (to “Black” speakers of the hybrid of French, Native American, Spanish, and West African languages which became known as “Louisiana Creole”) (Brasseaux, 2005: 90; Valdman et al., 2010: xii).²³

CODOFIL now came under harsh criticism because of the lack of linguistic diversity in their language programs, in which the codified Cajun French was valorized to the exclusion of what was positioned as Creole French. In the same way as the first generation of Louisiana French educators had to deal with the issue of “whose French?” by standardizing the language to create new learning materials, those identifying as Creole began to create their own language education and outreach programs (Dawdy, 2000: 109; Valdman et al., 2010: xii). In fact, today it might be said that in terms of free open source online language materials and courses, more Louisiana Creole resources can be found than Cajun ones, for example the downloadable textbook *Ti Liv Kréyòl* (Guillory-Chatman et al., 2020), which is complete with lessons featuring sound recordings, grammar, and glossaries. On the other hand, in terms of mass consumer products, popular books, etc. the marker “Cajun” still dominates, especially in tourist areas.

Designed in 1987, the official Louisiana Creole flag represents some of the diverse influences claimed by the movement (Bondurand, 2001). The upper left section features a white *fleur de lis* on a blue field, representing Louisiana’s French heritage. West Africa is symbolized by the Mali Republic national flag in the lower left corner, the Senegal Republic national flag in the upper right. The Spanish colonial period is signified by the Tower of Castille on the lower right. In 1987 the non-profit C.R.E.O.L.E. Inc. (Cultural, Resourceful, Educational Opportunities, and Linguistic Enrichment Incorporated) was established with: “the mission [...] to develop and perpetuate the Creole language and culture as it exists in the State of Louisiana.” Their various activities include participation in “international festivals, exchange programs, and cultural and educational programs,” including language, music, art, dance, food, architecture, and literature. The focus is international: “to provide opportunities for a global sharing of multicultural experiences within the Creole community” (C.R.E.O.L.E. Inc., 2022).

In response to what is perceived as the socially constructed Cajun / Creole binary that has held fast for more than 100 years in Louisiana, in the 2010s

23 Similar migrations of the meaning of the term “creole” occurred in other Romance-language contexts in the 20th century, for example in the Portuguese-language context of Angola and Mozambique—see in this book Part 1, Chapter 11.

a new program began to emerge offering the narrative of Louisiana Créolité, “a movement against the idea of race as the deciding feature of a population” (Landry, 2005). Christophe Landry, “a 10th generation Louisiana Creole, linguistic activist, and historian” contextualizes the movement:

Placing Louisiana Créolité in this context, obsessing over the etymology of the word Creole itself has three effects. First, it impedes looking at Creole Louisiana for what it has been and currently is. Second, it is a way to continually disclaim a shared genealogical and cultural relationship with people of opposite “races.” Third, constantly discussing the etymology of Louisiana Créolité, permits the speaker to couch Cajunité (Cajunness) and Créolité in some “pure racial” idea. In the pure race world, inhabitants do not mix, borrow from one another, live among one another, or share common ancestors. Because Americans (and now Americanized Creoles) associate race-mixing with Creole, it becomes essential to stress the “original use” of Creole.

LANDRY, 2022

In the 2005 documentary *Spirit of a Culture: Cane River Creoles* (2005) novelist John Sarpy personalizes the point and puts it even more plainly:

I’m not black, I’m not white. I’m in between, I’m a Creole. When you start trying to say that or explain it, ninety-nine percent of America just does not buy it. This multiracial thing to me is at the heart of my concept of being Creole, all right? It was at the heart of the concept of my grandparents and great grandparents and great parents before them of being Creole. [Today] all you will see is white history and black history. There is nothing in between. [...] But where there is any element of a mixture of white and black, then that the mixture has to disappear into black. [...] It’s a man-made divider.

in: RODMAN, 2005

In response to this de facto segregation, Louisiana Créolité represents a celebration of difference through the recognition that dissimilarities are often only superficial—especially in a place with such a unique history and so many diverse cultural influences. The explicit intention of the Louisiana Créolité movement is to overcome racial, ethnic, language and other divisions toward their resolutions, not excluding spiritual elements. The mutual intelligibility of the assorted varieties of French-based language serves as a connection among the various populations across Louisiana as well as in other parts of

the United States—notably communities in Texas and California. The knowledge of French has also created numerous opportunities for cultural and educational exchanges not only with the centers of France and Quebec, but also in French-speaking areas around the world in Africa and Southeast Asia (C.R.E.O.L.E. Inc., 2022; Landry, 2022).

6 By Way of Conclusion: Is Louisiana a Part of the South?

The main points of this text can be summarized by tracing several periphery / center binaries²⁴ which can help describe cultural associations in Louisiana—then and now:

periphery / center

French / American English

“Louisiana French” / “French”

kréyòl la Lwizyàn (Creole) / français de la Louisiane (Cajun)

Besides these, other dichotomies may be explored, such as Louisiana / “the South.” As the binaries listed above flow into each other as determined in and by various situations, so does this one. In the 19th century, many Louisiana citizens—especially in regions where French still dominated—wanted no part of the US Civil War. When they were conscripted into Confederate (or to a lesser extent, Union) armies, large numbers of recruits deserted and fled to the swamps and the deep woods where they could not be found by Federal or Confederate officials, neither groups of whom knew the geography of the territory (Sacher, 2007: 152–163). The Louisiana state legal system is also totally unique in the United States, administrated as it is through Catholic-based parishes instead of counties. Further, since 1804 the state government has been based on the Napoleonic Code in which all laws are strictly codified as opposed to the other state governments and the US Federal government, which are based more or less on the English common law system of judicial precedents (Engber, 2005).

On the other hand, since the end of the 19th century Louisiana can certainly be called a part of “the South.” Many of its citizens possess many positive

24 Perhaps it would be useful here to remind readers that, while we may generalize regarding one side or another of the periphery / center binary throughout certain time periods and geographical regions, finally influences are more meaningfully traced within particular cultural artefacts or oeuvres.

stereotypical features such as warm hospitality, distinctive cuisine, entertaining folklore as well as respect for traditional cultures and values. Still, it cannot be denied that various governments, groups and individuals in Louisiana have perpetrated some of the worst discrimination and violence in the history of the United States, for example the 1939 brutal beating and maiming of the Black Creole Amédé Ardoin, a "forerunner of both zydeco and Cajun music" (Sandmel, 2022).

As shown above, many scholars from Louisiana and elsewhere have documented the slowly accumulating influence of the United States beginning in the 19th century, gaining force after the US Civil War, and finally becoming dominant at the beginning of the 20th century. Since this time the French-language cultural-complex of Louisiana has become the periphery in the region in which it was the hegemonic center, a periphery which can be defined in contrast to both "the South" as well as the United States as a whole. From about 1970 to the year 2000 or so a Renaissance of Louisiana French language and culture took place which had great effects within the state as well as nationally and internationally. In 1990 about 250,000 Louisianans indicated that "French was the main language spoken at home."²⁵ Still, today it seems like the younger population has less interest in preserving it (Mamone, 2021; Lindner: 2013, 461; Trépanier, 1991: 169–170). As of 2010, the number of native speakers of Louisiana French was reported at 115,183, with a per capita rate lower than that of native French speakers in California and New York (American Community Survey 2006–2010)

Despite decreasing overall numbers of French speakers in Louisiana, those who call themselves Cajun, Creole or simply "French" continue to feel strongly about their heritage, and are working to keep alive the traditions of food, music, literature, folklore and art in the various regions. Tourism to Acadiana, including sightseeing tours and excursions, remains a strong economic boon, and online communities of interest maintain close contacts around the world with other French speakers. Bachelor's and master's study programs in French and Francophone Studies are offered at several colleges, with doctoral programs available at three universities, including a unique interdisciplinary PhD program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (2020). As exemplified in the narrative of Louisiana Créolité, the emphasis is on commonalities, not differences. International cooperation with Francophone centers like Quebec and France as well as the Antilles and Haiti, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian Ocean,

25 "D'après le recensement de 1990, à peu près 250,000 louisianais ont répondu que le français était la langue principale parlée chez eux." (Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, 2022).

the Maghreb, and the Mediterranean has helped French speakers in Louisiana to continue and fortify their efforts *Lâche pas la patate*.

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The Creolization of Patrick Chamoiseau (Martinique) and René Depestre (Haiti): Language and Center-Periphery Relationship

Milena Fučíková

Historically heavily influenced by colonization and postcolonial developments, the contemporary French-language literature of Martinique and Haiti remains culturally and artistically divergent by the specificity of each island. The Martinican Patrick Chamoiseau (1953–) and the Haitian René Depestre (1926–) each in their own way make use of the “miraculous weapons of Creoleness” (“armes miraculeuses de la créolité”; Bernabé, 1992: 16–17). They also take on different attitudes towards the literary center. Although in *Les aventures de la Créolité* (*The Adventures of Creoleness*; 1994), René Depestre claims that the Martinican manifesto *Éloge de la Créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* (1993) has not influenced his work, Depestre’s novels, novellas and poems are clearly related to the aesthetic principles of this movement. The literary development of both writers in the last three decades has also been characterized by innovative conceptions of literary language and poetics. By comparing the theoretical concepts of the Creoleness movement with the aesthetics of literary language of René Depestre and Patrick Chamoiseau, certain immutable stylistic features of their literary works will be highlighted. The aim of our study is to present specifically the creolisms, compounds, and neologisms used by Chamoiseau (Wells, 1994; Marmarelli, 1996; Perret, 2001) and to compare them with the Haitian expressions of Depestre’s novels and poems. The similar and different elements in relation to the Creole language and the so-called “French norm” of the center will be explored in four novels by Patrick Chamoiseau *Chronique des sept misères* (1986; *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows*, 1999), *Solibo Magnifique* (1988; *Solibo Magnificent*, 1999), *Texaco* (1992; English translation 1997) and *L’Esclave vieil homme et le Molosse* (1997; *Slave Old Man*, 2018) along with selected poems and novels by René Depestre *Alléluia pour une femme-jardin* (1981; *Hallelujah for a Woman-Garden*, 1995) and *Hadriana dans tous mes rêves* (1988; *Hadriana in all my dreams*, 2017).

René Depestre has been writing in French (not Creole) since 1945, when he published his first collection of poems, *Étincelles* (*Sparks*). In his essay *Bonjour et Adieu à la Négritude* (1980; *Hello and Farewell to Negritude*), he clarifies his

own position vis-à-vis the Negritude movement and assures the reader that he has never relented in his admiration for Aimé Césaire. In the essay *Écrire la "parole de nuit," La nouvelle littérature antillaise* (1994; *Writing the "word of the night." On the New Caribbean Literature*), Depestre treats Creoleness primarily through the lens of what he calls "a free French-Haitian writer" ("*libre écrivain franco-haïtien*"; Ludwig, 1994: 180). Ultimately, however, Depestre admits a deep affinity with certain principles of the Creoleness literary movement, the leading representatives in Martinique of which are the linguist Jean Bernabé and the novelists Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant.

Patrick Chamoiseau is one of the most well-known writers in France as well as around the world, as evidenced by the translations of his works into English, German, Italian, Czech and other languages. He entered literature in the 1980s and gradually became a major figure in the Francophone novel, especially after the publication of *Chronique des sept misères* (1986) and *Solibo Magnifique* (1988). He won the prestigious Goncourt Prize for his third novel, *Texaco* (1992). The author's second novel, *Solibo Magnifique*, straddles the genres of Creole fairy tale, detective novel, and traditional vigil for the deceased. In *Éloge de la Créolité* (1993), Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant jointly explore Caribbean identity, asserting their position in the very first sentence: "Neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant 1993: 75).

Chamoiseau's first novels, *Chronique des sept misères* and *Solibo Magnifique*, were soon labelled by critics with the term "*créolisation*," pointing out how Creole words in the text remain untranslated into French or unclarified in the footnotes. While Creole does not disappear altogether in later novels such as *Un dimanche au cachot* (2007; *Sunday in a Dungeon*) or *L'Empreinte à Crusoe* (2012, *Crusoe's Footprint*), it does appear less. As Józef Kwaterko writes, "language [in Patrick Chamoiseau's work] is the subject of diverse, compulsive questions, it narrates itself, it experiments with itself" (Kwaterko, 2008: 11).¹

1 The Literary Language of Zombi-Depestre and Djobeur-Chamoiseau²

While both Chamoiseau and Depestre write in French, their language is ineludibly infiltrated by Creole. Both lead the Non-Caribbean French reader to

1 "[...] langue, objet d'interrogations multiples, obsédantes, devient elle-même le récit ou l'aveu d'une recherche."

2 These sobriquets have been applied to the two authors by Patrice Delbourg (1989).

an alien and often disconcerting novelistic poetics. Nevertheless, the linguistic endeavors of René Depestre, a Haitian poet, nomad and expatriate with strong roots in French literature and the Creole oral tradition, differ from the work of Patrick Chamoiseau in the very notion of Francophony. Depestre's commitment to Francophone literature is unreserved. Throughout his life he has felt at ease "under the sails of Francophony" ("dans les voilures de la francophonie"; Depestre, 1994: 57). For Chamoiseau, *francophonie littéraire*, with its universal values, amounts to an imitation that mimics the work of the Parisian novelists. The perceptible difference between his stance and that of Depestre can be explicated by the specific situations of Martinique and Haiti. From its beginnings, Martinican literature has been subjected to a strong French centrality—linguistic and literary—from which it has struggled to break free. In the 20th century, this tendency is confirmed by the evolution from a "littérature d'imitation" (Delas, 1999) to the Négritude movement in the Parisian center with its avant-garde poets, followed by Frantz Fanon's more radical theories. This dynamic continues in Martinique and neighboring islands with conceptions of plurality and diversity, such as Édouard Glissant's *antillanité* (Caribbeanity), the Creoleness advocated by Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, and so-called New Antillean literature (Ludwig, 1994: 14), through which Gisèle Pineau, Ernest Pépin and others focus on the aesthetic and philosophical interrogation of French and Creole languages. Michel Beniamino (1999) describes several literary generations and schools evolving from imitation towards greater authenticity.

The situation in Haiti is different, however, as the Creole language and orality (*oralité* or *oraliture*; Laroche, 1991) are not in danger of disappearing (Ludwig, 1994: 15), unlike in Martinique. In *Éloge de la Creolité*, the three Martinican co-authors indicate—with traces of an inferiority complex—their peripheral situation as dominated by Paris (see above chapter Part 1, Chapter 3). Chamoiseau's essay *Écrire en pays dominé* (1997; *Writing in a Dominated Country*) devotes hundreds of pages to the complex relationship between the center ("centre-métropole") and the periphery, finally distilling the issue down to one crucial question: "How can you write when your imagination is drawing from morning to night on images, ideas, values not your own?" (Chamoiseau, 1997b: 17)³

In his search for an authentic aesthetics of the novel and poetic images, Patrick Chamoiseau works with a range of linguistic elements that move beyond notions of a particular "linguistic norm," while Chamoiseau's imagery is

3 "Comment écrire alors que ton imaginaire s'abreuve, du matin jusqu'aux rêves, à des images, des pensées, des valeurs qui ne sont pas les tiennes?"

Creole. Chamoiseau comments on *Lettre aux traducteurs* (*Letter to the Translators*): “In using French, I do not forget the Creole language, the Creole imaginary, the Creole conception of the world. It is important that the text preserves this Creole world [...]” (Chamoiseau, 1993: 1)⁴ French readers of Chamoiseau will find certain expressions strange or even nonsensical if they do not have a dictionary of *Créole Martiniquais* at hand: “tambouyés” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 46); “Krik-Krak” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 47); “Ti-sapoti” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 61); “Agiferrant” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 75).

In Chamoiseau’s language, many calques of Creole words can be found as well as expressions that hold a different meaning in French than they do in Creole. For example, *vieux* (*old* in French) means *bad, ugly* in Creole. Potential misunderstandings such as these may lead to confusion: “He was called Fafa, or Old-Syrup (“Vieux-sirop”), no one really knew why.” (Chamoiseau, 2018: 70)⁵ The reader accustomed to a more refined norm of French style may become disconcerted by such semantic deviations.

In *Chronique des sept misères*, Chamoiseau employs metaphorical similes, drawing analogies from the realm of Martinican nature, evoking animals, flowers, trees, fruit: “Sirop doddled around in circles like a begraddled hummingbird” (Chamoiseau, 1999a: 120–121); “Pipi and the Jupiter’s boys [...] happy as giddy hummingbirds” (Chamoiseau, 1999a: 121); “Then I would sink into a torpor like a crab” (Chamoiseau, 1999a: 119); “the *dorlis* went around in circles, as doleful as a crab without a hole” (Chamoiseau, 1999a: 21).⁶ The sentences flow with the exotic vocabulary of Creole fairy tales, describing the lost world of the Caribbean Indians and especially the flora and fauna of Martinique. Such passages should certainly be translated in footnotes or explained in a glossary at the end of the book. Interestingly, however, Chamoiseau argues that such “transparency solves nothing” (“la transparence n’apporte rien”; Chamoiseau, 1993: 1).

In the author’s literary language, we find synthetic verbal structures of Creole unusual for French (and English): “The Master, the horse, the mastiff: an accord old as eternity seemed to unite them. To mix-combine them.” (Chamoi-

4 “Dans l’usage du français, j’essaie ne pas oublier ma langue créole, mon imaginaire créole, ma conception créole du monde. Il est important que cette dimension créole du texte demeure [...]”

5 “On l’appelait *Fafa*, ou *Vieux-sirop*, sans trop savoir pourquoi.” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 106).

6 “Sirop tournoyait comme un colibri mouillé.” (Chamoiseau, 1986, 170); “Pipi a les garçons Jupiter [...] heureux comme des colibris fous.” (Chamoiseau, 1986, 183); “Je m’enfonçais alors comme un crabe dans la torpeur [...]” (Chamoiseau, 1986: 167); “[...] le *dorlis* malheureux comme un crabe sans trou.” (Chamoiseau, 1986: 34).

seau, 2018: 32)⁷ The expression “*mélan-combiner*” is a serial verb composed of two forms: a main verb and a modulating verb that brings one or more nuances of meaning. Chamoiseau may use these forms in the infinitive or inflected in tenses or aspect (although in Creole the verb is inflexible). Further, he often creates the illusion of Creole by using two French verbs to create one Creole serial verb: “I even thought I went *tourner-virer*, whirly-turning, which worsened my shit-fit.” (Chamoiseau, 2018: 73); “*Oala*, immediately the monster *s’envoya-monter*, shot-itself-up” (Chamoiseau, 2018: 73).⁸ Perhaps following Chamoiseau’s approach, the translator of the 2018 version of *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows* maintains the original French serial verb formulations in the English text.

The dialogue between French and Creole is particularly intense in cases when typical Creole features are highlighted,⁹ for example, the fusion of adverbs, particles or articles with nouns, e.g. “A dangerous door *la-porte*.” (Chamoiseau, 2018, 77)¹⁰ Structures of grammatical reflexivity are also featured, for example as used to express corporeality: “It’s that one who’s escaped his body, *oui*.” (Chamoiseau, 2018: 22)¹¹

Chamoiseau adopts Creole orality in a variety of forms, themes and strategies, bringing it directly into the structure of the French language. He borrows from Creole fairy tales the manner of speech, situational humor, the Creole “krik-krak” formulation as well as forms of direct address such “ladies and gentlemen of the group” and “Dear listeners”/ “messieurs et dames de la compagnie,” as if readers were, for example, being spoken to in a folkloric oral performance. The beginning of *Solibo Magnifique* begins with a subtly codified introduction to a typical Creole tale. The reader quickly lands within a very strange imaginary and realistic space-time: “During a Carnival evening in Fort-de-France between Fat Sunday and Ash Wednesday, the storyteller Solibo Magnificent died, throat snickt by the word, exclaiming: *Patat’sa!* ... That potato! ... His audience, believing they had heard the standard invitation for vocal response, saw it their duty to reply: *Patat’si!* This potato ...” (Chamoiseau, 1998: 8)¹²

7 “Le Maître, le cheval, le molosse: un accord vieux d’une éternité semblait les associer. Les mélan-combiner.” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 43).

8 “Je crus même tourner-virer en rond.” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 114); “[...] le monstre s’envoya-monter.” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 110).

9 The linguistic studies of Marie Christine Hazaël-Massieux may serve as a valuable source in this respect (Hazaël-Massieux, 1988, 1998, 2003, 2020).

10 “Une dangereuse la-porte.” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 116).

11 “C’est un tel qui a échappé son corps, oui.” (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 28).

12 “Au cours d’une soirée de carnaval à Fort-de-France, entre dimanche Gras et mercredi des

In contrast to the linguistically playful Chamoiseau, René Depestre writes his works in clear, smooth French, an aesthetic choice made clear from the very beginning of *Hadriana dans tous mes rêves* (1988). Nevertheless, many words from Haitian Creole emerge in his style. A “Glossary of Haitian Terms (Creole Language)” in which the meanings of selected expressions and certain cultural events are clarified in slightly more than three pages can be found at the end of the novel. Religious phenomena are introduced in the glossary: “Agoué-Taroyo: god of voodoo, lord of the sea and the islands of the sea,” as well as typically Haitian words: “Clairin: white rum without flavour.” The notes sometimes offer a literal translation of the Creole words into French: “Derrière-caye: behind (literally behind the house)” (Depestre, 1988: 193, 194).¹³ Depestre positions himself as a careful interlocutor of Haitian Creole. As an experienced interpreter of a periphery in terms of the central French language, Depestre must acknowledge that each translation is a new dialogue between two different cultural contexts, two languages, the intensity of which can be conflicting and dramatic by virtue of their distance from each other. René Depestre always presents the elements of Haitian culture such as folklore, dance, music, theater, zombification, and witchcraft in a logical and orderly way.

For the uninitiated European reader, the terms associated with voodoo ceremonies, sorcery and zombification practices in *Hadriana dans tous mes rêves* require detailed translations and explanations. Depestre faced two solutions: either to adapt his culture to French readers, or, conversely, to emphasize anchoring in the original aesthetics of the peripheral language, and thus encourage Western readers to appreciate potentially uncomfortable exotic poetics. Depestre chose several unique and original strategies to mediate the Creole world for French readers. In the opening of *Hadriana dans tous mes rêves*, the narrator presents the image of a zombie behind the wheel of a magnificent automobile “in the middle of the afternoon” (Depestre, 2017: 15) as it drives through the town of Jacmel. The zombie at the wheel is none other than the narrator’s recently deceased aunt, who is supposed to be lying in the morgue at this moment. The Creole characters comment on her appearance laconically: “Zombie car on the loose!” (Depestre, 2017: 19).¹⁴ The Creoles’ mundane

Cendres, le conteur Solibo Magnifique mourut d’une égorgette de la parole, en s’écriant: Patat’ sa! ... Son auditoire n’y voyant qu’un appel au vocal crut devoir répondre: Patat’si! ...” (Chamoiseau, 1988: 25).

13 “Agoué-Taroyo: dieu du vaudou, maître de la mer et de ses îles”; “Clairin: rhum blanc non parfumé”; “Derrière-caye: arrière-train (littéralement: derrière la maison)” (Depestre, 1988: 193, 194).

14 “aux heures les plus torrides de l’après-midi”; “autozombie en liberté” (Depestre, 1988: 17, 22).

reaction to this strange apparition is followed by a number of surprising Creole expressions that seep into the language of the narrative. New and original compounds appear: “woman-garden” (“femme-jardin”; Depestre, 1988: 26; 2017: 22). The lexical richness of the Creole language stimulates the imagination of the European reader, who may perceive such an irrational cultural reality in terms of what Depestre calls “quotidian Surrealism” (“surréalisme quotidien”; Depestre, 1988: 26; 2017: 10). After the magical passage through the town of Jacmel, the reader accepts the figure of the sorcerer and consequently the character of a cursed child, who has been turned into a butterfly and becomes the perpetrator of numerous rapes of young girls: “The infamous sorcerer Okil Okilon had adopted the infant. On the day of his twelfth birthday, he had been precociously initiated into the Vlanbindingues, a secret society in southwestern Haiti.” (Depestre, 2017: 22)¹⁵

Unlike what we have seen in Chamoiseau, René Depestre never creolizes the grammatical and syntactical structures of the French language. Yet despite Depestre’s apparent adaptability to the French norm, it can be argued that his surrealist fictions bear unquestionable traits of creolisms, exhibiting authenticity and originality, two of the basic principles of *Éloge de la Créolité* as a kind of intelligent reaction to the lack of autonomy and imitation so characteristic of peripheral literature: “[The cultural dependence] determined a writing for the Other, a borrowed writing, steeped in French values, or at least unrelated to this land, and which, in spite of a few positive aspects, did nothing else but maintain in our minds the domination of an elsewhere.” (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 76) While Chamoiseau’s style implies a certain interpretive challenge and requires an active approach in the search for references, René Depestre’s strength is his attempt to translate Haitian culture into French and to captivate the French reader with surreal shifts of supernatural scenes, often with a humorous effect. Depestre’s language is clearly marked by the spirit of Creole along with a desire to enrich dry literary French with more vivid colors. Chamoiseau’s language contains much more than a mere trace of Creole, as Milan Kundera once aptly remarked: “His language is French, albeit transformed (no one speaks this way in Martinique), not only Creolized, but Chamoiseauized.” (Kundera, 2009: 113)¹⁶

15 “Le fameux sorcier Okil Okilon avait adopté l’enfant. Le jour de ses douze ans, il l’avait précocement initié à la société secrète des Vlanbindingues du Sud-Ouest haïtien.” (Depestre, 1988: 26).

16 “Sa langue [de Chamoiseau], c’est le français, bien que transformé; non pas créolisé (aucun Martiniquais ne parle comme ça) mais chamoisé.”

2 Fundamental Orality

René Depestre and Patrick Chamoiseau are able to subtly confront the spoken word with the written language. The Haitian writer imitates the speech of a live narrator by inserting onomatopoeic words, vocalizations, unfinished sentences and repetition:

[...] Laudrun began to “interpret” fairy tales. No sooner had he settled down on the terrace than he said:

“Cric ...”

“Crac,” Aunt Isa and I replied in chorus.

“Once upon a time,” said Laudrun, “there was a young girl who fell in love with a fish in the river.”

DEPESTRE 1981: 22¹⁷

Depestre plays with verbal improvisation and exaggerates. He repeats words and rhythmic units, working with the rhythm of prose, as he also does in his poetry. Some of his sentences are quite short, speeding up the pace and imitating the sound of the narrators of Haitian fairy tales and novel characters. We also find modes of spoken discourse, traditional genres such as the tale of the fish *Zin and the girl Lovena* (Depestre, 1988: 22–25), and the song *Zin Thézín, my crazy fish Zin* (*Zin Thézín mon poisson fou Zin*; Depestre, 1988: 24). Similarly, the entire sixth chapter of *Hadriana dans tous mes rêves* can be seen as a literary imitation by Hadriana of spoken narrative.

Ralph Ludwig emphasizes the unique life experience of René Depestre, who lived for a long time in exile, rooted in French literature on the one hand and in the rich oral Haitian literature (*oraliture*) on the other. Regarding the collection of Depestre’s short stories and essays *Écrire la “parole de nuit.” La nouvelle littérature antillaise* (1994), Ludwig describes the strategy Depestre creates to overcome this permanent conflict between the two forces as an attempt at aesthetic synthesis:

Although the relationship between French writing and Creole oral expression may appear less conflicted to the Haitian writer than to the Mar-

17 “[...] Laudrun se mettait à “tirer” des contes. À peine installé sur la véranda, il dit:

– Cric ...

– Crac, répondirent en chœur tante Isa et moi.

Il était une fois, dit Laudrun, une jeune fille qui était tombée amoureuse d’un poisson de rivière.”

tinican writer, for example, we nevertheless find here the same attempt to synthesize two cultures.

LUDWIG, 1994: 18¹⁸

Patrick Chamoiseau also confronts the spoken and written word, orality and literacy. *Solibo Magnifique* offers a number of examples of written forms: the “Incident Report” (Chamoiseau 1998: 3–6); signed by police officer E. Pilon; the “List of Witnesses” (Chamoiseau 1998: 11–13), extracted from the preliminary investigation, etc. A powerful symbol of humanity amidst the absurdities of police administration are Solibo’s words at the end of the novel, his Rabelaisian address to the readers resonating with the transcription of the authentic voice of the last Creole storyteller:

Ladies and gentlemen if I say good evening, it’s because it isn’t day and if I don’t say good night it’s the cause of which the night will be white tonight like a scrawny pig on his bad day at the market and even whiter than a sunless béké under his take-a-stroll umbrella in the middle of a cane field
é krii? ... é krraa!

CHAMOISEAU, 1998: 164¹⁹

The reconstruction of the narrator’s “singing” within the novel is an imitation of the conflict the author is contemplating during the writing process: the struggle between the author writing the novel and the narrator telling stories to listeners. Patrick Chamoiseau thus pays homage to oral literature and the last narrators, the real “rebels: warriors” (“des rebelles: des Guerriers”; Chamoiseau 2021: 92) using the dominant written culture.

3 The Meaning of the Novel: Updating True Memory

In *Éloge de la Créolité / In Praise of Creoleness*, Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant agree that Creole not only implies an intimate and nuanced relationship

18 “Même si la relation entre scripturalité française et oralité créole peut paraître moins conflictuelle à un auteur haïtien qu’à un auteur martiniquais par exemple, on retrouve dans la littérature haïtienne ce même souci de synthèse entre les deux cultures.”

19 “Messieurs et dames si je dis bonsoir c’est parce qu’il ne fait pas jour et si je dis pas bonne nuit c’est auquel-que la nuit sera blanche ce soir comme un cochon-planche dans son mauvais samedi et plus blanche même qu’un béké sans soleil sous son parapluie de promenade au mitan d’une pièce-cannes *é krii? é kraa!*” (Chamoiseau, 1988: 233).

to the roots of oral tradition, but also relates to existential themes concerning the search for true memory. The assertion that “[o]ur history (or more precisely our histories) is shipwrecked in colonial history” (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1993: 98) emphasizes collective memory and legend through a closeness to ancient myth. Similarly, the French indefinite pronoun “*on*,” potentially linking all pronouns from *I* and *you* to the collective *we*, should surprise readers in Rene Depestre’s prose, even if the Haitian novelist often in other ways resorts to the personal, libertine, individualized tone of the Western European tradition. In *Hadriana*, the pronoun *on/we* appears repeatedly:

At the very bottom of the steep coast, after a corkscrew turn, the warehouses on the docks came into sight. We passed in front of the ochre-colored buildings of the customhouse and the tax offices. We reached a paved platform where on weekdays hundreds of women sang as they sorted the coffee for the Radsen brothers’ export business.

DEPESTRE, 2017: 18²⁰

The community of the town of Jacmel is portrayed through long lists of people and animals: “Stacked chaotically in the shade of the verandas, families, dogs, cats, and chickens all killed time Haitian-style on this October Sunday.” (Depestre, 2017: 19)²¹ Even the parrot, the symbol of language, undergoes a strange experience:

General Télébec, the hundred-year-old parrot that lived in the prefecture, constantly on alert for the latest gossip, fell right off his perch and then took off, screaming: “Help, help—it’s the end of the world!”

DEPESTRE, 2017: 15²²

Through the Creole orality in his work, Depestre also engages with colonial history as compared to Creole history, which “happened with no witnesses, or

20 “Au bas de la côte de plus en plus raide, après un tournant en tire-bouchon, on arriva en vue des entrepôts du port. On passa devant les bâtiments ocrés de la douane et des contributions. On atteignit la plate-forme macadamisée où les jours ouvrables une centaine de femmes triaient en chantant le café pour la maison d’exportation des frères Radsen.” (Depestre, 1988: 20).

21 “Familles, chiens, chats, volailles, pêle-mêle entassés à l’ombre des galeries, tuaient à la haïtienne le temps du dimanche d’octobre.” (Depestre, 1988: 21).

22 “Le Général Télébec, le perroquet centenaire de la préfecture, constamment à l’affût des tripotages du bourg, tomba de son perchoir. Il prit la fuite en hurlant:—La fin du monde! Au secours!” (Depestre 1988: 19).

rather with no testimonies [...]” (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, 1989: 98). This dichotomy is the central theme of his poems *Papa-Legba* and *Cap'tain Zombi*, in which the lyric self-recollects the memory of Africans deported to the Caribbean islands during the colonization of the 17th and 18th centuries:

I know where our millions of corpses are buried
 I am accountable for their bones
 I am accountable for their blood [...]
 Listen, White World,
 The salvos of our dead
 Listen to my zombie voice

CORZANI, HOFFMANN, PICCIONE/DEPESTRE, 1998: 72²³

A number of passages in *Hadriana* may be used to illustrate the ideas in the manifesto *Éloge de la Créolité/ In Praise of Creoleness*, although Depestre considers himself, rather, a follower of Négritude, Surrealism and a staunch admirer of Aimé Césaire, as indicated above. In the fifth chapter of the novel, the character of the white teenager Hadriana Siloé, transformed into a zombie by an evil sorcerer on the day she is to be wed, experiences the history of colonization as her own immediate existential experience. Depestre symbolically yet humorously links Hadriana's existential travails to the violence of the slave system:

The fate of the zombie might be compared to that of the colonial plantation slave of old Saint-Domingue. Its destiny corresponds, on the mystical plane, to that of the Africans deported to the Americas to replace the decimated Indian labor force in the colony's fields, mines, and factories. It would make sense, for the purposes of this study, to determine whether the idea of the zombie is in fact one of the traps of colonial history—something Haitians might have internalized and integrated into their own worldview. It could be a symbol of an imaginary world borne of tobacco, coffee, sugar, cotton, cacao, or spices—one of the many symbols of the ontological shipwreck of man on the American plantations, a perfect fit in the gallery of the wretched of the earth that the writings of Sartre, Memmi, Fanon, and Simone de Beauvoir, among others, have collaged

23 “Je sais où sont enterrés/ Nos millions de cadavres/ Je suis comptable de leurs os/ Je suis comptable de leur sang [...]/ Écoutez monde blanc/ Les salves de nos morts/ Écoutez ma voix de zombi”.

together from various portraits of the colonized (Black, Arab, Yellow)—not to mention women and Jews.

DEPESTRE 2017: 116²⁴

References to Sartre, Memmi, Fanon and de Beauvoir—all notable writers and opponents of French colonialism—illustrate Depestre's need for both systematic reflection on the history of the French colonialism and the search for memory in his prose and poetry.

Chamoiseau hints at the theme of captivity in the introduction to his novel *L'Esclave vieil homme et le Molosse (Slave Old Man)*: "In slavery times in the sugar isles, once there was an old Black man, a *vieux-nègre*, without misbehaves or *gros-saut* orneriness or showy ways. He was a lover of silence, taster of solitude." (Chamoiseau, 2018: 16)²⁵ The time of the beginning is always the time of slavery, which occurred without writing and without witnesses. Chamoiseau notes that the time of the outset of Creole civilization carries no romantic connotations: "Stories of slavery do not interest us much. Literature rarely holds forth on this subject." (Chamoiseau, 2018: 16)²⁶

4 The Rhythmic Narrator's Words

In Chamoiseau's novels, the figure of the Creole narrator is a mythic figure: it precedes the instance of the fictional narrator, with the latter deriving his legitimacy from the former. For the authors of the Creoleness movement, every novel narrative is built around an enigmatic (male) narrator who speaks to the reader

24 "Le destin de zombie serait comparable à celui de l'esclave des plantations coloniales de la Saint-Domingue d'autrefois. Son sort correspondrait, à l'échelle mythique, à celui des Africains déportés aux Amériques pour remplacer les champs, les mines et les ateliers, la main-d'œuvre indienne décimée. Il y aurait lieu, dans cette étude, de vérifier si la notion de zombie est un des pièges de l'histoire coloniale. Les Haïtiens l'auraient profondément intériorisée et intégrée à des usages domestiques. Ce pourrait être un signe de l'imaginaire du tabac, du café, du sucre, du coton, du cacao, des épices; l'une des figures du naufrage ontologique de l'homme dans les plantations américaines, à placer dans la galerie des damnés de la terre que les travaux de Sartre, Memmi, Fanon, Simone de Beauvoir, entre autres, ont constitué avec les portraits du Colonisé (Noir, Arabe, Jaune), sans oublier la Femme et le Juif." (Depestre 1988: 128).

25 "Du temps de l'esclavage dans les isles-à-sucre, il y eut un vieux-nègre sans histoires ni gros-saut, ni manières à spectacle. Il était amateur de silence, goûteur de solitude." (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 17).

26 "Les histoires de l'esclavage ne nous passionnent guère. Peu de littérature se tient à ce propos." (Chamoiseau, 1997a: 17).

in an urgent and intimate voice. Certain aspects of Depestre's style show that, as a narrator of Creole stories, his work also converges with that of Chamoiseau and Confiant.

In the fairy-tale novel *Hadriana dans tous mes rêves*, the first narrator, one who uses the Ich-form is Patrick, a boy madly in love with the enchanting French girl Hadriana who lives in Jacmel. These two main characters exchange the narration with each other, with their individual alternating narratives and statements intertwining with those of the other character-narrators, forming a plural form, as discussed above. This narrative structuring lends credence to the ideas of the followers of Martinican Creoleness, who stress their deep admiration for the Creole folk narrators.

A particular vision of narrative and language can be found in Chamoiseau, one influenced by Césaire, Senghor and Damas, a "Négritude-language" (*"langue-négritude"*; Chamoiseau, 1997b: 88) built on alternating slow and fast rhythms, pauses and transitions that carry a musical richness and a wealth of vocabulary and improvisation, all of which invoke the heritage of the Creole storyteller. In the novel *Texaco* (1992), the rhythmization is striking: the Creole interjections "flap" and "floup" (translated as "blip-blip") suggest speed or acceleration: "Blip-blip, made no difference whether slaves were of the fields or of the Big Hutch, [...] all were soon saddled with a task." (Chamoiseau, 1997c: 55)²⁷ The linguistic aspects of the novel thus more closely imitates the sonority of Creole: "They whispered to each other kssu kssu kssu." (Chamoiseau, 1997c: 34)²⁸ Musical combinations of words for the pleasure of rhythm is a prominent feature of Chamoiseau's work, in which sentences are often built using refrain-like repetition: "Furrow, furrow, furrow in a straight line." (Chamoiseau, 1997c: 129)²⁹ Similarly, a rhythmic sentence containing an assonance using the /i/ phoneme joins through sound the internal rhyme of the words, i.e. "*hi hi, on le vit errer de ravines en ravines*" ("When his despair was calmed [for despair from love dies faster than a little coal oven, heh, heh], he was seen wandering from ravine to ravine, lifting each stone, diving into each waterfall looking for his Ninon.") (Chamoiseau, 1997c: 146)³⁰ The musical approach of choosing individual rhythmic, sonorous words as well as joining sounds, words, entire sentences and paragraphs together in this way is evident throughout Patrick Chamoiseau's novels and essays.

27 "Flap-flap, chaque nègre se retrouva dessous une tâche, et sans distinguer s'il était des champs ou de la Grande-case [...]." (Chamoiseau, 1992: 75).

28 "Ils se le chuchotaient kssu kssu." (Chamoiseau, 1992: 48).

29 "Sillonne, sillonne, sillonne l'horizontale." (Chamoiseau, 1992: 169).

30 "[...] car désespoir d'amour meurt plus vite qu'un ti four de charbon, *hi hi, on le vit errer de ravines en ravines.*" (Chamoiseau, 1992: 190).

5 Conclusion

In *Les aventures de la Créolité. Lettre à Ralph Ludwig* (Ludwig, 1994: 159–170), René Depestre in his own distinctive way can be seen to subscribe to aspects of all three well-known Martinican manifestos: Aimé Césaire's *Poésie et connaissance* (1945), Édouard Glissant's *Le discours antillais* (1981), and *Éloge de la Créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* by Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant. Similar to Martinique writers, for Depestre the cultural references and realistic details of Haitian realities are part of his epic world, creating a subversive imaginary even as he avoids mixing Creole with French. As his poems *Papa-Legba* and *Cap'tain Zombi* show, Depestre shares a similar attitude with the Martinican defenders of Creoleness regarding the issue of absence of history and the historical uprooting of slaves imported to Caribbean plantations. Depestre identifies himself with legendary figures of Haiti's past in order to remind the Haitian people of their own truth which has been preserved in oral literature, a truth which remains linked to myth and legend. Nevertheless, Depestre himself classifies his work as more akin to Surrealism and Magical Realism, considering Alexis and the Cuban Alejo Carpentier to be his contemporaries. Depestre does not seem attracted, however, by the elaborate creolization of the French language, an interest which is clearly shown in Patrick Chamoiseau's narrative strategies. Depestre's creolization of French, rather, is reflected in the sound, rhythmic, morphological, syntactic and semantic structures of the French language as well as in his mode of narration derived from oral tradition.

In a way, the status of the literatures and cultures to which Depestre and Chamoiseau adhere is reflected in the different status of their work. As the autonomy of Haitian culture and the increasingly pronounced bilingualism separates French and Creole literature into parallel and mutually influencing linguistic streams, Haitian writers are free to move within one or the other. The adherents of Martinique's Creoleness are faced with a diglot situation in which the dominant French language pushes Creole orality into the margins, possibly condemning it to gradual extinction. Chamoiseau's approach is a way of asserting the cultural heritage of his territory within the French language and within French literature by valorizing peripherality vis-à-vis the center through a specific aesthetic code. René Depestre feels no need to do this, as he performs as an exiled Haitian intellectual selectively, opting for the affirmative cultural references of Surrealism and Négritude along with Creoleness. While Chamoiseau is a French writer rethinking the position of the periphery, Depestre is a Haitian author grounded in his own literature and tradition who situates his works within the broader framework of Francophony.

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Abdelkébir Khatibi: The Labyrinth of Language and Emancipation

Míla Janišová

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari define “minor literature” as literature “which a minority constructs within a major language,” taking as a defining feature “language [as] affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986 (1975): 16).¹ Although their book focuses on Franz Kafka and the minority literature they examine is primarily German-language literature produced in the Czech cultural milieu, this definition can also be applied to the work of authors emerging from a colonial context which is produced in the language of the former colonizer.

Language as an instrument of thought clearly participates in the constitution of national and ethnic identity. Seen through the prism of postcolonial studies, the language of the colonizer imposed on the colonized peoples is the alienating tool par excellence. Since it is disseminated and maintained through administrative and educational institutions, language wields both de facto and symbolic power over the literature produced in colonized areas, often even long after the dominated peoples have gained independence. At the same time, however, the language of the former colonizer can offer a path of emancipation and liberation from local traditions felt as binding.

The choice of a language of creation is often a painful dilemma for an author from a previously colonized area. He is straddling at least two cultures, two geopolitical contexts, and is therefore forced to constantly balance between the two poles and seek equilibrium. The North African region finds itself in a unique situation since in addition to European languages it has another written language with a tradition of more than a thousand years—Arabic. Moreover, Arabic became the official language in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia immediately after independence and was for years the only language used in all official communications.

¹ *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* is the title of the first English translation of Deleuze and Guattari’s book. The work was translated by Dana Polan and published in 1986 by the University of Minnesota Press.

Still, Maghrebi authors continue to express themselves in French despite the enforced and legally mandated Arabization. To illustrate, between 1988 and 2003, as many as two-thirds of active writers in Algeria were writing in French (Harchi, 2020). Nevertheless, one does not become a author simply by the relationship one maintains with a language or by the way one masters it. Other motivations and impulses enter into the act of writing and choosing it as a profession. The author carries within deeply stored traces of the cultural systems he has encountered since birth. The Maghrebian writer is surrounded from childhood by several languages and cultural contexts, representing vast networks of references. Using the example of the Moroccan author Abdelkébir Khatibi and his first prose text, *La Mémoire tatouée* (1971; *Tattooed Memory*, 2016), we will here sketch out how a Maghrebian writing in the language of a former colonizer copes with a bilingual or trilingual situation, i.e. how the processes of hybridization of language and cultures (here Arabic and Berber) are inscribed in the French in which Khatibi writes.

Since the first works were produced in the late 1940s, Moroccan Francophone literature² has coped with the weight of history, especially that of the period of colonialism. The first generations of authors to pass through the colonial education system did not have sufficient knowledge of literary Arabic, therefore wrote their works in French. Immediately after independence in 1956, Morocco introduced a policy of Arabization, and from 1961 the government attempted to Arabize the education system. Literary production became divided, with some authors abandoning French altogether and embracing the long and rich tradition of Arabic literature. The demand for works in Arabic was also heard from official quarters, thus the question of the choice of language acquired ideological and political connotations. The first issue of the art review *Souffles* was published in 1966, with Abdelkébir Khatibi one of its first contributors. Khatibi studied sociology and philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, where he defended his doctoral thesis on the Maghrebi novel in 1965—the first academic work of its kind on the subject. His contributions to *Souffles* testify to his knowledge of contemporary French literary and philosophical trends. Quite in the spirit of the political and artistic convictions that *Souffles* has espoused since its first issue, he pressed the demands of plurality and modernity.

2 Here we consider Moroccan literature to be that which is written by local authors, not by authors from other countries such as France or Spain.

Our culture is still largely traditionalist or imitative. The problem is how to break this tradition, demystify it and find new formulas that express our reality and embody our deepest desires.

KHATIBI, 1966³

In the prologue to the first issue of *Souffles*, the editor-in-chief of the review Abdellatif Lâabi emphasized the author's search for his own poetic language, which he understood primarily as a tool created out of linguistic chaos to express his feelings, being and place in the world (Lâabi, 1966). Thus for Lâabi it does not matter whether the language is French, Arabic or another: the poet, as the speaker of his people, models his language from the matter of his imagination through his own poetics, shaping it to his own needs as well as for those on whose behalf he speaks.

Although Abdelkébir Khatibi lived out most of his life in Morocco, all of his complex oeuvre, comprising literary and philosophical works, anthropological and sociological studies, analyses of Maghrebian folk art, political speeches and other texts, was written in French. He first entered the literary field through poetry, having written poems since he was an adolescent, first in Arabic. Soon he began composing in French, the language he learned at school and discovered through canonical works of French literature. It was not until 1971 that he published his first prose work in the form of an autobiographical novel, a genre whose importance in Maghrebian literature he defended in his doctoral thesis. Although little read, perhaps due to its difficulty, his dissertation *La Mémoire tatouée* can be seen a key work of Moroccan literature. With its title as well as its subtitle *Autobiographie d'un décolonisé* (*Autobiography of a Decolonized Man*) the author proclaims the work's place within a clearly defined (European) genre. The synesthetic tension between the two words *mémoire tatouée* / *tattooed memory* establishes modes of reading and interpretation even in this early work by Khatibi.

Philippe Lejeune (1975: 14–15) describes the narrator of an autobiography as merging with the author, to form a personage who recounts as faithfully as possible the events that marked his childhood, adolescence or adulthood, and by reliving his past through felt, unconscious or conscious memory. A genre firmly rooted in the European tradition, autobiography presupposes a certain willingness or need to publicly reveal the intimacy of the individual. Khatibi's writing resists such a conception, as his text strives to emancipate itself at the

3 "Notre culture est encore principalement traditionnaliste ou imitative. Le problème est de savoir comment faire éclater cette tradition, la démystifier et trouver de nouvelles formules aptes à exprimer notre réalité et à incarner nos désirs les plus profonds."

levels of both genre and language. Appropriating such artistic license is itself a transgression of established generic boundaries. The Arabic literary tradition recognizes writing about oneself solely as a mediation of the experience of spiritual awakening towards a deep relationship with God that the Sufi mystics invoked in the so-called *fahrasas*, initiation journals. The trope of tattooed memory also problematizes the European tradition of life-writing, evincing Khatibi's desire to break away from established models, as we will attempt to show below.

As in canonical European autobiographies, the core of Khatibi's narrative of the self remains the construction of identity. Beyond ethnic identity, however, Khatibi's mission as a writer and his search for a place in the world as an author plays a significant role. We enter the text with an incipit outlining the circumstances of the narrator's birth, which foreshadows the atmosphere of the entire work:

Long have I guarded the sacred ritual of my birth. They put a little honey on my lips, a drop of lemon on my eyes, the first gesture to free my gaze toward the universe and the second to invigorate my mind, to die, to live, die, live, doubled upon my double—what, was I born blind to myself? I was born at the Aid el Kebir festival; my name suggests a thousand-year rite, and it happens now and again that I imagine Abraham cutting open his son.

KHATIBI, 2016: 13⁴

These opening words anchor the narrator in an ancient, millennia-old culture, with the Feast of Sacrifice (Íd al Kebir) remaining one of the essential Maghrebi religious festivals. Moreover, here these details are mixed with customs stemming from pre-Islamic traditions. At the beginning of the first chapter, the moment of birth is reflected through events connected not to the Maghreb space but to a history important to the colonizer: "I was born with the Second World War, so I grew up in its shadow and few memories come back to me from that time." (Khatibi, 2016: 15)⁵

4 "De ma naissance, je sauvegarde le rite sacré. On me mit un peu de miel sur la bouche, une goutte de citron sur les yeux, le premier acte pour libérer mon regard sur l'univers et le second pour vivifier mon esprit, mourir, vivre, mourir, vivre, double à double, suis-je né aveugle contre moi-même? Né le jour de l'Aid el Kébir, mon nom suggère un rite millénaire [...]" (Khatibi, 1971: 9).

5 "Je naquis avec la deuxième guerre, je grandis dans son ombre et peu de souvenirs me reviennent de cette époque." (Khatibi, 1971: 11).

The first pages of the novel, a work flowing between autobiography and fiction, suggest the overall compositional concept: the text is driven by a constant confrontation of opposites, contradictions and dichotomies. Just as the identity of the unnamed author/narrator is (at least) two-fold, duality shapes the entire work. Moreover, these dyads become fragmented and full of overlaps, as the narrative revisits places abandoned and unspoken about in previous passages. The narrator resides in two cities during his childhood and has two mothers, more precisely his mother and her sister, both of whom take care of him for a certain time. From his terrace, he observes two of the neighbor women, one beautiful and young, the other ugly and old. The events double as if reflected in a mirror, for example in one scene the Marseillaise being sung recalls a moment of the chanting of Koranic verses.

In seeming to reveal itself to the reader, the self is once again caught up in an ornamental ritual replete with intimations and concealment. Just as the character and his identity are amorphous, so is the structure of the narrative, which increasingly resembles a labyrinth. In the novel, several subjects enter the scene, each expressed by pronouns of different number and person, but always referring to the narrator:

I am a servant and I reel [...].

KHATIBI, 2016: 13

As a kid, when cruel thoughts make you used to sardines and their odor [...].

KHATIBI, 2016: 45

When the heat lengthened our collective wandering [...].

KHATIBI, 2016: 67⁶

This split or double identity stems from the colonial situation. Khatibi was born at the beginning of the Second World War and received his primary and secondary education in colonial schools in which the pervasive domination by the colonizer was reflected in the content of the school curriculum: Moroccan pupils read stories not only about snowy forests and the dog Medora sleeping by the fireplace, but also about things they had never seen and could not even imagine the appearance of. This dominance was also evident in the layout of

6 "Je suis serviteur et j'ai le vertige [...]." (Khatibi, 1971: 9) "Enfant, lorsqu'une pensée cruelle t'habitue à la sardine et à ses odeurs [...]." (Khatibi, 1971: 50) "Quand la chaleur allongeait notre errance collective [...]." (Khatibi, 1971: 76).

the European neighborhood, the shape of the parks, etc., through which the children passed on their way home from school. Even after the Proclamation of Independence from France in 1956, Morocco did not abrogate all of the remnants of the colonial period. It thus became necessary to deal with the putative inferiority complex of the society towards some sense of renewal. The oppression of the colonizer had etched deep wounds in Moroccan society that were not easily healed.

On discovering their uprooting, this people will wander, haggard, in the broken spaces of the history. And nothing is more atrocious than a rip in the memory. But this tearing speaks both to colonized and colonizer, since the medina always resisted with its maze.

Khatibi, 2016: 42⁷

In the text Khatibi surveys and names the fissures caused by colonization, but his perspective is not limited to that of the oppressed. Khatibi's ambivalence and duplicity is evoked from the awareness of not only the hardships but also the benefits he has gained from contact with the world of the metropolis, the horizons that open up, the enchantment induced by reading French poets. The narrator is no longer fully part of the original community, as he has renounced his birth identity and defined himself against the corrupted world of his Maghreb fathers.⁸ Nevertheless, upon arriving in Paris, he discovers that, despite all his efforts, he remains a stranger in the metropolitan space. He wanders through a no-man's land, unable to move forward or turn back. His search for himself drives the logic of the text, which itself becomes a wandering as the narrator moves between different places with no respect to chronology or shifts in time. The past is thus endlessly confronted with the present and the future. Events experienced in the past are reflected in the present voice, which relates them to the moment of the narration.

This liminality is most pronounced in the treatment of the language, both thematically and expressively. The high degree of deterritorialization of language, which Deleuze and Guattari consider a key feature of minority literature, in Khatibi's case connotes a perversion of the logicity, clarity and dis-

7 "En découvrant son dépaysement, ce peuple errera, hagard, dans l'espace brisé de son histoire. Et il n'y a de plus atroce que la déchirure de la mémoire. Mais déchirure commune au colonisé et au colonial, puisque la médina résistait par son dédale." (Khatibi, 1971: 46).

8 Rebellion against the father is a frequent theme in early works of Maghrebian literature. See Driss Chraïbi *Le Passé simple (The simple Past)*, Mohamed Shukri *Le Pain nu (For Bread Alone)*. Shadows of Freud's Oedipus complex are also evoked in Khatibi's work.

tinctness of the French language. In *Tattooed Memory* the text is transformed into a labyrinth: “The road wraps me so close that the medina and its allegories echo in my phrases.” (Khatibi, 2016: 41)⁹

The language of the work of any author in a postcolonial context writing in the language of the (former) colonizer inevitably contains an undercurrent of the mother tongue, whether purely symbolic, anxiously tended, or even in its absence. For Catherine Mavrikakis, however, the native language is never forgotten. It is

a myth that can be described as constitutive of our thinking about language. It is as if the mother tongue is endowed with the ability to mediate the vanished: it emerges on the human horizon when everything has been erased or lost.

Mavrikakis, 1989: 59¹⁰

The doubling of Khatibi’s narrative comes from his plurilinguism:

At school, secular teaching imposed on my religion; I became trilingual, reading French without speaking it, fooling around with scraps of written Arabic, and speaking my everyday dialect. Where, I all this babble, was there any coherence and continuity?

Khatibi, 2016: 50¹¹

The Arabic language inscribes itself into French, transforms its syntax, and influences the poetics of the text. More or less hidden quotations from the Koran, often shaded with irony, permeate the entire novel. The narrator declares the death of his God, or more precisely, the deity invoked by his father, since to subscribe to the philosophy of the modern West is always to bury God. But this does not prevent him from treating the Islamic Holy Book in his own way and creating subtle textual arabesques incorporating the text. The narrative is rhythmic and has a distinct cadence: almost identical passages return at regular intervals, some images are repeated, and words function as refrains

9 “[...] la rue m’enveloppe de si près que la médina et ses allégories se répercutent dans le labyrinthe de mes phrases.” (Khatibi, 1971: 44).

10 “[...] le mythe que l’on pourrait désigner comme constitutif de notre pensée de la langue. La langue maternelle se verrait dotée des pouvoirs de l’objet-ruine: elle se dresse dans l’horizon humain lorsque tout a été effacé ou perdu.”

11 “À l’école, un enseignement laïc, imposé à ma religion; je devins triglotte, lisant le français sans le parler, jouant avec quelques bribes de l’arabe écrit, et parlant le dialecte comme quotidien. Où, dans ce chassé-croisé, la cohérence et la continuité?” (Khatibi, 1971: 54).

at the end of paragraphs (*Smack him! Hit him!*). Enumerations and juxtapositions of images also come from Arabic. Rhythmic exclamations and quotations (*Oops! Whoop!*) evoking the Maghrebian oral tradition appear quite frequently in the novel.

The fragmented syntax both reflects and foreshadows painful events—when memory fails or when the narrator resists memories so wounding that language cannot obliterate the wounds. In one passage relating to the moment of circumcision, not only does the narrator—a child—experience searing physical pain, but he is also confronted with a radical transformation of his world, which will henceforth be strictly divided into male and female, and in which he is to occupy a place that he is not comfortable with. The narrative fragments and the narrator abstracts entirely from himself, moving from I to Thou.

The world separates, becoming two, I float, an immemorial shriek, far beyond what was torn, an indefinite cry that will collapse my final cruelty; [...] And it's not the death of the innocent. Don't you believe you've been raised in the dignity of a patriarch? Be worthy of your blood, be a patriarch! Marry one, two, three, four women, and get on with it! Inherit, little one, inherit from your father, from your father—this crack won't kill you. Those who have erections, when they're not circumcised, know only torment and annoyance! The ones of The Great Misstep! Know this, propitious one, know well! You may be able to launch yourself as parable. And why not!

Khatibi, 2016: 28–29¹²

Language, at once the object of the quest and its instrument, however enigmatic, allows the unknown to be spoken of and experiences conveyed which remain unknown to the narrator. Through language, that is, a system of signs, deeply stored memories emerge from the mind, from the culture of the metropolis and its canon; such a sign in Khatibi's work may be the geometry of the flowerbeds of Spiney Park in the French Quarter of the city of El Jadida, modified according to the symmetry of a Cartesian theorem: “[...] Spiney Park, laid

12 “Se sépare le monde en deux, je flotte, immémorial cri, bien au-delà de l'arrachement, cri indéfini. [...] Non point la mort du petit juste! Ne crois-tu pas qu'on t'a élevé à la dignité du patriarcat? Sois digne de ton sang, sois patriarche! Épouse une, deux, trois, quatre femmes, et passe! Hérite, enfant, hérite de ton père, la fêlure n'est pas mortelle. Ceux qui s'érigent, le sexe non circoncis, ne connaîtront que tourment et déplaisir! Ceux de Très Grand Égarement! Sache, enfant propice, sache! Peut-être pourras-tu te mettre en parabole. Eh quoi!” (Khatibi, 1971: 29).

out—I've been told—as the Cartesian dictum has it (clear as clarity and pure as purity) [...]” (Khatibi, 2016: 41)¹³ Khatibi deliberately uses the term “phrase cartésienne” in French to link thinking and remembering with language.

When the narrative leaves the relative safety of childhood and adolescence to move closer to the moment of utterance, therefore to the author's present, language breaks down entirely and the narrative is transformed into a dialogue:

- A. Listen to me without betraying, or else go, go accuse the wind.
 B. I'm listening, I do betray you. You recount your childhood, you take us on the tour of your little life—which has nothing special about it, you have to admit. But perverse as you are, sly as you think you are, you lump your downfall together with signs, you yank back your hand when history gives you a hard time. A syllable here, a vowel there, and childhood, plop!
 A. Poor lost soul!

KHATIBI, 2016: 145¹⁴

1 Conclusion

Patrick Chamoiseau asks “How to write in a conquered land?” in his essay *Écrire en pays dominé* (Chamoiseau, 2002). Khatibi's answer is to reveal the writing process itself. *Tattooed Memory* can be read as a kind of programmatic text formulating essential themes that the author would address in dozens of texts for the rest of his life. The thematization of writing, the reflection on the process of the creation of the text emerge as passages which are as essential as passages calling up memories of the past. In the first pages of his novel, Khatibi asks, echoing Chamoiseau, “Is a portrait of a child even possible?” (Khatibi, 2016: 20).¹⁵ The search, however, is not so much for the influence of subjugation as for how to establish oneself as the author, how to create oneself in the text. The

13 “[...] parc Spinney, arrangé—m'a-t-on dit—selon la phrase cartésienne, claire comme la clarté et pure comme la pureté [...]” (Khatibi, 1971: 44).

14 “A. Écoute-moi sans me trahir, ou va, accuse le vent.

B. Je t'écoute, je te trahis. Tu racontes ton enfance, tu fais le tour de ta petite vie qui n'a rien d'exemplaire, il faut l'avouer. Mais malin que tu es, que tu penses être, tu amalgames ta déperdition dans les signes, tu retires la main quand l'histoire te harcèle: syllabe par là, voyelle par ici, et enfance, ploc!

A. Pauvre égaré!” (Khatibi, 1971: 177).

15 “Est-ce possible, le portrait d'enfant?” (Khatibi, 1971: 18).

question of whether and why to write in French, that is, in the language of the other, is not important to Khatibi. He rejects the tensions that have built up in contemporary Moroccan literary circles.

The need to write results from a complex of feelings, attitudes, emotions, temptations and dreams. Can a poet be legitimately forbidden to recount his sorrows and joys, even when children are starving, to use Sartre's words?

Khatibi goes on to describe the task of the author more precisely.

It is enough for the writer to understand that culture is not the will of solitary individuals, but the creation of a set of values and ideas in the service of the greater liberation of man.

Khatibi, 1966¹⁶

For Khatibi, French is the material, the stuff one uses to imprint one's identity as a creator, one's myths, one's tattoos and one's fascination with French patterns, mixing all of these in an admixture that gives life to the poet. From such work with the language, it is only a step to intertextuality and further to the establishment of the self as doubled or multiplied even further. The essence of the Maghreban is not and cannot be a single identity, but a layered identity, containing all the influences that the territory on the Mediterranean coast has lapped up over millennia.

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16 "Le besoin d'écrire est le résultat d'un complexe de sentiments, d'attitudes, d'émotions, de tentations et de rêves. Peut-on interdire valablement à un poète de chanter ses peines et ses joies même si des enfants meurent de faim, pour reprendre une expression de Sartre? Il suffit que l'écrivain comprenne que la culture n'est pas la volonté d'hommes solitaires, mais construction d'un ensemble de valeurs et d'idées au service d'une plus grande libération de l'homme."

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Biculturalism, Bilingualism and Orality in the Deperipheralization of Cuban-American Literature

Marta Hudousková

The 1959 Cuban Revolution was a defining moment in the literary development of both Cuban and Cuban-American literature as well as an inspiration for many artists and authors across the Americas and even around the world.¹ The events represented a rupture which resulted in a boom of a vast body of critically acclaimed pieces of post-revolutionary literature throughout the remainder of the 20th century continuing through the beginning of the 21st. Such an accumulation of literary capital within the Cuban-American transnational literary space demonstrates Pascale Casanova's description of the potential of a significant political event to be mediated into literature. In aesthetic terms, the Cuban Revolution overturned the old hierarchies of the literary order and established new relationships. The period and the works that were influenced by it corroborate Casanova's assertion that "revolutions are always at once literary and political" (Casanova, 2007: 4). This chapter examines the deperipheralization of Cuban-American literature as represented by Cuban-American writer Achy Obejas' 1996 novel *Memory Mambo*. The global response to the Cuban Revolution and its legacy, e.g. in the context of the end of the Cold War 30 years later, transformed the poetics along with the center-periphery dynamics of Cuban-American literature. The poetics of orality, biculturalism and bilingualism, elements once regarded as peripheral in the dominant US literary space, are placed at the center of Obejas' narrative and used purposefully as a marker of difference. By challenging the centrality of Miami-based anti-Castro nationalism, notably in interactions between the two Latina characters Juani and Gina, the narrative searches for ways to transcend politics to achieve various forms of personal and cultural autonomy.

In addition to situating *Memory Mambo* in the context of what Isabel Álvarez Borland (1998: 7, 57) calls the "one-and-a-half" Cuban-American literary generation of exile writers who had grown up on the island before migrating

1 This chapter is based on author's article *Oralidad, biculturalización y bilingüismo en la desperiferización de la estética cubanoamericana*, *Études Romanes de Brno*, 43,1: 95–112.

north, this chapter also places the novel within the literary production of US Latinx as well as Cuban insular literature, as these contexts inform the work's literary and aesthetic practices.

1 *¡Viva La Revolución! Cuban-American and Cuban Exile Literature*

Born in 1956, Achy Obejas may be placed among the one-and-a-half generation, born in Cuba, but coming to maturity and educated in the US. The novelist and journalist Cristina García (1958–) can also be identified as a prominent representative of this generation. These authors generally write in English and speak from the viewpoint of an ethnic minority within the US, not from a viewpoint of political exiles, as had the preceding generation of writers. Gustavo Pérez Firmat uses the sociological concept of biculturation to designate the one-and-a-halfers' position in the dominant US culture, describing how “Cuban-American culture is a balancing act” (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 6). For Pérez Firmat, being Cuban-American connotes the same degree of Americanness as does the term *cubanidad*—identifying or identified as Cuban. In the words of Eliana Rivero, the second-generation authors occupy a space “equidistant from both worlds, the Cuban and the North American” (Rivero, 2018: 25).² Pérez Firmat emphasizes the liminality of this position: “[T]he two cultures achieve a balance that makes it difficult to determine which is the dominant and which is the subordinate culture” (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 6). This sense of both *cubanidad* and biculturation can serve to summarize the attitude of many one-and-a-halfers towards US culture.

These prose authors embrace the dialectics of the Revolution/Exile (Ortiz, 2012: 418) typically from the perspective of a one-and-a-half protagonist, who is according to Pérez Firmat “[...] ‘marginal’ to both its native and its adopted culture ...” (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 3). Their work captures a kind of loss—geographical, cultural, linguistic—connected with the exilic life, a sense of not belonging in either the Cuban world or in their new abode. This feeling of alienation pushes these writers towards the search for a new identity which comes through in autobiographical stories of the personal and the communitarian (Álvarez Borland, 1998: 8–9), with the work often taking the form of hybrid bilingualism (Rivero, 2018: 25).

Regarding the one-and-a-half generation, Rivero observes that they “est[án] más aquí que allá” (“are more here than there”) in terms of center and periph-

2 “equidistantes de ambos mundos, el cubano y el norteamericano”.

ery, with their position peripheral with respect to Havana, whereas the earlier generation of exiled authors remained connected with the center, “estaban más allá que acá” (“more there than here”; Rivero, 2018: 31). In literary terms, the work of the first generation of Cuban exiled authors belongs to the Cuban insular and Latin American literary tradition (Rivero, 2018: 23). On the contrary, these Cuban-American authors became known as ethnic writers within the US literary world (Rivero, 2018: 34). Brought up under the revolution, Cuban author Reinaldo Arenas may be placed among the group of exile authors “estaban más allá que acá.” Arenas, who settled in New York in 1980, can be seen as a literary predecessor to Obejas in the way he questioned heteronormative Cuban exilic nationalism. As an openly homosexual writer, Arenas sought to escape the restrictions of Cuban national art under the political supervision and censorship of the regime. In the US, he had to completely recompose all his old works, as the authoritarian system on the island had destroyed all copies of them. Apart from being raised under the revolutionary discourse, the fact that Arenas wrote his fiction in Spanish also firmly places him among the first generation of exile authors (Álvarez Borland, 1998: 6, Ortíz, 2012: 418). In his novels *El Portero* (*The Doorman*, 1989) and *Antes que anochezca* (*Before Night Falls*, 1992), he critiqued not only the Castro regime’s repression of homosexuals but also the intolerance and insincerity of Cuban exiles in the US.

2 *Latinidad* and the Latinx Literature

Obejas’ novel *Memory Mambo* shares similar traits with other Latinx fiction, including works that in the US include Chicana/o, Mexican, Dominican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban minority literatures. Once relegated to the periphery of the US literary space, Latinx literature now refers to a relatively large corpus of literary works, many once labeled by the denominator of “Latino literature.”

Latinx literature represents “a literary response to US neocolonialism” (Irizarry, 2016) which can be traced back to the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898. The Latinx literary canon has been consecrated and exists “within the ‘American’ literature canon.” (Irizarry, 2016) These literatures are often contrasted with the idea of a dominant Anglo-American literature. Latinx literary production is interested in identity based on *latinidad*, i.e. as a part of the world perceived as racialized within white Anglo-America. Nevertheless, Rivero comments that the situation of Cubans in the US was different than that of the other Caribbean and Central American minorities, since Cubans had the status of political refugees (Rivero, 2018: 27). These literatures have a common theme—a

loss as well as a reconstructing of the Self with a new identity in a new culture. *Latinidades* are constructed after the entrance of a neocolonial subject in the US from countries with alternative epistemologies through which the new arrival must negotiate identity across different systems (Irizarry, 2016). These negotiating processes lead to a feeling of “otherness” and “hybrid sensitivity” (Rivero, 2018: 30) stemming from a perceived border condition common in the fiction produced within Latinx literature. For Irizarry, the border is “a marker of hybrid or liminal subjectivities, such as those who negotiate among multiple cultural, linguistic, racial, or sexual systems throughout their lives.” (Irizarry, 2016) Once categorized as “Cuban exile literature,” this literary production later became known simply as Cuban-American literature. Ortíz describes the position of Cuban-American works within Latinx literary production: “[T]he 1898 War and the 1959 Revolution situate[d] Cuban-American literary practice in the informing contexts of US Latino literature” (Ortíz, 2012: 417). Consequently, Obejas’ *Memory Mambo*, which tells a story of Cuban neocolonial subjects in the US after the Cuban Revolution, is also a part of the Latinx literary canon, which has been positioned as deperipheralized with respect to the central white Anglo-American literature.

An analogy can be drawn between *Memory Mambo* and other Latinx novels in that they portray underprivileged, marginal, subaltern, hybrid neocolonial subjects within the Latinx US cultural and political context. As for the Latinx literature genre, autobiographical writing, memoirs, ethnic Bildungsroman, *testimonio* prevail, as these genres tell stories of the construction of identity within their respective Latino and Chicano communities.

3 *¡Hasta la victoria siempre!*³ Cuban Insular Literature

The question will now be discussed as to how the Cuban literature from the island relates to what has been indicated above about Cuban-American as well as Latinx literature. Before we consider the literature that began to proliferate in Cuba in the 1990s, which corresponds chronologically to Obejas’ novel, let us first say a few words about the literature of the Cuban Revolution. Like countless works written on and off the island in the decades since the events of 1953–1959, *Memory Mambo* can be seen as a reaction to a specific post-revolutionary socioeconomic, political, ideological as well as literary and aesthetic developments.

3 “Ever onward to victory!”

Revolutionary leaders such as Fidel Castro and Che Guevara repeatedly expressed the importance of recreating culture for the new Cuban Communist society. For Casanova, the notion of the nation, state, and literature are not only tightly connected but even interdependent: “The construction of national literary space is closely related [...] to the political space of the nation that it helps build in turn.” (Casanova, 2007: 85) Culture was a tool of utmost significance for the triumph of the revolution, with this eventuality projected to create homogeneity in the literary space. “To Defend the Revolution is to Defend Culture” (Castro, Foreword, Words to the Intellectuals, 1961) was the motto of the First Congress of Writers and Artists in 1961. In the reality of revolutionary Cuba, culture was forced to serve the Revolution, with all media, arts and literature subjected to rigid official controls. In his address to Cuban intellectuals and artists at the Congress, Castro insisted that

[w]ithin the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing [...] the Revolution means the interests of the entire nation [...]. Within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, no rights [...] because the Revolution has a right: the right to exist, the right to develop and the right to win.

CASTRO, 1961⁴

The emergence of the political pole led to submission of the literary pole, and Cuban literary production had to be consecrated by the revolutionary authorities to achieve its highest and only goal of one unified message.

The revolutionary writers constructed what was projected as a new literary tradition, including its own themes and genres. The discourses of the Revolution served as a base for the new conventions, which were in line with the socialist orientation of the country: nationalism, building socialism and social progress, as well as the narrative of a more equitable Cuba. As in other Communist regimes, the creation by the state of the so-called New Man (*el Hombre Nuevo*), one who strives to change the society and liberates the nation, was declared the goal. Following this project, all literature permitted to be published was forced to become politicized (Casamayor-Cisneros, 2013: 32). A trade embargo by the United States put in place in 1958 (with some sanctions still in place today) made economic and social conditions extremely difficult for

4 “Dentro de la Revolución, todo; contra la Revolución, nada [...] la Revolución significa los intereses de la nación entera [...]. Dentro de la Revolución, todo; contra la Revolución, ningún derecho [...] porque la Revolución tiene un derecho: el derecho de existir, el derecho a desarrollarse y el derecho a vencer.”

the majority of the Cuban people. This led into the revolutionary discourse of Communist nationalism and “the desire of the people” (“el deseo del pueblo”; Che Guevara, 1965) to overcome these and other counter-revolutionary measures. The concomitant aesthetics of Socialist Realism remained dominant in Cuban literature until 1989 and the fall of many Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe (Casamayor-Cisneros, 2013: 33). Given the nationalist and militaristic milieu in which literary works were produced, the brutal character of Cuban society was reflected in the 1960s in the so-called “narrativa de la violencia” (Martín Sevillano, 2014: 176). The Cuban literary critic Luisa Campuzano characterizes Cuban post-revolutionary literature as the product of “a markedly virile, martial culture” marked by the poetics of violence and Socialist Realism (Campuzano, 2004: 142).⁵

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 brought dramatic changes to Cuba. In 1990, Castro announced the advent of “Período Especial en Tiempos de Paz” (Special Period in Times of Peace.) The collapse of the Soviet Union and the governments of Warsaw Pact countries, which had been the principal trading partners for Cuba until the end of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in 1991 resulted in a shortage of food, medicine, basic drug store goods, water, petrol, and electricity outages (Casamayor-Cisneros, 2013: 45–46; Cuesta, 2012: 24–25). With the loss of support from the Soviet bloc, the ongoing economic sanctions by the United States which prevented almost all imports into Cuba exacerbated the already difficult and unstable situation.

The *Período especial* which began in 1991 was distinguished not only by material scarcity, but also by significant ideological and political disillusionment within the country. Besides the political and economic aspect of the crisis, the nineties also provoked a profound existential crisis in which the old Cuban national identity was shattered and traditional referents disrupted (Casamayor-Cisneros, 2013: 16). The country was losing its historical *telos*, which was anchored in faith in the ultimate prosperity promised in the rhetoric of the Cuban Revolution (Casamayor-Cisneros, 2013: 23, 46 54; Rafael Rojas qt. in: Cuesta, 2013: 17).

At this time, a generation of writers called “Novísimos” (the newest ones) came to prominence. The revolution no longer dominated the political and literary pole as its center. The new generation disavowed the aesthetics and values established by the old hierarchies of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary literary order. In the new post-Soviet space, these authors literarily struggled for independence in a milieu in which the political apparatus had relinquished

5 “una cultura marcadamente viril, marcial”.

total control over literary creation and merely censored direct attacks against the regime. If Cuba found itself politically on the periphery after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the literary space paradoxically acquired autonomy. Cuban literature as represented by the *Novísimos* generation moved toward the center of the international literary space, where it lingered in the 1970s and 1980s. With the literary pole winning independence from the political pole, the literary capital of the *Novísimos* began to accumulate. Autonomy emerged, along with greater recognition, legitimation and, ultimately, consecration by North American and European literary authorities, with the higher visibility creating a situation in which Cuban literature now took a dominant position among other Spanish-speaking literatures. Just to name two examples, Wendy Guerra and Ena Lucía Portela⁶ came forward as key figures in this literary generation, with the works of these two women reflecting the Cuban “Special Period” of profound political and socioeconomic changes.

The narratives of each Guerra and Portela both explore the social, moral, and spiritual dimensions of the period (Campuzano, 2004: 151, 205), highlighting the crisis in the public space and the need to explore the private space (Araújo, 2006: 78). Humor and irony (Campuzano, 2004: 151) is used as a means of demythologizing, destabilizing (Campuzano, 2004: 151; Araújo, 2006: 78), and reinterpreting official history (Cuesta, 2012: 28). Authors like these are rewriting the national imagery (Cuesta, 2012: 27) by including within it individuals marginalized and excluded by the revolutionary discourse (Campuzano, 2004: 151), for example prostitutes, members of the LGBT community, single mothers, emigrants, the unemployed, murderers, the homeless, and drug addicts (Cuesta, 2012: 26, 28). Another formally taboo topic discussed by these writers is religion, specifically the Afro-Cuban belief system of Yoruba which functions as a counterpoint to hegemonic, rational, male religious discourses. These authors portray individuals that had been suppressed or even erased from the

6 It is no coincidence that Achy Obejas has translated a number of Portela's and Guerra's works from Spanish into English, bringing the transnational Cuban republic of letters to a wider readership. Casanova highlights the value of literary translation, which she regards as *littérisation* (Casanova, 2004: 135), a way that production from peripheral countries earns consecration, legitimation, international recognition and visibility. “The translator, having become the indispensable intermediary for crossing the borders of the literary world, is an essential figure in the history of writing” (Casanova, 2007: 142). Reading these literary texts beyond the Cuban border out of the reach of central authorities accounts not only for the deperipheralization of these texts, but also stretches the transnational Cuban literary space through the incorporation into Cuban letters of both the diaspora as well as insular literature. Still, Portela and Guerra manage to exist globally only by becoming translated writers and emerging within the US literary space though Obejas.

discourses of the socialist society (Cuesta, 2012: 28), in which the eradication of putative social evils and any form of conduct taken as antisocial was valorized.

Thus individualism (Araújo, 2006: 78) became one of the pillars of the new aesthetics, replacing the aesthetics of the collective typical of the post-revolutionary period. Through the poetics of transgression (Campuzano, 2004: 151; Araújo, 2006: 78), the authors of the *Novísimos* boom show the “other” unofficial, invisible Cuba (Cuesta, 2012: 28), deconstructing traditional representations of *cubanidad*. Moreover, their poetics emphasize the corporeal, the sexual, and the erotic (Araújo, 2006: 77). Although Portela’s and Guerra’s characters were formed within the revolutionary cosmology, they do not identify with it since they must face the revolution’s unfavorable consequences head on (Casamayor-Cisneros, 2013: 29–30).

To recapitulate, it may be stated that both the Cuban-American and Cuban insular writers reimagine and redefine the national imagery, rewriting the official history and reconstructing *cubanidad*. These *cubanidades*, however, are constructed in a different way. In the US, a hyphenated Cuban-Americanism emerges within the dominant Anglo-America. In Cuba, *cubanidad* is remade after the breakdown of the national identity and imagery that had been defined so unequivocally by *la Revolución Cubana*. The need to reconstruct the Self comes from, in the case of the US, the sense of exile necessitated by escaping the revolution, and in the case of Cuba, by the post-Soviet condition following the end of the Cold War. Containing features of Cuban, Cuban-American as well as Latinx literature, the genre of novels in question may be called life-writing in the form of autobiography, memoir, *testimonio*, etc.

4 The Sound of Miami

The Cuban diaspora in Miami represented an affluent community with strong political ties to Washington. Many Cubans in this area had been wealthy supporters of the former dictator Fulgencio Batista who were forced to flee the island when Castro took over in 1959. In their new country they generally now followed the “most conservative Republican principles” (de la Campa, 2000: 72) and were ready to overturn the revolution from the other side of the Florida Strait, with some actively collaborating with the CIA to overthrow Castro with military operations such as the ill-fated Bay of Pigs attempted invasion in 1961.

It was not until the 1980s (for male writers) and the 1990s (for female writers) that post-revolutionary Cuban exile and Cuban-American literary production began to gain autonomy within the larger context of multiethnic immigrant and diaspora writing in the United States. Whereas Havana had been endowed

with great literary prestige and high-culture supremacy in the linguistic-cultural area of Latin America, Miami now became a center of popular culture for Cuban exiles in the US and, in a broader sense, a global capital of Latino popular cultural expression.

After the Cuban Revolution, the largest numbers of Cuban exiles in the US settled in Miami, Florida, transforming it into a powerful Cuban enclave. As Casanova maintains, the geography of the world republic of letters “is based on the opposition between a capital, on the one hand, and peripheral dependencies whose relationship to the center is defined by their aesthetic distance from it” (Casanova, 2007: 12). Havana’s dominant centrality in relation to the periphery of Miami began slowly dissipating, as the Florida city established itself as a cultural center for Cuban and other Latino immigrants. The symbolic, aesthetic, even political distance between Havana and Miami became a major theme for many artists of all types, with the Cuban-American experience imprinted in Miami’s musical, performance and visual arts. As Gustavo Pérez Firmat theorizes: “Cuban-American culture is shamelessly materialistic and resolutely middle-brow” (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 13). Pérez Firmat draws on popular culture to describe Cuban-American culture as inscribed not only in literature, museums, and concert halls, but also in shopping malls, restaurants, and discotheques as places that bear witness to Cuban-American fashion, food, and dancing (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 14). Román de la Campa, a one-and-a-halfer like Pérez Firmat, makes a similar point when he defines the Miami’s exile community as a popular culture formed by television as well as by the English language, drawing the clear distinction between Miami and Havana, the latter an environment that “reveres high culture” (de la Campa, 2000: 134). With personal experience with both cultures, de la Campa readily admits that Miami’s culture is nostalgic, while the revolutionary culture on the island is “more alive and interesting” (de la Campa, 2000: 101). Miami’s thriving cultural life was noticeable predominantly in music. What began as the music of resistance and nostalgia in the 1960s with the Afro-Cuban genre of *son*, mambo, *chachachá*, and *danzón*, evolved in the 1980s and 1990s into so-called “pop salsa.”

With the commercial success of the Cuban-American singer Gloria Estefan and her band Miami Sound Machine (MSM), music from the island crossed the border of the Cuban exile Miami-based enclave to become a synecdoche of all Latino music as it emerged on the commercial pop music scene in the US. The group conquered both Americas in the late-eighties as one of the most well-known pop music bands in and from the United States. As had many Spanish-language performers since the 1960s, the group owed its initial success to playing American pop songs in Spanish: “[a]t first MSM was a Hispanophone soft-rock group; later it became an Anglophone soft-salsa group” (Pérez Fir-

mat, 2012: 127). The band's repertoire became more Latinized over the years, with the songs based more on Cuban rhythms and marketed to the wider public as Latino. De la Campa pinpoints the contribution of the Cuban-American music scene to the "Latino cultural awakening in the United States" (de la Campa, 2000: 154). The group's massive 1985 hit *Conga* "topped the dance, pop, Latin, and Black charts simultaneously" (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 129). Apart from the vibrant music scene, the Cuban Miami diaspora could pride itself on having the first Latino situation comedy series in the United States. Produced in Miami from 1977–1980 by PBS, the bilingual sitcom *¿Qué pasa, USA?* reflected Cuban exile life. The TV show reached not only Cuban-Americans, but also vast Latino populations across the US and abroad.

Still, the Cuban national culture remained most connected with Havana, not Miami, as it was there that the revolution had taken place. As de la Campa explains, "leaving the revolution was equivalent to leaving the nation, since they were meant to be one and the same," thus fleeing the Revolution resulted in losing the bond with the nation (de la Campa, 2000: 152). To sum up, if Havana embodied literariness and cultural hegemony, by the 1980s Miami had emerged as a center of popular culture which represented a struggle against this hegemony.

5 The Cuban Revolution in *Memory Mambo*

The themes of Achy Obejas' *Memory Mambo* (1996) reside within dialogues of neocolonial subjects (Cuban-Americans and Puerto Ricans) within the dominant US cultural and political context. The novel tells the story of a Cuban-American family's attempt to assimilate into US society, a narrative closely related to the question of identity and what it means to be Cuban in the US. The protagonists' adaptation to their new environment does not proceed smoothly and the family becomes isolated in relation to other Latino immigrant groups as well as the Anglo-American society. Another significant theme is the view of the Cuban Revolution as the highlight of a Pan-Americanism which serves as an antidote to the problematic assimilation into the US culture.

The deperipheralization of Cuban-American literature can be seen in both the themes and poetics of this novel. Obejas presents the protagonist's Cuban-American family as having the same marginal, peripheral status as any other neocolonial US minority. The myth of Cuban exceptionalism as well as the anti-Castro nationalist Miami-based discourses are deconstructed through several motifs, the first of which is the setting of the novel in Chicago. Translocating the novel from Miami to Chicago enables the narrative to be distanced ideo-

logically and politically from Miami, the capital of the Cuban US diaspora and the cultural and spiritual center for exiles. The Florida city was well-known for its “hardline, conservative, anti-Castro” (Ortíz, 2012: 416) politics and became a symbolic center of counterrevolution.

By placing the Cuban characters’ exilic lives in Chicago instead of Miami, Obejas confronts them with several centers, creating one of the complex peripheral situations featured in this novel. For decades, many Cuban-Americans in Miami considered themselves exiles and refused to identify as “immigrants,” since they understood their stay in the US as only temporary. In literary terms, Miami has been connected to the creation and establishment of the exilic narrative, while Obejas’ choice of a move out of Miami foregrounds the efforts of her characters to create and establish a completely new home. What characterizes the narrative is the story’s usual ties with Miami, a center for Cuban exiles. Amrita Das makes a similar observation *a contrario*:

The fact that the narrative is not located in Miami, the usual center of Cuban culture and politics in the United States around which the dominant Cuban-American exile narrative has been built, allows for the first break from what has been erroneously considered fundamental about the Cuban-American identity. The distancing from Miami, a recreated space and revered center for exiled Cubans, almost sanctioned the questioning of what is to be a Cuban in the United States.

DAS, 2012: 144–145

Besides Miami as a central geographical referent, the exilic narrative revolves around nostalgia with respect to pre-Castro Cuba and the role of memory in reinventing the Self. As José Esteban Muñoz puts it, “Cuban-American memory is a politics of nostalgic reconstruction where prerevolutionary Cuba is figured as a utopic lost homeland” (Muñoz, 1995: 76). In the narrative of the exile, Cuba can be accessed only through memory or fiction by one-and-a-halfers, as only they are the Cuban-American generation “infused by tales and descriptions of a glorious Cuba, since they have never had a chance to be a part of that nation” (Das, 2012: 145). As a part of this narrative, life in pre-Revolution Cuba is imagined as “prosperous and purposeful” (Das, 2012: 154), an idyllic state of plenty which was stunted by the Revolution. In her novel, Obejas constructs the protagonist family’s hybrid, bicultural status in the US in that she illustrates their oscillation between two cultures and two worlds: the lead protagonist Juani “está más aquí que allá” in the US, whereas her parents from the first exile generation “están más allá que acá” in Cuba. The Cuban-American woman Juani summarizes her family’s relation to the 1959 revolution: “Gina said she under-

stood my confusion, because we were so fucked up about the revolution in my family.” (Obejas, 1996: 134) Furthermore, it is the figure of Castro as an anti-hero putting an end to this pre-Revolution utopia that constitutes the exilic narrative. According to Amrita Das, Juani’s family can be counted among the generation of Cuban-Americans who “have continued to perpetuate the ethnic memory of the revolution led by Castro that dispossessed and dislocated the Cubans, and thus he remains the villain of the dominant exilic narrative” (Das, 2012: 150). The anti-Castro rhetoric is tightly linked with this image of *El Comandante* as the spoiler or destroyer, a figure also typical for the exilic narrative. Das names this “nationalist discourse [as] essential to the Cuban-American identity” (Das, 2012: 150). The Cuban-American exilic nationalism that the Puerto Rican character opposes is characterized as “anti-Castro sentiment,” i.e. counterrevolutionary “rhetoric about Fidel as a tyrant and all things in Cuba since his arrival being awful” (Obejas, 1996: 114). This anti-Castro nationalist discourse is linked to poetics of nostalgia and the image of a pre-Castro utopia. Obejas is not the first Cuban writer to challenge the perennial nationalism of the Cuban diaspora based predominantly in Miami. The works of poet and novelist Reinaldo Arenas (1943–1990), who immigrated to the US in 1980 and eventually settled in New York, also adopt a critical stance regarding the intolerance and traditionalism of Cuban exiles.

Apart from setting the novel outside of Miami, another motif by which Obejas deconstructs the myth of Cuban exceptionalism as well as the discourses of the affluent and powerful Miami Cuban diaspora is the laundromat that the family owns and around which the family life is organized in Chicago. In the bustling Windy City, maintaining their own family business does not guarantee them a high position on the socioeconomic ladder as it likely would have in Miami. In this way, Obejas problematizes the view of the Cuban exiles as valorized over other immigrant groups and enjoying “the active support of the United States, both economically and politically” (de la Campa, 2000: 73). As some scholars (Grosfoguel, 2001; de la Campa, 2000) emphasize, the first wave of Cuban exiles benefited from the Cuban Refugee Program, established in December 1960 and by which Cubans received millions of dollars in financial aid from the US government. This initiative was aimed to help those fleeing the Castro regime in the atmosphere of the Cold War amidst the ideological battle between communism and capitalism. Criticizing the putatively racist stance of the US during this period, de la Campa asks: “What better lesson than the pictures of so many white, upwardly mobile Cuban refugees fleeing to the United States after leaving everything behind?” (de la Campa, 2000: 28). In addition to financial assistance from the US government, Cuban exiles profited from the “Cuban Adjustment Act of 1965,” giving them privileged status within US

immigration law which permitted them to quickly secure US residency and citizenship as soon as their feet touched US soil (de la Campa, 2000: 127). This initiative, created and promoted by representatives of the Cuban diaspora and US Cold Warriors, became the exiles' "only weapon against the revolution" (de la Campa, 2000: 128). Thanks to these programs and Washington's political support, the Miami-based Cuban diaspora became a thriving ethnic community in social, economic and political terms, a situation that no other immigrant Latino group enjoyed. As alluded to in *Memory Mambo*, an interesting comparison is the comparatively lesser economic and social support for Puerto Rican immigrants, despite the fact that they have been full US citizens since 1971 since the acquisition of the island by the US in 1898.

Obejas challenges the dominant exilic narrative by presenting the Cuban-American family as an economically and socially struggling community just like any other ethnic Latino minority in the US. This is far from the image of the economically, politically, and socially influential Miami-based Cuban diaspora. Juani affirms this sense of separation from the affluent Miami center as she acknowledges her family's marginal status in the US: "I'm Cuban, and in Gina's eyes, automatically more privileged as if my family had ever been privileged, as if we were doing anything except trying desperately to stay afloat." (Obejas, 1996: 78). This struggle is also personal, as it includes the protagonist's search for identity and for *cubanidad* within the dominant US culture as she constructs her Self as a member of an underprivileged minority.

The exile nationalist discourse is de-centered, as Obejas also gives voice to Castro's discourse of the Revolution as it is pronounced from within the US. This is done through the subversive voice of a female Puerto Rican character who is an unrepentant lover of Castro as the Cuban-American liberator. The results of the Cuban Revolution are in this way presented as ideologically and culturally superior to the US system and thus an antidote to the fragmented, rootless life of Cuban exiles in the US. This view of the revolution is in sharp contrast with the traditional discourse with "the Cuban exile capital of Miami" as its center, symbolized by "its unmitigated nostalgia for the Batista epoch, its proud ties to the CIA, its tolerance for terrorism, its racial politics, and its control over the media" (de la Campa, 2000: 82). These center-periphery dynamics change when the perception is conceived from the periphery. Thus in *Memory Mambo* it is from the periphery of the US literary space that the Cuban Revolution, traditionally treated as a rejected center by the dominant exilic narrative, finds a central position in the novel. Juani recognizes this distinction: "[Gina] started telling me about the importance of the Cuban revolution (as if I, a Cuban, didn't know), and what it meant to Puerto Rican independence, and how throwing off *yanqui* imperialism was the right thing to do" (Obejas, 1996:

130). The takeover of the communists in Cuba symbolizes a potentially inspiring model of resistance to alleviate the neocolonial status of Puerto Rico: “[...] Gina and her friends began reminiscing about their trips to Cuba, about helping on sugarcane cutting brigades, and hearing Fidel speak at the Plaza of the Revolution for hours [...]. They found it all inspirational, a blueprint for what they envisioned for Puerto Rico” (Obejas, 1996: 129). For Gina, the Cuban Revolution signifies a sense of belonging and purpose in life: “I was jealous that she [Gina] and her friends knew so much about my country, and I knew so little [...]. I hated their independence movement not for political reasons, but because it seemed to give them direction. And hope” (Obejas, 1996: 133). Hence, while the Cuban uprising is inscribed as an archetype of the Latin American liberation movement as a symbol of cultural and moral superiority in the sense of José Martí’s essay *Nuestra América* (*Our America*, 1891), Juani rejects this view in her search for identity in Chicago.

As some scholars suggest (Das, 2012; de la Campa, 2000), the Cuban exile community has faced isolation from the Anglo as well as the Latino society. De la Campa states that the Miami-based “exile national superiority” might lead to a “nationalism [that] begets a sense of isolation, if not arrogance, that may well keep all Cubans from any sense of belonging—to the family of Latin American nations, to Latino alliances, or even to the US concept of Americans at large” (de la Campa, 2000: 14). In an expression of this idea at the personal level, the fear of loneliness and isolation is also the driving force behind the Juani’s inability to challenge her family’s essentialist attitudes, which she strongly disagrees with: “I didn’t have an escape, and I didn’t want to be rejected” (Obejas, 1996: 124). In contrast to Juani’s need for acceptance, the protagonist’s family is depicted as socializing with neither the Anglo nor the Latino segments of the Chicago population.

In the novel, Cuban-American isolation is contrasted with the Pan-American solidarity proclaimed by the Puerto Rican character, e.g. bonding with other racialized ethnic groups like African Americans. These relationships is inscribed in music. “Because of Gina’s politics [...] I put away a lot of old salsa and male-sung boleros (because they encouraged women to romanticize instead of working on real relationships), and replaced them with *Nueva Trova* and *Nueva Canción* [...], Lucécita Benítez, Haciendo Punto en Otro Son, and lots of instrumental jazz, especially by African Americans” (Obejas, 1996: 116). The treatment of the Cuban Revolution is shown as valorized within a wider Latin American and Pan-American cultural family.

As we have seen, the Cuban Revolution serves as a watershed moment of Latin American history as well as a point of identification or rejection in the problematic process of minority identity construction. Accordingly, the novel

portrays the Cuban Revolution as a fortuitous event through cultural referents: by giving the voice to a Puerto Rican female character who dialogues with the Cuban-American family, Obejas draws the reader's attention to symbols and triumphs of the Cuban Revolution.

One symbol of the revolution *par excellence* is represented by the images of Fidel Castro in various settings around the world that the Puerto Rican character Gina has decorated her bedroom with: Fidel with a cigar in his teeth or with a dove on his shoulder as he makes a speech. In addition, intertextuality with the words of the 19th century Cuban nationalist José Martí is featured: "I have lived inside the monster and know its guts; and my sling is the sling of David" (Castro, Second Declaration of Havana, 1). José Martí, called the Apostle of the Revolution, uttered this metaphor shortly before his death in battle against the Spanish, and Castro subsequently repeated the words in the opening of the Second Declaration of Havana in 1962 after the expulsion of Cuba from the US-dominated Organization of American States. The Puerto Rican character repeats this metaphor of living inside the monster in comparing herself to Martí as she performs her activities against *yanqui* imperialism.

Another cultural referent is the sugar cane cutting brigades praised by the Puerto Rican character as representing the difference between the revolution's collectivist spirit and the selfish individualism of the US. Further, the triumph of the Cuban Revolution is supported by an allusion to the *Nueva Trova* and *Nueva Canción* musical movements, as referenced above. De la Campa identifies "the somewhat popular political songs known as *Nueva Trova*" with "Cuba's new cultural forms and developments" (de la Campa, 2000: 103). He insists that these songs feature textual ideas along with the rhythm in that they signified "a creatively politicized combination of serious poetry and guitar music" (de la Campa, 2000: 154). In contrast to the music of Miami, the Cuban political songs of the 1960s and 1970s that spread across Latin America may at first sound apolitical, showing few ethnic or nationalist traits (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 120). Nevertheless, Pérez Firmat digs a bit deeper to describe how "[a]t bottom the Miami sound is political through and through; but it is politics that denies politics, that seeks nonpolitical redress for political grievances" (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 123). In his analysis of lyrics from popular songs of the 1980s and 1990s, two dominant thematic lines can be traced—on the one hand, consumerism and material wealth, on the other, the tribulations of love. These two themes, however, are in fact two sides of the same coin, with both a reaction to the frustration caused by the loss of the native island. Along these lines, in *Memory Mambo* the themes and aesthetics of the Cuban Revolution are pitted in opposition to the dominant and conventional Cuban-US anti-Castro, anti-Revolution aesthetics.

6 Poetics of Orality

Given the significance of music and dance in the novel, Obejas' work might be analysed in terms of a poetics of orality, a Caribbean trait which according to Édouard Glissant represents a counterpart to certain Western poetics of writing. "[I]t is nothing new to declare that for us music, gesture, dance are forms of communication, just as important as the gift of speech [...]. For us, it is a matter of ultimately reconciling the values of the culture of writing and the long-repressed traditions of orality" (Glissant, 1999: 248–249). In Obejas' case, the poetics of orality comprises both songs and dance, not only because of the title of the novel and one of its motifs, but also because of the allusions to and intertextuality with song lyrics. Mambo represents a metaphor for the assimilation process. Pérez Firmat puts it succinctly: "Born in Cuba, made in the USA, mambo itself is a one-and-a-half." (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 12) In the words of the Cuban-American Juani, memory mambo signifies her assimilation into US culture: "one step forward, two steps back" (Obejas, 1996: 194). Sharing songs and rhythms signifies affiliation with the Cuban community. Obejas cites song lyrics from the 1966 radio hit "96 Tears" by the Chicano group Question Mark and the Mysterians: "We look at each other. Then, together, we start singing: '*Too many teardrops/ for one heart to be cryin.*' I drum on the edge of the tub. '*You're going to cry/ ninety-six tears ...*'" (Obejas, 1996: 49).

Obejas is certainly not the first Spanish-American author to allow the aesthetics of popular music to inform literary practices. Her work follows in the footsteps of other Cuban writers (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 149) such as Guillermo Cabrera Infante (*Tres tristes tigres/ Three Trapped Tigers*, 1967), Severo Sarduy (*De donde son los cantantes / Where the Singers Come From*, 1967), Lisandro Otero (*Bolero*, 1985), Oscar Hijuelos (*The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*, 1989). The last author on this list, the Cuban-American Hijuelos, deserves a brief note here. Despite chronologically coinciding with the Miami one-and-a-half generation, he belies this categorization since he was born in the US in 1951, thus his writing was not informed by Revolution/Exile dialectics (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 136; Ortíz, 2012: 418). His significance for the Cuban-American republic of letters is nevertheless indisputable, however, especially as the first US Latino to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1990.

Besides popular music, other strategies position center/periphery in Obejas' *Memory Mambo* in interesting ways. In addition to orality and the frequent use of Spanish expressions which supply the novel with a taste of Cuban exoticism, another leading aspect of Obejas' poetics is humor, by which she destabilizes and deconstructs the traditionalist discourse of Cuban-American exiles, e.g. regarding the Revolution. To sum up Obejas' aesthetic practices, the weight

the novel gives to popular music and dance—both inscribed in the Caribbean poetics of orality, bilingualism and biculturation—can be considered a significant contribution to the deperipheralization of Cuban-American literature.

Another feature of the writing of Obejas as well as many other authors of her generation is the autobiographical nature of their work, which also might be described in terms of memoir or Bildungsroman. Strategies include using first person narration to represent the individual's life experience and coming of age in a broader community. As shown above in this chapter, related genres have been exploited by other Latinx as well as Cuban insular writers.

7 A Comparison to Cristina García, Another One-and-a-Halfer

Like Achy Obejas, Cristina García may be positioned within the wider context of Cuban-American fiction. Both authors deal with the theme of nostalgia and the role of memory as a tool in reconstructing the Self. Unlike *Memory Mambo's* focus on life in the US, however, García's novels tend to demonstrate how the Cuban Revolution and subsequent exile cause a split within a family. For both writers, the revolution symbolizes a wound that is not (merely) political, but familial and generational. García's novels *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992) and *The Agüero Sisters* (1997) are portrayals of reconciliation between family members on both sides of the Florida strait who are coming to terms with the trauma of separation. This theme can also be found in *Memory Mambo*, as Juani suffers from the lack of communication with and within her family provoked by the revolution. Nevertheless, unlike *Memory Mambo*, García's novels maintain the traditional ideological division of the exilic anti-Castro discourse in the US diaspora (Lourdes in *Dreaming in Cuban* and Constanca in *The Agüero Sisters*) versus the discourse of the Revolution on the island itself (Celia in *Dreaming in Cuba* and Reina in *The Agüero Sisters*).

Concerning poetics, unlike Obejas, García makes use of the Afro-Cuban religion Santería as an important motif in reconstructing the self of Cuban subjects living in the US. The practice of this syncretic religion in the US by *creyentes* (believers) signifies cultural and spiritual connection with Cuba (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 123). The chants and rituals of Santería also represent another form of orality.

The use of Caribbean poetic elements like orality (in Obejas) and Santería (in García) have contributed to deperipheralization of the Cuban-American literary voice. In their works, the Caribbean peripheral aesthetics have developed a certain measure of autonomy. These elements considered exotic in

the center were imported or influenced by colonization from Africa to the Caribbean, then from the Caribbean to the US by authors like Obejas and García. The orality was, in effect, colonized twice; first by the Spanish and then by the English language. Consequently, the oral tradition was assimilated as part of the national literary and cultural heritage in the center (Havana) and was thus given centrality and assigned literary merit. These Caribbean elements were subsequently introduced as new aesthetic norms in the US literary space. Through the *littérisation* of oral practices, orality could be employed to forge a new sort of language. Through subversion of US linguistic and literary conventions (using orality and bilingualism), these writers have established a new hybrid, hyphenated Cuban-American cultural identity and Cuban-American writing.

This sort of hybrid and hyphenated *cubanidad* have become literarily and politically emancipated from both the Cuban insular and US literary world. By the linguistic and cultural appropriation of these peripheral components in the US literary space, Obejas and García have achieved a national and international literary presence, demonstrating the autonomy and legitimation of the Cuban-American literary space. Their texts have been translated not only from Spanish into English, but also from the oral to the written tradition. The works bear witness to assimilation, bilingualism, and transculturation, i.e. “the passage from one culture to another” (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 140) into a state of biculturation between two cultures, two worlds, and two languages (Pérez Firmat, 2012: 127). This liminality is characteristic of the one-and-a-half generation, a population which navigates between two different cultures. Authors like Obejas and García have achieved literary modernity by employing elements considered peripheral in the dominant Anglo-American literature. Elements of African and Caribbean culture complement the biculturation and bilingualism.

8 Conclusion

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 and the end of the Cold War in 1989 represent two key historical points, both of which spurred on new aesthetic and literary practices. For decades, the specificity of Cuban-American culture has thrived within a dual peripheral position: in relation to Cuba and in relation to North American Anglophone centrality. Consequently, the emergence from this peripheral position also happens in both directions through an argumentative intersection. *Mambo Memory* shows that it is possible to oppose the peripheral position of the Miami exile to an even higher degree of peripher-

alization, but at the same time to link this intra-American peripheralization to Havana's centrality as well as to the wider Hispanic dimension and Pan-Hispanic discourse (José Martí). At the aesthetic level, this process is complemented by a reassessment of linguistic, musical and cultural elements once considered aesthetically peripheral and exotic, but have now been elevated to the center. The literary moves of Obejas, García, Cabrea, Hijuelos and other authors show readers ways of valorizing the periphery at the border of two centers, two languages, two cultures.

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The Caribbean Diaspora and the Construction of Thirdspace in Josefina Báez's Performative Text *Levente no. Yalayorkdominicanyork*

Martina Bařinová

In her experimental text *Levente no. Yalayorkdominicanyork* the Dominican artist Josefina Báez (1960–) explores the home of Latina immigrants in New York—also her home. The novel reflects ideas Dominicans hold about the United States as well as the clash of these impressions with the reality and prejudices they are confronted with upon arriving in the new place. The text revolves around diaspora and closely related questions of centrality and marginality: How do categories such as ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic and legal status interplay with the situation of a woman in a capitalist, Eurocentric society? Or, from the opposite point of view, how are these categories perceived through the uncensored lens of a woman? And finally, who is this woman, a Dominican living in a poor neighborhood of a global metropolis, writing for?

Josefina Báez, performer, dancer and poet, has been exploring the lives of female Hispanic immigrants to the United States since the 1980s. She reveals the challenges and transformations faced by this population, their understanding of their own identity, and the possibilities which open up in the new place. Although her writings and theatre performances can be considered more cult than mass culture (which can be said about nearly all contemporary Caribbean authors, in contrast with musical artists performing in rap, reggeaton and other popular genres), critics appreciate Josefina Báez for bringing the culture of the Dominican diaspora to a wider audience and for actively participating in it. As described by Silvio Torres-Saillant: “[Báez's performance] offers an open ontological frame where everything that is present in the life of migrant communities can be constituted to take part in the formation of Dominican nationhood in and outside the island” (in: Gozenbach Perkins, 2014: 169). The success of Báez's texts and performances is a product of her own personal experiences through long decades of continuous work in the areas of theatre, poetry and philosophy. In 1986 Josefina Báez founded the theatre company *Latinarte/Ay Ombe* in New York; she is also the author of the books of poetry *Camarada, la dicha no está jugando / Comrade, Bliss Ain't Playing* (2008) and *Como la*

Una / Como Uma (2013). Her performative text *Dominicanish* (2000) was well-received in her home city as well as abroad.

Issued in 2012 by the publishing house Latinarte, *Levente no. Yolayorkdominicanyork* (here on *Levente no*) is composed of stories shared among a group of Hispanic women who live in one building in the New York neighborhood Washington Heights. Through these intertwining narratives Báez shows that the category of gender cannot be separated from other factors which define the identity of an immigrant. As a continuing extension of *Levente no* to the present moment, Josefina Báez publishes the blog “from Ni é,” in which she reacts to current events throughout the world and at home through short comments on everyday situations in Ni é (the apartment building in New York where the women live), elsewhere in the USA, and in the Dominican Republic. She has offered opinions, for example, on the pandemic, US presidential elections as well as the Black Lives Matter movement.

Similarly to Josefina Báez, other contemporary Dominican writers have overcome the understanding of *dominicanidad* (Dominicanness) as embedded merely within the limits of the island. This also reflects the fact that most of these authors also live outside of Dominican Republic. Caribbean literature maintains a precarious position in the competitive international book market, with local reading publics on and off of the island itself preferring to consume more easily digestible products of popular culture. Nevertheless, the generation of authors born after 1960 has been very productive. Among those whose works have been successful internationally are Rita Indiana Hernández, the author of musical projects, poetry and cult prose whose novel *La Mucama de Omicunlé* (2015) won the Mario Vargas Llosa award as well as Junot Díaz, the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for the novel *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2017). These authors and their peers such as Aurora Arias, Rey Andújar, Juan Dicient, Frank Báez and others all explore the core themes of globalization, migration and life in a big city characterized by violence and consumer culture. Miguel D. Mena has described the work of this generation of writers as one that transgresses the identification with / dependence on the island in favor of individuality: “The feeling now is that the *Island* has vanished and is only a background or a backdrop. What counts—well in the vein of René del Risco—is the plain subject, full, aware of its limits, willing to do anything to finally be and be there, wherever desires take him, not only where History places him.” (Mena, 2010: 13)¹

1 “La sensación de ahora, es que la *Isla* se ha esfumado y es sólo un fondo o un trasfondo. Lo que cuenta—bien en la onda de René del Risco—, es el sujeto llano, pleno, consciente de sus argos límites, dispuesto a todo con tal de ser y estar finalmente ahí, adonde los deseos lo lleven, no sólo donde la Historia lo sitúe.”

Besides Josefina Báez, several other playwrights and performers of contemporary Dominican and transnational Dominican theatre have explored the experience of living in diaspora as well as the trope of a (idyllic or actual) return to the island. Chiqui Vicioso examines these themes in relation to womanhood in her works of theatre as well as poetry; Vicioso is also the author of essays about theatre as well as works of literature on unique women in Dominican history. The hard experience of Dominican sex workers and other female immigrants in Argentina is reflected in the theatre pieces of María Isabel Bosch and Ingrid Luciano Sánchez, Dominicans based in Buenos Aires.

In the introduction to the anthology *El Caribe y sus diásporas: Cartografía de saberes y prácticas culturales*, Anja Bandau and Martha Zapata Galindo point out the importance of pop culture and media for identity formation within (trans)Caribbean communities. These cultural artefacts, which include everything from music, media and fashion products to literature, circulate between the continents, and they complement ongoing acculturation processes in metropolises around the world. New York in particular is the home of a large Dominican community which significantly expanded in the 1960s when a large number of leftist intelligentsia emigrated during the dictatorship of Joaquín Balaguer.

Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof probes the situation of Dominicans living in New York in the book *The Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York* (2008). He refers to Santo Domingo and New York (the city with the second largest population of Dominicans in the world) as the two capitals of Dominican Republic (Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, 2008: x). Hoffnung-Garskof's study explores the complicated relationship of Dominicans towards the United States. On the one hand, American models are accepted and even looked up to by the society, as they represent an ideal of success. Moreover, the money earned by the family members in the USA form a significant part of the incomes for many households on the island. The idealization of the American dream logically leads to the initial desire to move to this country of better opportunities, and then to look and live like white Americans, an attitude which is embodied in the word "*blanqueamiento*." On the other hand, there is a clear resentment of many Dominicans toward "gringos." An antiimperialist disposition has persisted since the American invasions of the Dominican Republic in the second half of the 20th century (Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, 2008: 8–9). These conflicted attitudes and feelings are expressed by the well-known quote "Yankees, go home, but take me with you."²

2 Josefina Báez also reflects upon this reality on several occasions in *Levente no*, for example in a dialogue between two neighbors recalling the popular Dominican comedian Freddy Beras

Despite the ambivalent relationship toward their northern neighbor, the Caribbean and New York have become interconnected, with customs, knowledge, dialects, rituals, products of culture and social structures circulating between them. Susanne Lettow and Martha Zapata Galindo refer to this circulation as the “coloniality of knowledge” (*colonialidad de saber*) (Lettow, Zapata, 2011: 26). The authors use the term “glocalization” in reference to diasporic communities, as they consider it more productive than working within the “global versus local” binary (Lettow, Zapata, 2011: 28). The question of marginality becomes complex in *Levente no.*, since it problematizes the center-periphery dichotomy on several levels, for example the relationship between the Dominican Republic and the USA as one of a former colony in relation to an economic power. Another level is that of the urban periphery in relation to the central areas of the big city in the sense of economic, employment and legal mobility. A third level represents the marginal situation of a working-class colored woman and/or single mother in the patriarchal society.

To challenge binary conceptions of identity (e.g. national, gender, ethnic), a number of postmodern feminist critics have worked with the concept of “thirdspace,” based on Henri Lefebvre’s theories of social space. In a conception reworked by Edward Soja, the third or lived space represents the field where Lefebvre’s perceived space and conceived space meet and clash in the lived experience (for details see below). In *Levente no.* the theoretical notion of this lived space takes on the form of the apartment building called “Ni é,” a word used by the author to refer to the perineum, the space anatomically found between the vagina and anus. As a metaphor, it represents the “in-between” place, a place which “is neither here nor there.” This word/sound also plays with the sound of pronunciation of the phrase *ni es acá ni es allá* (it is neither here nor there). Ni é represents a place where the women and other inhabitants can create their own territory with their own politics and language.

My aim in this case study is to explore the narrative tools Josefina Báez uses to represent the lived reality of the diasporic community as a social space in which the protagonist is able to free herself of the cultural stereotypes and inherited hierarchical structures. This analysis of the novel considers theories of social space and globalization through the approaches of various contemporary intellectuals. *Levente no.* also deals with questions of the identity and fluidity by which the protagonist is able to transgress the limitations of her

Goico, who fled the country during Trujillo’s régime. The women comment on the irony of the fact that many like Goico “chased the Yankis away,” but in the end will themselves live and die in the USA. “And look where we are living ... and will die ... Yanki go home and lle-vame contigo.” (Báez, 2012: l. 291).

social position. In the next part of this chapter I will discuss the question of identity in the Caribbean region and in the diaspora, in part by referencing studies by the Jamaican historian Stuart Hall and the Cuban writer and scholar Antonio Benítez Rojo.

1 Diaspora, Identity and the Esthetics of Hybridity: Call Me Kay

The protagonist and narrator of this coming-of-age story is twenty-four year old Kay, whose full name is Quisqueya Amada Taína Anaisa Altagracia Indiga.³ She is a first generation US born *dominicanyork* (as Dominicans living in New York call themselves), daughter of a divorced mother. Kay doesn't speak English very well, and she works in a factory for little money. In the first part of the text, Kay introduces herself by rejecting all the stereotypes that may be associated with her origin, for example by choosing the universal nickname Kay. Throughout the text, Kay emphasizes the rich cultural and linguistic knowledge she can draw on by flowing between the Anglo and Latino culture, an ability reflected by her code-switching and use of Spanglish.

Choosing one or another language may entail a political or emancipatory intention, as is revealed in *Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza* by the Chicana writer and scholar Gloria Anzaldúa, one of the pioneer authors to explore the issues of border identity from the female perspective. Nevertheless, while in Anzaldúa's works the Spanish language is related to her roots, and the author emphasizes the importance of connection with the land of Texas and the syncretic traditions of this region, Josefina Báez understands the border identity or bicultural belonging as fluid and always changeable. For Báez, the answer to "Where is home?" is "where I am right now" and "Who am I?" represents a fluid, contextual and always transforming state of being/doing. For Kay, her actual home is the in-between, in *Ni é*. In Kay's words: "When I am here,

3 This name, as Feliz Pache explains, contains within it "different ethnicities and beliefs which have converged into the bodies of Dominicans throughout the history." ("el personaje engloba las diversas etnias y creencias que históricamente convergen en un cuerpo dominicano"): *Quisqueya* is the Taíno name of the island; *amada* (the loved one) symbolizes her love to this place; *Taína* is a reference to the heritage of the original inhabitants as well as a reminder of the genocide which nearly led to the annihilation of this ethnic group. *Anaisa* is a voodoo goddess (Anaisa Pye) who is the protector of love in the family; this name also connotes the importance of the African culture in Dominican Republic and Haiti. *Altagracia* on the other hand relates to the Catholic religion, in which the Virgen de la Altagracia is the spiritual guard of the Dominican people, while *Indiga* has etymological roots in "indicum," which means "from India" (Feliz Pache, 2020: 14).

I live like they live here. When I am there, I am there ... Here, it is mine. And there too. I have a permanent residence in Ni é." (Báez, 2012: l. 170)

Kay is proud of her Dominican roots, as they embody a vivid, authentic part of her very being. Kay's Dominican heritage is reflected in everyday practices, such as housework, body care, and in the experience of the sensory inputs, including the tastes, sounds and rhythms of music as well as sexuality. In these passages, the narrator uses Dominican Spanish and sometimes vernacular English, whereas neutral English is used to represent the discourse of the authorities of the white Anglophone, dominant society (white collar workers, teachers, academics). The following passage, in which Kay recalls and paraphrases a school psychologist's report, is a demonstration of the two contrasting points of view of the immigrant's culture:

Her family can't understand her devotion to books. They are clean but very loud. Their eating habits are insufficient and not nutritious enough, as science can prove. And still, Kiskiya? Kosquiya Amara has an unbelievable rich vocabulary, exuberant critical thinking abilities and incisive humor [...] But she is too passionate, too emotional. Too verbal. Too direct. Too Hispanic. Pardon, Latin.

Báez, 2012: l. 41–43

To counter the psychologist's stereotypes, Kay goes on by naming all the aspects of her life that show how rich and diverse diasporic culture is, with its tastes and rhythms the source of pleasure and quality.

Your face drew a blank when I told you my comfort food. Yes. I have the privilege of tasting yours and mine. And I would keep mine by choice. *Arepitas de yucca*, chocolate with *maicena*, *yuniquecas*, *bollos de harina de maíz* (don't forget to sprinkle some anis seeds) and *morir soñando*. [...] Get your dictionary to translate my comfort zone. And your brain will explode. So your tastebuds. I understand. And could not care less.

BÁEZ, 2012: l. 39–41

These passages show how Kay can draw on resources from both American and Dominican culture, an ability which gives her an advantage. It may be that the equipment of her hybrid culture is even more suited for the world we live in and the world soon to come, thus it should in no way be seen as merely "marginal" or "peripheral." And those who stand closer to the "center" of power in the present may begin to feel a "lack" if they ignore the glocal dimension of their community.

Levente no. is written in fractured, hybrid language, and during her performance Josefina Báez also works with the intonation, intensity and pace of speech as well as with various accents. The emphasis on the oral quality of the presentation is a narrative strategy that makes it possible to mediate herself through the plurality of categories that form the reality of a Black-Dominican-mother-daughter-lover-partner. All of these aspects interact within and come through the historical and lived experience of one woman. The text is composed of anecdotes of the female inhabitants of the building Ni é, who among themselves create a mosaic of stories of adaptation. In the conversations among these women lingers the question: Where do I belong and which culture is mine? An example of this process is this dialogue about washing clothes:

Once you leave there, it will never be the same. It is a blessing or a curse. I don't know. But I know that it will never be the same [...] Do you know what I really lost living here? Washing well my clothes. Now I can barely wash my underwear. This pulsation has disappeared when I migrated to this country ...

BÁEZ, 2012: l. 742–745

In his essay “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” the Jamaican historian Stuart Hall distinguishes between two ways of understanding cultural identity. The first one is the idea of one shared culture, which includes a number of specific characteristics, practices and the collective history that nations have in common. The other admits ruptures, fragmentation and differences. Stuart Hall recognizes the empowering potential of the first approach in the formation of relatively recent social movements (such as feminism and reactions to colonialism) that have influenced Afro-descendant communities. Although he himself considers it partially a construct, he explains that the concept of “oneness” constitutes a symbolic referent for the diasporic community and the essence of its creative self-representation. Referring to Frantz Fanon, who argues that this “imaginative re-discovering” of identity is often fueled by a secret hope that postcolonial societies will find something that transcends the misery of the present, Hall ponders whether this practice is “not [one of] re-discovery, but the production of identity” (Hall, 1990: 223–224).

Josefina Báez also considers the idealization of African or Afro-Caribbean identity to be rather overstated. In the beginning of the novel, this standpoint is articulated in a dialogue between two neighbors, with one explaining to the other that the color of her skin or hair speaks for itself, and that she does not depend on labels for self-definition.

- Me. I am Afro-Dominicana.
- Ah, afro what?
- Afro-Dominicana. Afro-África ... get it?
- Are you going to look for luck with the negros from here? If it's not that, you should know that the title is not necessary. They invented it here, at the university, just for talking shit, politics. Sure there is a professor-man-with-title-making living out of it. But remember, here are negros like us, but they are a-me-rican. I haven't seen no Black person calling themselves African American. They are Black. The end. (Báez, 2012: l. 232–233).

Likewise, the following fragment of a discussion in a beauty salon can be read as a metaphor of a negotiation of one's ethnic or national identity. Kay comes to the conclusion that the need to identify with one certain group or model is overestimated.

- Dominican blowout. Dominican beauty salon. Dominican style. Dominican hair salon Ta! We will teach the *morenas*⁴ not to put so much Vaseline in their buns, so that their hair get free and shakes nicely.
- That won't make you any whiter.
- And if keep my afro it won't make me any more black.
- That's true too ... (Báez, 2012: l. 965–966)

These conversations reflect a process of selection or rejection of historical concepts through which Kay claims her own position regarding “how the Dominican or Afro-American identity should be” or “what it should look like.” Rather than following prescribed models, she develops her own, self-confident personality.

According to Stuart Hall, identity is chosen by or imposed upon the subject in relation to narratives of the past. He claims that the essence of the common historical experience of Caribbean nations lies in ruptures, separation, migration and discontinuity characterized by the constant oscillation between center and periphery (Hall, 1990: 243).

The concept of fragmentation is also essential for Antonio Benítez Rojo's notion of Caribbean aesthetics. In his eminent theoretical work *The Repeating Island (La Isla que se repite)*, Rojo calls the nations of the Antilles the “sea nations” (*los pueblos del mar*), as the element of ocean / the Caribbean sea is what unites them in their diversity. This is the case not only with respect to the geographic location of the islands, but also because of the energy characteristic of their constantly migrating inhabitants. Rojo compares this dynamism and its aesthetic expression to the sinusoid and asymmetric movements of

4 A brown woman, a mulata.

sea currents. In the midst of this chaos, the one place where everyone meets is rhythm, or *poly-rhythm* (ever-changing and overlapping rhythms of different cultures), a characteristic closely related to orality and performance. Rojo speaks of presentation of “a certain way” (“cierta manera”), meaning the improvised, collective act which helps the Caribbean civilization to face the violence that has permeated this region for centuries. In Rojo’s view, the roots of this violence lie in the hierarchical structure of the colonial society.

According to Benítez Rojo, the Caribbean oscillates between two dominant images: plantation and carnival. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of machinery, he compares the Caribbean to the plantation of capitalism. This dynamic, as he attempts to show, repeats itself in varied forms in the relationships which continue even today among the islands as well as between the islands and global hegemony. The power with which the Antilleans face violence is the ability to react,⁵ which culminates in carnival (a concept too complex in Rojo’s writing to fit into this short study). Precisely this improvisational and performative quality complemented by the ability to take a knowing step back from everyday challenges characterize the performances of Josefina Báez. She is thus able to, as Alexandra Gonzenbach Perkins describes, overcome the “suffering and obstacles that form a part of the migrant experience” (Gonzenbach Perkins, 2014: 19).

The essence of the question of “Caribbean identity” lies in the search for a point of amalgamation between the need for self-definition and the ideal of belonging to a certain imagined community (which can be a very strong engine to create social change), as well as between the reality of difference, fragmentation and cultural syncretism. Following from this discussion of Hall’s and Rojo’s viewpoints, the meeting ground for these cultures, the roots of which reach all the continents of our planet, can be seen as the expression of hybridity.

Hall adds that hybrid aesthetics and diaspora aesthetics can become a set of tools of subversion and resistance which provides to the Caribbean diasporic community “places from which to speak” (Hall 1990: 227). In *Levente no. a* a space is created, for example, by the use of the hybrid language shared by Hispanic women in similar life situations. Nevertheless, the question of identity

5 As an example, Rojo describes a scene he witnessed in 1962 when besides the hurricanes of the storm season another threat was hanging over Cuba, the possibility of Russia installing nuclear rockets on the island. While the radio is full of apocalyptic news and nationalist speeches, the writer observes the street from his balcony. He notices two old black women walking with confidence and elegance through the street, surrounded by golden dust and, simply, “knowing.” In the “certain way” of their stride he sees the embodiment of the ability to overcome the apocalypse by improvisation (Benítez Rojo, 1998: 25).

often becomes secondary in their conversations, as they center their creativity on solving everyday problems and seeking resources to make their lives better.

2 Center, Periphery and Body as the Ultimate Territory

In the familiar and safe environment of Ni é, the women can speak openly about sex and politics, as well as about their families, dreams and life goals. In this respect Shalina Mailla Pozo comments on the relationships in the novel between language and space as well as language and femininity. She writes that Josefina Báez in *Levente no.* liberates women of the ties of linguistic and conventional repression: “The tongue, organ which has been silenced for so long, is liberated in Ni é through the movement, voices, sounds and situation within the group of women.” (Mailla Pozo, 2013: 18) Mailla Pozo explains the word play in the title of the work. “Levente” is a term used to refer to a person who is in a constant movement from place to place. For the displaced women in the novel, Ni é represents a place where they have an opportunity to create new life, where they have control over their bodies and their language (Mailla Pozo, 2013: 18). As Emilia María Durán-Almarza points out, the fact that Báez claims a specific neighborhood as her home rather than the general Dominican community in New York as well as her celebration of her diasporic status enable her to transcend an understanding of home as a patriarchal institution with persisting hierarchical structures (Durán-Almarza, 2011: 77).

Kay describes Ni é as a “building of strong, sometimes sad, lonely women and children without father. Yeeah, every apartment like a doll house. But then again, that’s the real reality” (Báez, 2012: l. 1270). The inhabitants, whether they come from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Salvador, Colombia or another Latin American country, create a network of support and solidarity. What unites them is not only the shared experience of being an immigrant, but also the ordinary, everyday tasks such as shopping, cleaning, cooking, fashion, their relationships and conflicts with their partner, children or relatives back on the island. Ni é is a microcosm where the women are all equal in spite of their diversity, which can be summed up by Kay’s constataion that “in all apartments we cook the same things, just a bit different” (Báez 2012: l. 1520) and “Houses like Ni é can be found in every neighborhood. What’s important are the inhabitants, living on many maps at the same time” (Báez 2012: l. 1261).

Báez’s literary creation of a house-home-community is an aesthetic representation of the theoretical concept of thirdspace. Based on Lefebvre’s theories about social space, Edward Soja describes thirdspace as an intersection of the

material, physical space that surrounds us (first space, also called perceived space) and of the historicity or our cognitive ideas about this reality (second space or conceived space). Therefore the lived reality of the thirdspace requires a deconstruction of the traditional binary oppositions. Soja writes:

In postmodern reconstructions of contemporary life, the great modernist narratives that connect “fixed” community with emancipation are shattered. Another spatiality is recognized, one which cannot be so neatly categorized and mapped, where the very distinction between mind and body, private and public space and between who is inside or outside the boundaries of community is obliterated and diffracted in a new and different cultural politics of real-and-imagined everyday life.

SOJA, 1996: 116

For those activists, intellectuals and communities who choose marginality for themselves, the social space itself becomes the main battle-field in the struggle against oppression. For feminist postcolonial theorists and writers who see the inequality in urban spaces as a complex issue, the concept of thirdspace offers an approach from which to explore identity categories such as ethnicity and economic status in relation to gender. In the city space ruled by the geography of patriarchy, these feminist critics advocate for the formation and sustenance of “strong, resistant communities that face the conditions of the present moment creatively, as bell hooks wrote” (Soja, 1996: 110–111).

As examining the particular perspectives of the authors would require a longer discussion than this study allows, I will now briefly touch upon the aesthetic representation of the thirdspace in *Levente no.*, a place where lived reality acquires more tangible contours. In her radical openness, Josefina Báez not only names and acknowledges the diversity within one community, but also reflects the processes of change experienced by the protagonists. The women living in Ni é are aware of their marginal place within the Anglophone American society; this place, however, also allows them to see the situation in each of their countries of origin, their hybrid cultural heritage, and the ingrained hierarchical structures from a new perspective from which each woman can reevaluate her own possibilities.

One example is the story of Olga, who married in order to obtain residency in the United States. In an anecdote she describes how she imagined marriage just like in Venezuelan soap operas. When she learned that the reality is different—that is, her husband doesn’t expect a romantic dinner after returning home from work, but just sex—she had to “come up with her own version” of the script. The marriage meant the first step towards better opportunities in a new

country, but after some time Olga understood that she also has a choice. In this case the choice to leave the relationship. Only after finding a safe, supportive community did Olga realize her own value and could find courage to stand up for herself. “Of course we broke up. Because getting married also often means to fuck even when you don’t feel like it,” she concludes (Báez, 2012: l. 978–1000).

The processes of emancipation, or simply becoming conscious of one’s true situation, are represented mainly by the changes in the characters’ view of their own body and intimacy as well as their sensory experiences. The physicality of the body becomes a political category, a territory, a value that moves beyond the notion of body as a product of culture or biology.⁶ For an illustration, we can look back to dialogue in the beauty salon mentioned above. Among other features, this passage shows how the body encompasses a political category. The color and style of hair, for example, becomes important in defining the protagonist’s cultural identity. The lived dimension, on the other hand, is represented by the scene above about washing clothes, which reflects how the needs of self-care may change in relation to the physical conditions of a particular place.

3 From Theory to Living: Migration Is a Hanger

The female voices in *Levente no.* focus on the present, on the events they take part in on a daily basis and which they can influence creatively in terms of micro-politics, a concept also important for the Spanish philosopher and economist Amaia Pérez Orozco. In the theoretical publication *Subversión feminista de la economía. Sobre el conflicto capital-vida* (Feminist subversion of the economy. On the capital-life conflict, 2015), Pérez Orozco develops a critique of the capitalist economy based on “good being and bad being” (*el bien estar y el mal estar*). She claims that our society’s well-being must be evaluated in terms of the experiences of the every day struggles of individuals and communities on the periphery of the global neoliberal economy, such as migrants and single mothers as well as ethnic, gender and other minorities. If we place the sustainability of life at the center of our attention, she argues, we become interested in types of work that are not traditionally valued and remunerated in the cap-

6 This conception of body as a territory of many cartographies is inspired by Barbara Hooper’s idea of body-writing (somatography), for example in her unpublished manuscript *Bodies, Cities, Texts*: “[The body] is a lived space, a volatile space of conscious and unconscious desires and motivations—a body/self, a subject, an identity: in sum, a social space, a complexity involving the workings of power and knowledge and the workings of the body’s lived unpredictabilities” (in: Soja, 1996: 114).

italist patriarchal society such as the reproductive and caring work typically performed by women. For Pérez Orozco to “politicize life” means to have discussions on who cooks, how the housework is shared, and other “little things of the everyday” (Pérez Orozco, 2015: 40).

Pérez Orozco insists that prosperity cannot be evaluated based on a discourse of economic statistics and mass media nor solely on theory: “Certainly many studies have been written about the situation of domestic workers, but I doubt that there has been a book written by one of them” (Pérez Orozco, 2015: 42). Similarly, the Argentinean academic Jorge Locane considers the discourses of the media, which present the deterritorialized, neoliberal world as one happy global village, to be not only misleading, but indoctrinating. As an example, he describes three cases of immigrants in American metropolis. The first one is a white university professor from Argentina who lives within a social bubble of intellectuals with stipends and protected by the walls of a prestigious university in New York. The second is an illegal Mexican worker in the California marijuana fields. The third is a native Peruvian woman trying to make a living as a street-vendor in Santiago de Chile (Locane, 2016: 17). The immense differences in the life conditions of these three “global citizens” (in the second and third case we may rather use the term “economic migrants”) is an illustration of how important it is for any theory to consider all factors that influence the reality of an individual. In contrast to the model of the putatively successful global citizen elite class who determines trends and controls capital, subjects trapped in their locality with limited access to information and a minimal chance of mobility feel powerless, although they also desire to lead the lifestyle of the elites as depicted in the media. As these models are generally unreachable for these “locals,” their situation often becomes more and more painful and frustrating.⁷

In *Levente no*, these local communities are represented by the relatives of the residents of Ni é in the Dominican Republic who maintain an ambivalent relationship toward the United States. This is touched upon in the introduction of the present text by means of the study by Hoffnung-Garskof. The following scene takes place during the visit of an uncle living in the USA to his hometown.

7 With respect to “locality” Locane cites Zygmunt Bauman: “Being local in a globalized world is a sign of social deprivation and degradation. The discomforts of localized existence are compounded by the fact that with public spaces removed beyond the reaches of localized life, localities are losing their meaning-generating and meaning-negotiating capacity and are increasingly dependent on sense-giving and interpreting actions which they do not control [...] Some of us become fully and truly ‘global’; some are fixed in their ‘locality’—a predicament neither pleasurable nor endurable in the world in which the ‘globals’ set the tone and compose the rules of the life game.” (Locane, 2016: 51).

He really took it seriously with fixing of the race and returning home with a trophy. With his blond children speaking very fine *güiri güiris* [Spanish spoken by white tourists]. Grandma all paralyzed. The neighbors pale with envy and at least one cousin will cry and stay heartbroken as he sees the difference between him and el “americanito.” And even though they buy him pizza and bring newly smelling clothes. Even though they take him to hotels with beaches full of blond women with naked breasts that will soon turn red like a tomato. Even though they fill the fridge with things from magazines which grandma forbids him when the visitors-Santa-Slauses-without-beard don't see it. In spite of the rented car ... shalltheydieshalltheydieshalltheydie ... the cousin prays quietly so that nobody can hear him.

Báez, 2012: l. 1293–1295

On the one hand there is rejection of the center, on the other the desire to move to the center in pursuit of better opportunities. The veneration of the US models goes hand in hand with the feeling of inferiority and dissatisfaction personalized by the cousin in the scene above. The migrants already in the US see both sides of the coin, as personified by Kay and the other women of Ni é: “Migration is a hanger. And to stay back home is a hanger too. Life at its best. Hanger. Hanging. And handling.” (Báez, 2012: l. 1781) The question of where life is better and what one gains or loses by emigrating is proposed from the viewpoint of a woman who exists simultaneously among various peripheries.

By re-creating everyday worries and joys, Josefina Báez brings into light what Pérez Orozco calls the “politicizing of life.” The freedom to share their experiences, desires, problems and the sense of being part of the same reality gives the women of Ni é the strength to realize changes that lead to their emancipation and to a better quality of life for all. The experience of migration has had a positive impact on Kay's life, as it has taught her to witness, but not to internalize the racist and sexist standards which persist in Dominican communities, both on the island and outside of it. In this way, as Durán Almarza observes, Báez “is able to incorporate gender as an analytical category in her poetic examination of the formation of transcultural Dominican identities in the USA” (Durán Almarza, 2011: 88). As described above, one strategy by which she succeeds in accomplishing this is by working with the oral qualities of speech and performativity.

The novel *Levente no. Yolayorkdominicanyork* reflects several forms of marginality which a Latina immigrant in the USA has to face. At the same time, it transcends the traditional perception of these marginalities as a handicap

to show that the fragmentation, changeability and plurality characteristic for diasporic subjects can also bring an opportunity to develop a new dimension of personal freedom and resistance.

This case study has featured a parallel reading of Báez's novel / performance and the theoretical texts of selected contemporary scholars who have analysed globalization, migration and social communities as well as feminist critics who frame these topics within the condition of women. All of these discourses may be said to share one core underlying philosophy, albeit (fittingly here) expressed using different vocabulary. The emphasis of Báez on the oral language and performance of the lived experience gives her work a special nature by which she can reach diverse audiences as well as, most importantly, her own community.

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Gloria Anzaldúa: Opening up Space at the Border

Markéta Riebová

1 Voice

In the animal kingdom, the rule is, eat or be eaten; in the human kingdom, define or be defined.

THOMAS SZASZ (1973: 17)¹



“Soy la que escribe y se escribe / I am the one who writes and who is being written.” (Anzaldúa, 215: 3) In her passionate refusal to be defined by others, Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa² dedicated her life and art to defining her own existence on the Mexican American border. Her hybrid work *Borderlands. La Frontera. The New Mestiza*, which combines essay, poetry, autobiographical passages and political manifesto, has over the years become an extremely influential text.³ Since its first publication in 1987, it has inspired countless readers who have shared the painful/creative/enigmatic experience of intersecting

1 Thomas Szasz was a US psychiatrist of Hungarian origin.

2 Terminological note: In connection with Gloria Anzaldúa, we here use the terms Chicana author or Chicana writing, as her literary and theoretical work appears after the Chicano Movement and Chicano cultural revival and thus it openly proclaims its striving for equal ethnic and gender rights. The gender-nonspecific terms ChicanX and LatinX have come into use more recently than the text by Anzaldúa studied in this article. The politically neutral term Mexican American is also used to refer to people with Mexican ancestry living in the US who do not consider themselves connected ideologically or emotionally to the Chicano Movement or Chicano Renaissance. Further analysis of the terminological nuances can be found in: Březinová, Kateřina (2004). *El imaginario chicano. La iconografía civil y política de los mexicanos en Estados Unidos de América 1965–2000*. Praha: Karolinum, 35–43. An insightful personal confession related to the intricacies of the term Chicano/a is offered by Benjamín Alire Sáenz in his article En las zonas fronterizas de la identidad chicana sólo hay fragmentos (Sáenz, 2003: 87–113).

3 The title of the book will hereafter be abbreviated as *Borderlands*, whereas the word “Borderlands” will refer to the geographical area of the U.S. Southwest. *Borderlands* is formed by

and overlapping cultures. The conceptualization and metaphorical power of *la frontera* (border) and *mestizaje* (miscegenation) has also received great academic attention. María Socorro Tabuenca Córdoba acknowledges the energy of Anzaldúa's thinking: "It is in part due to her influence that the idea of 'the border' turned out to be very prominent in a number of academic disciplines since the mid-1980s, especially in the United States, where this image has served as a popular locus of discussion on monolithic structures" (Tabuenca Córdoba, 2013: 454–455). Alejandro Grimson considers Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* as one of the four main texts that sparked the development of border theory at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s (see Grimson, 2003: 15).⁴

Border thinking is based on the idea that the theoretical and the epistemic must have a lived dimension.⁵ In her writings, Anzaldúa systematically draws on this dimension, as her personality and positionality enable her to undergo the bordering experience from every possible angle: "her very homosexuality is the sexual counterpart of her mixed blood, her language is neither English nor Spanish but a constant switching of several codes, while her locus of discourse lies in the interstice between the two countries, in what she

two main parts: "Atravesando fronteras/ Crossing Borders" is mainly essayistic and is divided into seven chapters, while "Un agitado viento/ Ehécatl, The Wind" consists of six sections of poetry.

- 4 The other three foundational texts referred to by Grimson are Renato Rosaldo's *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (*Cultura y verdad: la reconfiguración del análisis social*, 1991); *Border Writings* (1991) by D. Emily Hicks; and the anthology edited by Héctor Calderón and José David Saldívar *Criticism in the Borderlands* (1991). Richard Cándida Smith comments further: "During the 1990s the concepts of 'borders' and 'borderlands' entered U.S. intellectual life with a sense of tremendous urgency. [...] The challenge of reincorporating the United States back into the Americas has prompted extensive symbolic investigation and creative activity." (Cándida Smith, 2003: 242) Considering the fact that the present book is being compiled in Central Europe, it is also important to mention a contribution by Czech scholar Tereza Kynčlová: "Chicanská ženská literatura: Hybridní identity a politické zápasy na mexicko-americké hranici" (Chicano Women's Literature: Hybrid Identities and Political Struggles on the Mexican-American Border) in: Pegues, Dagmar, Kynčlová, Tereza (eds.) (2011). *Cesta Amerikou. Antologie povídek regionálních spisovatelek* (*Journey through America. An anthology of short stories by regional women writers*). Brno: Host, 130–159. This anthology also outlines Gloria Anzaldúa's contribution to Chicana/ChicanX feminist theory and to border theory.
- 5 Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova understand the "lived dimension" in this context as the experiences of those who have been excluded from the production of knowledge by modernity. According to these authors, border thinking does not happen irrespective of modernity but in response to it as part of real life struggles against the colonial distribution of power. Thus "border thinking is the epistemology of the exteriority; that is, of the outside created from the inside" (Mignolo—Tlostanova, 2006: 206).

calls the *no-man's-borderlands*" (Savin, 1994). Anzaldúa's will to transcend center/periphery as well as other binaries (e.g. geographical, cultural, linguistic, racial, class, gender) drives her to open up space for ambiguity. She speaks from the Texas/Mexican border, although her message is not particular only to the American Southwest. She proposes that psychological, sexual, spiritual borderlands resonate wherever two or more cultures occupy the same space (Anzaldúa, 2012:19). Drawing on Anzaldúa, Walter Mignolo describes how "different historical conditions from which border positions could be developed as active de-colonizing projects, both epistemic and political from the lived experiences of diverse communities" (Mignolo, Tlostanova, 2006: 213). In this way, Anzaldúan thinking overcomes a concrete, local origin to become intelligible in other bordering locations, acquiring thus a global dimension. With this move by Anzaldúa to re/envision the border, the once exclusively peripheral positioning of Chicano/a literature is transformed and expanded into a global context.

2 Body

1,950 mile-long open wound
dividing *a pueblo*, a culture,
running down the length of my body,
staking fence rods in my flesh ...

GLORIA ANZALDÚA (2012: 24)



Borderlands evidences the metaphorical transfer of the border onto the writer's body, by which form is given to Anzaldúa's identification of the divided land/people with the painful physical and spiritual split she experiences. The autobiographical grounding of the work is fundamental: intimate knowledge of the conflicts and ambiguities of the Borderlands is the source of authority that enables her to theorize with regard to the complexity and otherness of this personal-cultural-geographical area. Panchiba Barrientos emphasizes how Anzaldúan *autohistoria-teoría* is based on personal biographies, history, memoir, storytelling, and myth. It is important that "the stories never subordinate each other," be they "simple narrations inspired by everyday life or complex theoretical and epistemological proposals that defy normative and

colonial imaginaries.” In this way Anzaldúa “resignifies the questions about what constitutes an experience that is worth telling” (see Barrientos, 2018: 66, 76).⁶

Gloria Anzaldúa was born in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas, right on the current geographical borderline between the U.S. and Mexico. She was born to a family with Spanish, German, Mexican and Native American roots, with her Basque ancestors among the first European settlers in the region. Acknowledging her own European heritage led her to realize how her own forebears had been conquistadors and, later, also the victims of conquest as geopolitical borders shifted again. Mexican independence from the Spanish Empire with the Treaty of Córdoba in 1821 established the First Mexican Empire and in its unstable political environment, the Republic of Texas declared its independence from Mexico in 1836, with the territory annexed by the United States 12 years later. As Anzaldúa (2012: 30–31, 267) describes the situation, Anglo land grabs and racism toward the Mexican population eventually caused the gradual loss of social status and the impoverishment of her family. Gloria was the first born daughter in a traditional Catholic family in which the distribution of the masculine and feminine gender roles was hierarchical and undisputed. She was born with an intense sensitivity to her body and sexuality in a community in which the corporal was repressed. Her unique situation thrust her into an arduous struggle for self-determination propelled by her strong character and an acute capacity of observation and questioning. She was born in 1942, which meant that she spent her childhood in the midst of the segregated world of Mexican American migrant agricultural workers. Hard work and strong-mindedness helped her to overcome the barriers of the educational system and later to achieve university degrees in the more progressive climate of the 1960s.⁷

Her move towards urban life, teaching as well as political and civic engagement in the 1970s caused Anzaldúa to rethink her childhood and youth experiences. One of the ways she channeled her new insights was to begin examining the idea of borders and divisions through theoretical and creative writing

6 “Sus historias a veces son simples y se centran en elementos de la vida cotidiana, otras veces ofrecen complejas propuestas teóricas y epistemológicas que desafían los imaginarios normativos y coloniales que nos ordenan. Esta autora alterna entre ellas sin dejar que una someta a la otra, resignificando las preguntas sobre qué es lo que constituye una experiencia que valga la pena ser contada.” (Barrientos, 2018: 66).

7 Anzaldúa received a B.A. in English, Art and Secondary Education from the University of Texas-Pan American (now University of Texas Rio Grande Valley) in 1968, and an M.A. in English and Education from the University of Texas at Austin in 1972.

as well as lecturing, which became especially focused in this direction after she left Texas for California in 1977. The 1980s saw Anzaldúa emerge as an important independent scholar of Chicana feminist theory who engaged in a number of projects, among these her striving to revalorize the role of Chicana activists in the Movement (see Jacobs, 2012: 6–39), her critical reading of traditional Mexican American gender roles (see Jacobs, 2006: 98–117), and her goals of developing an inclusive multicultural feminist theory that could identify and call attention to the particular problems of race and class encountered by non-white women. The most acclaimed results of her work are the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (co-edited with Cherríe Moraga, 1981) along with the genre-merging masterwork *Borderlands*.⁸

From her internal and external experience of the border, Anzaldúa theorizes on hybridity and all types of crossings: “Escribo para ‘idear’—the Spanish word meaning ‘to form or conceive an idea, to develop a theory, to invent and imagine.’ My work is about questioning, affecting, and changing the paradigms that govern prevailing notions of reality.” (Anzaldúa, 2015: 2). Tereza Kynčlová sees two objectives in Anzaldúa’s work: a therapeutic aim directed at alleviating and depicting the writer’s own spiritual and physical struggles, and a goal that mediates “healing the historical wounds” in general, in other words, “a somewhat utopian forming of coalitions among people arbitrarily divided into categories of race, culture, gender” (see Kynčlová, 2011: 133). This metaphorical union of the individual with the collective and the need for a new understanding leads Anzaldúa to envision what she and other theorists call “thirdspace,” a concept originated in the mid-1990s by Edward Soja elaborated on below.

8 Other works authored or co-authored by Anzaldúa include: *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1990); *Interviews/Entrevistas* (AnaLouise Keating (ed.), New York: Routledge, 2000); *This Bridge we Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (AnaLouise Keating (co-ed.), New York: Routledge, 2002); *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality* (AnaLouise Keating (ed.), Durham: Duke University Press, 2015). Along with various women illustrators, Anzaldúa also authored a series of children’s books featuring the protagonist Prietita, a young Mexican American girl.

3 Space

Landscapes are culture
before they are nature;
constructs of the imagination projected
onto wood and water and rock ...

SIMON SCHAMA (1995: 61)⁹



Anzaldúa's attachment to the space she was born into permeates all of *Borderlands*. She identifies with the dryland and dessert landscape, drawing energy and inspiration from the mythical space of Aztlán¹⁰ that corresponds with her native Southwest. She is intensely aware of Rio Grande Valley's violent history:

This land was Mexican once
was Indian always
and is.
And will be again.

ANZALDÚA, 2012: 25, 113

These lines may be found in both the first and final chapter of the essayistic section of *Borderlands* called "Atravesando fronteras/Crossing borders" in which a framework is created which supports the intertwining of the landscape and cultural history.

The spatial dimension and hybrid condition of *Borderlands* transverses geopolitical, cultural, linguistic, gender and other crossings. Anzaldúa introduces the reader into the multi-layered Southwest through a combination of

9 Schama's work *Landscape and Memory* opens in an interesting parallel to Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*. *Landscape and Memory* is a study of the relation between landscape and history/people in the homeland of his maternal ancestors on the contemporary Polish-Lithuanian border, where the border shifts over centuries have continued to cause contention among Lithuanians, Russians, Germans and Poles in terms of the land and its people.

10 Aztlán, or "the Land of white herons," is a mythical place of origin of the Aztec/Mexica/Tenochca people. Described in various ways in original Nahuatl histories, the legend of Aztlán re-emerged during the Chicano cultural revival in the 1960s, as according to popular Chicano legend this location corresponds precisely with the area of the Mexican American Borderlands.

voices that speak from various positions, each with a different language. Quoting the lyrics in Mexican American Spanish of a popular song by the *norteña* music band Los Tigres del Norte, Anzaldúa introduces “El otro México que acá hemos construido” (“The other Mexico we have built here”). A citation in English of an academic work by Jack D. Forbes and Eric R. Wolf follows in which Chicanos are linked to their indigenous roots. Finally, a confession of the writer’s affection to her homeland appears in a poem that moves back and forth between English and Spanish. The diversity of voices is combined with contrasting images of Borderlands: unbound in terms of nature, with the wind, the sand, the earth meeting the ocean, the waves, the spume, yet divided by human arbitrariness evident in the form of a rusted barbed wire fence stretching from Tijuana/San Diego to the Rio Grande Valley and the Gulf. Anzaldúa portrays the fence as an open wound:

The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture.

*Yo soy un puente tendido
del mundo gabacho al del mojado,
lo pasado me estira pa’ ’trás
y lo presente pa’ ’delante,
Que la Virgen de Guadalupe me cuide
Ay, soy mexicana de este lado.*

ANZALDÚA, 2012: 25

A wound but also a bridge: the border culture in Anzaldúan thought is the locus of death as well as of transformation, creativity, new possibilities. She conceptualizes it as blood merging/*mestizaje*. Her “third country—a border culture” (Anzaldúa, 2012: 25) is echoed a decade later in *Thirdspace*, a study of Los Angeles by Edward Soja (see above Part 3, Chapter 19). Inspired by Henri Lefebvre, Soja amplifies the traditional dyad of historicity and sociality by his turn to spatiality, i.e. the third/lived space. Thus he stresses the importance of “thirthing/othering” which lies in the constant openness of “both/and also” that replaces the duality of “either/or” (Soja, 1996: 70–82). This is where *Thirdspace* coincides with *Borderlands*, i.e. with the Anzaldúan way of introducing the tri-alectics of space in Chicano/a thinking.

Historicity emanates from Anzaldúa’s descriptions of the Rio Grande Valley, its invincible arid landscape, violent history and multiple cultural layers of

indigenous, Spanish and Anglo heritage.¹¹ Sociality is reflected in the author's representation of the strikingly uneven power distribution in the U.S. Southwest in matters of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and social status. Poems, essayistic passages, memories and intertextual quotes from 19th century Anglo newspapers and political proclamations serve Anzaldúa to uncover the devastating results of what it meant when in 1845 "The wilderness of Texas [had] been redeemed by the Anglo-American blood & enterprise," as William Harris Wharton, diplomat and senator from the new Republic of Texas, would have it (Anzaldúa, 2012: 29).¹² The deterritorialization of Mexican Americans prior to the Chicano Renaissance as witnessed by Anzaldúa is evident in many passages:

The Gringo, locked into the fiction of white superiority, seized complete power, stripping Indians and Mexicans of their land while their feet were still rooted in it. *Con el destierro y el exilio fuimos desuñados, destroncados, destripados*—we were jerked out by the roots, truncated, disemboweled, dispossessed, and separated from our identity and our history.

ANZALDÚA, 2012: 30

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- 11 An eloquent illustration of the presumptuous and exoticizing American perspective towards the Texas border area in the 19th century is offered in an assessment by José David Saldivar of John Gregory Bourke's period article *The American Congo* (*Scribner's Magazine*, Vol. vv., no. 5, 1894, 591–610): "While Bourke painstakingly surveys the landscape, flora, and fauna, he remains oblivious to his project of imperial gazing, collecting, organizing, and aestheticizing the landscape, flora, and fauna. His work as a travel writer-ethnographer of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands enabled and informed the imperial cultures of the United States to see the Mexicans of the borderlands as *pelados*, as 'lawless' ('The Rio Grande Mexican has never known what law is'), and as culturally inferior 'fatalists' who indiscriminately practice what he calls a 'weird pharmacy' and therapeutics of *curanderismo* (folk-healing medicine)." (Saldivar, 1997: 166–167) A thorough analysis of the roles of Mexican and Anglo population in the evolution of Texas is offered in the study by David Montejano *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).
- 12 In this context, the concept of "manifest destiny" is of importance. The term was first coined in 1845 by newspaper editor John O'Sullivan in his essay "Annexation" in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* in which the author urged the U.S. to annex the Republic of Texas. Such a mind-set can be linked as early as 1831 to what the French observer Alexis de Tocqueville referred to as "American exceptionalism," i.e. the widely held cultural belief of settlers of the United States that they were destined to expand their rule of North America westward all the way to the Pacific Ocean. This mentality can be traced back even further to the Calvinist theological doctrine of predestination brought to North America by the Puritans.

It is spatiality (or the third/lived space) that Anzaldúa refers to as she writes from the border, as spatiality can insert “a discourse into a space where the discourse is not allowed” to help “transcend the desire for the comfortable and known” (Cándida Smith, 2003: 236). Voicing the memories of the loss of land, exploitation in the fields, oppressive family hierarchies, language violence at school, and silencing at home enables her to empower herself through writing to reread border social relationships and values from a different perspective.

In Anzaldúa’s eyes, this “thirding/othering” (Soja, 1996: 81) is made possible in the Borderlands, as this space is thus capacitated to mix categories and open up space in alternative ways: “To survive the Borderlands/ you must live *sin fronteras*/ be a crossroads” (Anzaldúa, 2012: 217). This liminal space/state of in-betweenness is understood by Anzaldúa as a “Nepantla”: “Nepantlas are places of constant tension, where the missing or absent pieces can be summoned back, where transformation and healing may be possible, where wholeness is just out of reach but seems attainable” (Anzaldúa, 2015: 2). The writer takes up the term/concept from Náhuatl:¹³ she compares the Chicano/a experience to the state of disarticulation and disorientation of the Mesoamerican culture after conquest which brought about the cataclysmic breakdown of the Aztec empire and the immediate miscegenation of the indigenous and white/Spanish worlds (see Joysmith, 2015: 12). “Nepantla” stands for a space where two seemingly opposing views must be negotiated and synthesized, it is thus a space of change and transition which leads to new perspectives, knowledge and skills (see Cantú, 2013: 182). According to Anzaldúa, what is gained through creating such a space is the *facultad*: “the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities [...] a kind of survival tactic of people caught between the worlds” (Anzaldúa, 2012: 60–61).

Anzaldúa connects this “transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another” especially with and through Borderlands women (Anzaldúa, 2012: 100). The refusal to blindly accept the dualisms of fixed and opposing genders, national identities, geopolitical formations and social structures leads her to the concept of a “new *mestiza* consciousness” emblemized in the figure of La Malinche, the indigenous interpreter of the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés.¹⁴ As Elizabeth Jacobs explains: “The subversive image of female identity

13 The Náhuatl term is derived from the word *panotla* (bridge), which can be translated as “the land in-between” or “space in-between” (see Miguel León-Portilla qt. in: Joysmith, 2015: 12).

14 In his book *Imagined Globalization*, Néstor García Canlini develops an interesting chapter “Untranslatable Multiculturalism” on the absence of a positive term for miscegenation in English: “While in French, Spanish, and Portuguese, the words *métis*, *mestizo*, and *mestiço*

that recurs throughout the text is developed with references to Anzaldúa's own lesbian sexuality and a genealogy of indigenous female figures beginning with Coatlicue, the Aztec goddess of life and death." (Jacobs, 2006: 29) The spiritual renewal found in pre-Columbian mythology together with the art of mixing cultures are mirrored in an ancient metaphor with which Anzaldúa identifies herself with corn,¹⁵ then with tortilla making: "*Soy un amasamiento*, I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only has produced both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings." (Anzaldúa, 2012: 103)

Anzaldúa's reliance on the empowering energy drawn from the Mesoamerican goddesses (Coatlicue, Coyolxauhqui or Tonantzin) as well as women symbols of mestizaje (La Malinche, La Llorona) has been inspiring to many Chicana/ChicanX feminists as well as general readers. Nevertheless, this also represents a contentious point of her theory.¹⁶ Critical voices find her dependence on mythology excessively archaic and nostalgic. The Chicano writer Benjamín Alire Sáenz sees no sense in returning to the "traditional" spiritual values of the Mesoamerican people since the material conditions that were reflected in the Aztec religion are long gone. He refuses the Anzaldúan vision of the return to the *Tierra Madre*, pointing to the contradiction within her famous words ("This land was Mexican once/ was Indian always/ and is. / And will be again.") as embedded in the flawed concept of "land belonging to someone" (see Sáenz, 2003: 104–105).¹⁷ Similarly, David Johnson and Scott Michaelsen detect

have widespread use, there is no English equivalent [...] I find the absence of the word *mestizo*, with the potential to designate mixtures in a positive sense, now common in Romance languages, to be a symptom of how these matters are dealt with in English." (Canclini, 2014: 79–97).

- 15 "Indigenous like corn, like corn, the *mestiza* is a product of crossbreeding, designed for preservation under a variety of conditions. Like an ear of corn, the *mestiza* is tenacious, tightly wrapped in the husks of her culture. Like kernels she clings to the cob; with thick stalks and strong brace roots, she holds tight to the earth—she will survive the crossroads." (Anzaldúa, 2012: 103).
- 16 The idea of basing the Chicano/a cultural identity and homeland claim on the celebration of Aztlán and the Bronze Race had already been present in the Chicano Movement of the late 1960s, albeit with a distinctively masculine perspective. The expression Bronze Race has its origin in the poem *La Raza de Bronce* (1902) by the Mexican poet Amado Nervo, with the title later used again by Bolivian writer Alcides Arguedas in his 1919 study about the Andean indigenous people. In José Vasconcelos' famous 1925 book-length essay "*La raza cósmica*," Vasconcelos predicts that miscegenation will bring about a future "fifth race" in the Americas. In spite of its controversial nature, it was this last text that inspired many in the Chicano Movement.
- 17 "Al querer distanciarse de los discursos europeos dominantes que considera dualistas,

in the recurrent “link of the Mesoamerican to magic, transformation and healing” examples of the reifying esoteric stereotypes of pre-modern people (see Johnson, Michaelsen, 2003: 34).¹⁸

As for miscegenation understood as healing, Anzaldúa finds support in the iconic concept of “La raza cósmica” put forward by the “cultural caudillo” of the Mexican Revolution José Vasconcelos (Anzaldúa, 2012: 99), although her reading of the Mexican philosopher is quite unidimensional. Emphasizing the book’s celebratory passages on *mestizaje* as an inclusive counterpoint to racial purity, Anzaldúa omits entirely discussions of what today would generally be considered controversial aspects of the text (i.e. descriptions of racial superiority/inferiority, the notion of miscegenation as synthesis instead of diversity inclusion, and the spiritual/aesthetic/civilizing factor of miscegenation, all ideas that come from the classical Greco-Latin tradition, not indigenous traditions). According to Ada Savin¹⁹ and Benjamin Sáenz, Anzaldúa’s high estimation of *mestizaje* as the one solution reveals that *Borderlands* is in fact based on binary thinking after all:

Unfortunately, Anzaldúa falls into the binary thinking that she criticizes with such eloquence. To categorize the world in “European” and “indige-

opresores y racistas, Anzaldúa recurre a mitologías y culturas que honestamente no puedo creer sean en verdad las suyas. El reconocimiento de una ascendencia mixta no es, en sí mismo, problemático. Es mucho mejor reconocer las culturas antagónicas literalmente heredadas que basar nuestras identidades en nociones ridículas (y peligrosas) de «pureza» y «genealogía» [...] “Volver a los bienes espirituales «tradicionales» que estaban allí antes de la llegada de Cortés y compañía no tiene, prácticamente, sentido alguno. Las condiciones materiales que dieron origen a la religión azteca ya no existen. El lenguaje, la gramática, la manera de expresarse de Anzaldúa están, en última instancia, completamente hipotecados por una nostalgia que, a mi criterio, es inaceptable.” [...] “Lo más inquietante es que Anzaldúa se embarca, con su «poema» final, en un discurso imperialista con respecto a la propiedad sobre la tierra. La tierra, cualquiera sea ésta, nunca fue «india,” nunca fue «mexicana». Y hablando en términos de propiedad, la tierra nunca retornará a los pueblos indígenas que vivieron en ella antes de la conquista. Nunca ocurrirá otra vez. La conquista fue cruel, violenta, irrevocable. Sea cual sea nuestra imagen del futuro, éste no se parecerá al pasado.” (Sáenz, 2003: 103–105).

18 “el recurso de Anzaldúa pertenece, aparentemente, a algunos de los estereotipos más obvios de los pueblos premodernos (culturas dominadas por la magia, la metamorfosis, la sanación)” (Johnson, Michaelsen, 2003: 34).

19 “Having started out with the manifest will to reject all dichotomous thinking, any binary categorization, Anzaldúa proves eventually incapable of surmounting the very logic she has been attacking all along. Thus reaching the last pages of the book the reader stumbles over the very same oppositions the author had set out to abolish: white vs. black/mestizo, material vs. spiritual, sterile vs. fertile” (Savin, 1994).

nous” and also to try to unite both worlds through miscegenation actually equates a relapse into the “dual” thinking that does not express the complexity of the society we live in.

SÁENZ, 2003: 104²⁰

Rather than the utopian proposal to resolve the clash of cultures through *mestizaje* or ancient myths,²¹ a less contentious source of the value of *Borderlands* is its capacity to convey the complexity of the border, a space that compels people to negotiate and develop the *facultad* to survive and thrive (the complexity captured in the Anzaldúan term of “Nepantla”). The writer’s stress on hybridity and on being open to “a constant changing of forms” (Anzaldúa, 2012: 112) is a basic characteristic of third space and offers the foundation of her textual-theoretical border as a metaphor.

4 Language

The tremendous world that I have in my head. But how to free myself and free it without being torn to pieces? And a thousand times rather be torn to pieces than retain it in me or bury it. That, indeed, is why I am here, that is quite clear to me.

FRANZ KAFKA (Kafka, 1948: 288)



Writing can be taken as a form of freeing oneself from an unavoidable burden to express what must be expressed, sometimes involving the conscious risk of being “torn to pieces.” Considering the potential hybridity involved in

20 “Anzaldúa, lamentablemente, incurre en el pensamiento dualista que con tanta elocuencia crítica. Categorizar el mundo en « europeo » e « indígena » y tratar de unir ambos mundos mediante el mestizaje equivale a recaer, exactamente, en un pensamiento « dualista » que no hace justicia a la compleja sociedad en que vivimos.” (Sáenz, 2003: 104).

21 In this context a claim by Simon Schama may be of interest: “Of one thing at least I am certain: that not to take myth seriously in the life of an ostensibly ‘disenchanted culture’ like our own is actually to impoverish our understanding of our shared world. And it is also to concede the subject by default to those who have no critical distance from it at all, who apprehend myth not as a historical phenomenon but as an unchallengeable perennial mystery.” (Schama, 1995: 134).

complex linguistic and cultural contexts, drawing a parallel between a writer positioned in Prague at the beginning of the 20th century and an author from the 1980s Mexican American Borderlands might seem a stretch. Nevertheless, one can hear a distant echo of Kafka in Anzaldúa's proclamation of the ability to thrive "in all cultures at the same time/*alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro/me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio/ Estoy norteada por todas las voces que me hablan/ simultáneamente*" (Anzaldúa, 2012: 99). The literary language and structure of *Borderlands* masterly illustrates Anzaldúa's urgency to capture her sense of "being torn" in her writing from within the liminal state of "Nepantla." The articulation of this *nous* comes through various modes of perceiving the world through a mission which involves recreating the self, despite the possibility that this may also be self-consuming.

According to Savin, "one of the [Anzaldúa's] most noteworthy achievements is that of having convincingly incorporated the linguistic hybridity of the borderlands into the very substance of her literary work" (Savin, 1994). Formal innovations, linguistic code-switching and genre crossing flow throughout all the texts of *Borderlands*. Anzaldúa accumulates her reflections on Borderlands language and voice into the fifth chapter "How to tame a wild tongue." It begins with the following anecdote:

"We're going to have to control your tongue," the dentist says, pulling out all the metal from my mouth. [...] My tongue keeps pushing out the wads of cotton, pushing back the drills, the long thin needles. "I've never seen anything as strong or as stubborn," he says. And I think, how do you tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down?

ANZALDÚA, 2012: 75

Anzaldúa's memory of her "stubborn" tongue interfering with the dentist's work evokes the twin quality of tongue/language: an organ that preserves a physical body and simultaneously allows spiritual communication through speech. In her introduction to the book *Langues choisies, langues sauvées: poétiques de la résistance*, Christine Meyer also highlights this double-sidedness in the autobiography of Elias Canetti, the first volume of which is called *Die gerettete Zunge*.²² Meyer infers that for Canetti (born into the Sephardic community in Bulgaria, reaching maturity in Vienna, exiled in England in 1938) writing in Ger-

22 "The tongue set free." The pairing "Zunge/Sprache" in German correlates to "tongue/language" in English.

man meant saving his own “tongue” as a literal part of his body, not only an organ of speech, i.e. overcoming the threat of death (see Meyer, Prescod, 2018: 19–20). It is this same urge of physical preservation that moves Anzaldúa to metaphorically link the refusal (even the inability) of her tongue to remain quiet to the perseverance of the languages spoken in the Mexican American Borderlands.²³

For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither *español ni inglés*, but both. We speak a patois, a forked tongue, a variation of two languages.

ANZALDÚA, 2012: 77

Developing ways to “tame a wild tongue” and to “bridle and saddle” it may be connected to the message that Anzaldúa transmits as a feminist Chicana writer who fights against the silencing of women in her own community: “*hablar pa’ trás, repelar. Hocicon, repelona, chismosa*, having a big mouth, questioning, carrying tales are all sings of being *mal criada*. In my culture they are all words that are derogatory if applied to women—I’ve never heard them applied to men.” (Anzaldúa, 2012: 76). For women of color, this silencing is double, not only due to their inferior position in the mainstream white society, but also due to the “orphan condition” that many Chicanas feel unaccepted by Latin Americans in countries where Spanish is the official language:

Deslenguadas. Somos los del español deficiente. We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic mestizaje, the subject of your burla. Because we speak with tongues of fire we are cultur-

23 “And because we are a complex, heterogeneous people, we speak many languages. Some of the languages we speak are: 1. Standard English, 2. Working class and slang English, 3. Standard Spanish, 4. Standard Mexican Spanish, 5. North Mexican Spanish dialect, 6. Chicano Spanish (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California have regional variations), 7. Tex-Mex, 8. *Pachuco* (called *caló*).” (Anzaldúa, 2012: 77) Anzaldúa herself considered her “home” tongues to be Standard Mexican Spanish, North Mexican Spanish dialect, Texas Chicano Spanish and Tex-Mex. Her school education was in English.

ally crucified. Racially, culturally and linguistically *somos huérfanos*—we speak an orphan tongue.

ANZALDÚA, 2012: 80

This peripheral position reflects Anzaldúa's elevated sensitivity to contexts of rich multilingualism complicated by multifarious hierarchies, the "forked tongue," the "orphan tongue": all these conditions push the writer into imbuing her text with a tension and emotion based on hybridity. She writes in English but at the same time resists the majority language from within through interspersing Mexican Spanish words in her texts or engaging in blatant, even defiant English/Spanish code-switching. In addition, she uses the innovative power of *pochó*, Mexican Spanish grammatically and phonetically modified by the English-speaking environment. Although once scorned by many standard Mexican Spanish as well as English speakers as a degenerated linguistic form, *pochó* (as well as the urban slang of Mexican Spanish called *pachuco/caló*) has managed to transform its creative-destructive energy into a tool of empowerment for its speakers since the Chicano Movement, with the perspicuity that this hybrid form is often used as an expressive tool by Chicano/a writers.²⁴ Anzaldúa herself, especially in the fifth chapter, lets her language "bark," as in one of her subtitles: "Oyé como ladra: el lenguaje de la frontera"²⁵ (Anzaldúa, 2012: 77). Contradiction, ambiguity, adaptation and creativity are equated with physical survival, all of which are made possible by the leverage brought by cultural/linguistic hybridity. Anzaldúa shows this eloquently through the example of La Malinche interpreting for Cortés: her tongue literally saved her life.

Simon Schama describes an interesting effect that occurs: when it has a peculiar way of muddling categories, of making metaphors more real than their referents; of becoming, in fact, part of the scenery" (Schama, 1995: 91). The Anzaldúan metaphor of the border and Borderlands has grown powerful, long exceeding the peripheral area of the Mexican-American frontier to inspire thought and creativity from multiple other bordering spaces with complex cultural layers. As Milan Kundera aptly showed in his essay "Un Occident kidnappé ou la Tragédie de l'Europe Centrale" (1983), Central Europe also belongs to them.

24 As Carlos Monsiváis demonstrates, *pochó* and *pachuco* was also imprinting the standard Mexican Spanish spoken in Mexico throughout the late 20th century (see Monsiváis, 1992: 8–10).

25 "Hear how it barks: the language of the border."

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Rui Knopfli, a Nomad between Sion and Babylon

Silvie Špánková

Rui Knopfli (1932–1997) belongs to the group of Mozambican “hybrid” poets, those who were born in one country and, due to political and/or personal circumstances, decided to migrate to other spaces, although the essence of their feelings remain related to the center of their origin.¹ Among such poets are those born in Portugal and taken when they very young to Mozambique, a country with which they identified and where they developed their creative activity, as well as those born in Mozambique with Portuguese ancestry and for personal or political reasons decided to leave for other places (England, France, Portugal). Regardless of their journeys, these writers became poets of a double identity, with many of them leaving significant marks in Mozambican and Portuguese literature.

Of those who left Portugal for Mozambique, Fonseca Amaral (1928–1992) stands out. Amaral was born in Viseu and lived 23 years in Mozambique, where he collaborated with several newspapers and magazines. Although his work was sporadic and scattered among several periodicals, he became a mentor for Knopfli. Also from Viseu, the poet and painter António Quadros (1933–1994), who created the heteronyms João Pedro Grabato Dias, Mutimati Barnabé João and Frei Ioannes Garabatus, became Knopfli’s friend and collaborator in the magazine *Caliban*. Among the great poets born in Portugal who made Mozambique their homeland of the heart is Sebastião Alba (1940–2000), author of several poetry collections including *Ritmo do presságio* (*Rhythm of the omen*, 1974), one of the apexes of Mozambican poetry. Besides Knopfli, nomadic poets born in Mozambique who left for other countries include Virgílio de Lemos (1929–2013), who wrote under the names Lee-Li Yang, Duarte Galvão and Bruno dos Reis, as well as Alberto de Lacerda (1928–2007) and Luís Carlos Patraquim (1953–).

Mozambican themes had penetrated poetry in Portuguese language long before Knopfli. Among other works, influences are present in the collections *Poemas d’África* (*Poems from Africa*, 1941) and *Águia Doida: Poemas d’África*

1 This text was published in Portuguese with the title Rui Knopfli, nómada entre Sião e Babilónia, in *Études romanes de Brno*, 43, 2: 47–61.

(*Crazy Eagle: Poems from Africa*, 1961) by António de Navarro (1902–1980), a Portuguese-born poet also included in the *Dicionário de autores de literaturas africanas de língua portuguesa* (*Dictionary of authors of African literature in Portuguese language*, 1997, ed. Caminho) by Aldónio Gomes and Fernanda Cavacas. In fact, Martim de Gouveia e Sousa, a specialist in Navarro's work, recalls that *Poemas d'África* were evaluated by João Gaspar Simões, preface-writer of the collection, as the first "truly African poems of Portuguese poetry" (Simões qt. in: Sousa, 2007: 20–21). This denomination caused, however, some perplexity among the authors who were born in Mozambique and who saw the work and perspectives of poets from Portugal as exogenous. Thus, in his essay *António de Navarro e a poesia africana* (1946), Orlando de Albuquerque comments that *Poemas d'África* represents works "of a good poet who looks at Africa and that, as a good poet, managed to apprehend something of that Africa, but woe to him! That something is fragmented and incomplete, filtered through the soul of a 100% European poet" (Albuquerque qt. in: Oliveira, 1997: 350).² The work of the nomadic poets born in Portugal who have clung to Mozambique could also be seen and evaluated in a similar way. These poets should be considered, simultaneously, Mozambican and Portuguese. In this regard, Knopfli opines:

As an expression of the Mozambican colonial milieu, Craveirinha's poetry is the most splendid, there is no doubt about it. After that, people like Sebastião Alba. Alba has fabulous things [...] but you look at the cut of his poetry and it's totally Portuguese, whether he intends it or not. Like I said, for all the good will António Quadros has when he writes a book with the name Mutimati Barnabé João, he's a guy from the Iberian plateau. No African would write the expressions he writes. Because not even I, white and European, but having been born in Mozambique, was capable of using that language.

CHABAL, 1994: 197³

2 "[...] dum bom poeta que olha para África e que, como bom poeta, conseguiu apreender algo dessa África, mas aí dele! Esse algo fragmentado e incompleto, coado através da sua alma de poeta 100% europeu."

3 "Como expressão de um meio moçambicano colonial, a poesia do Craveirinha é a mais esplendorosa, não há dúvida nenhuma. Depois disto, gente como Sebastião Alba ... O Alba tem coisas fabulosas ... mas tu olhas para o recorte da poesia dele e é totalmente português, quer ele queira quer não. Como eu disse, por toda a boa vontade que um António Quadros tenha quando escreve um livro com o nome de Mutimati Barnabé João, ele é um tipo da meseta ibérica. Nenhum africano escreveria as expressões que ele escreve. Porque nem eu, branco e europeu, mas tendo nascido em Moçambique, era capaz de usar aquela linguagem."

We can see in this quotation the existence of a hybrid poetic identity, which may stem from the fact that the Portuguese poets who came to Mozambique wanted to write as Africans, simulating appropriate styles (particularly in the case of Mutimati Barnabé João). These writers could not, however, overcome discursive traditions that prevail in Portuguese poetry. For this reason, Knopfli refuses to don the masks of identity conveyed by heteronyms, as in the case of António Quadros, opting to reconcile the various cultural and identity strands that form him as a poet and a man. Although Knopfli has an affection for the Mozambican space, he also acknowledges the European substrate in which his origins and cultural roots lie. Knopfli's poetry is unique in this sense: he is not an European adopting an African mask, nor an African rejecting European cultural symbols. Knopfli is simply an African European or a European African who, while rejecting the European heritage as an expression of colonial domination, ironically accepts it as an expression of his own cultural belonging. This represents a mature reconciliation, an awareness that the African acacia (*micáia*), like the European rose, is an integral part of his cultural, and therefore human, journey:

And the little I have left I intend to apply it
in humble tasks such as the cultivation
these verses, some sudden unavoidable love
and the slow and meticulous discovery of the rose.

final verses of the poem *The Discovery of the Rose*, KNOPFLI, 2003: 273⁴

With these verses, the poet sings the “praise of the rose, European flower par excellence,” in a “poem written in Africa” (Chabal, 1994: 200).⁵ Taking into account this spatial and cultural polarity, this chapter will reflect on the imaginary journeys between the symbolic cultural “center,” represented by European culture, and the “periphery,” expressed by the African space and imaginary. The focus will be on the poems of *O corpo de Atena* (*The Body of Athena*, 1984), a collection written in Britain which demonstrates a dichotomy of spatial-cultural

4 “E o pouco que me sobra tenciono aplicá-lo/ em tarefas humildes como o cultivo/ destes versos, algum súbito amor inadiável/ e a lenta e minuciosa descoberta da rosa.” (“A descoberta da rosa,” Knopfli, 2003: 273).

5 “elogio da rosa, flor europeia por excelencia”; “poema escrito em África.” This “discovery of the rose,” according to António Manuel Ferreira, can be seen as “the radical encounter with poetry, understanding by poetry not only the specifically codified verbal text, but, more than that, the vision of the world that underlies any creative act, including scientific and philosophical proposals.” (Ferreira, 2012: 475) On the basis of this hypothesis, Ferreira also develops an excellent reflection on the Horace tradition in Knopflian poetry.

trajectories antithetical to the collections written in Mozambique. Moreover, the unusual beauty of the poems and the fact that this collection lies somewhat in the shadow of other Knopfli's books also stimulates interest in this collection.

The problem of transcontinental trajectories is a cardinal point of much of the criticism of Knopfli's works. These trajectories are analyzed in detail by Fátima Monteiro in her essay *O país dos outros. A poesia de Rui Knopfli* (Monteiro, 2003), with the same issue has been the subject of analysis and interpretation in several other studies, including works by Ana Mafalda Leite (2020), Maria de Santa Cruz (1998), Viviane Mendes de Moraes (2015) and Paula Terra Nassr (2015, 2017). These works confirm the hybrid identity profile of the Mozambican poet. Viviane Mendes de Moraes relies on the theory of intellectual hybridity by Jahan Ramazani, who in his book *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* (Ramazani, 2001) defines intellectual hybridity as a tension of ideas and cultures, of subjects who are in a between-place (see Moraes, 2015: 72). Within the same goal, Moraes paraphrases Ramazani by stating that poetic hybridity occurs when, inspired by multiple sources, the poet transfers this plurality of meanings and forms to the verses, creating a new poetry, yet completely implicated with the intercultural relations that shaped it (Moraes, 2015: 76).

This "poetic hybridity" or "intellectual hybridity" presents specific points of contact with the concept of "nomadism" in terms of the liberatory process through an attempt to juxtapose and merge discourses from different cultural areas. Moreover, "nomadism" expresses a free movement in physical, imaginary and cultural space which attempts to abolish political boundaries in view of a world—in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, without *polis*, *politics* or *police* (see Westphal, 2011: 39). In this sense, nomadism refers to subject identity rather than "passport" identity. The notion of nomadism has also been applied in literary criticism and interpretative pragmatics to represent a desire for freedom in a rhizomatic movement not restricted by rules and limits of an analytical method. It is a "wandering" through an open world (*smooth space* according to Deleuze and Guattari), a "getting lost" at a crossroads of alienating paths, in contrast to the paths traced in a closed, cloistered, rigorously observed space (*striated space* according to Deleuze and Guattari) (Westphal, 2011: 39).

Michel Maffesoli, one of the pioneers of "nomadism," reflects on this concept based on the anthropological necessity of free movement, of a wandering that expresses identitarian plurality and/or existential duality (see Maffesoli, 2002: 17). Besides pointing to the instability of all matter, nomadism expresses a longing to discover the "there," that "somewhere" which incites the traveler (Maffesoli, 2002: 19–20). This desire, however, is not only the impulse of a rest-

less spirit, as the very essence of incessant movement carries socio-political implications. As Maffesoli reminds us, sedentarism is a way of life that can be easily controlled and regulated, while movement is beyond control: that which moves escapes the “sophisticated camera of a panopticon” (Maffesoli, 2002: 29).

According to Jane Fenoulhet, the figure of the nomad can be perceived from yet another point of view according to the following conceptions: 1) “life as a process of which change and mobility are fundamentals,” 2) “a movement away from stable identities,” 3) “‘becoming’ as the fundamental mode of being of a subject who is, therefore, multiple,” 4) “language as deterritorialized so that it becomes possible for a subject to carry a linguistic dwelling-place with them” (Fenoulhet, 2017: 4). To these assertions, Fenoulhet adds:

The figure of the nomad is thus not necessarily someone who travels, but rather someone who is open to ‘becomings.’ The concept of ‘becoming’ is quite specific in Deleuze’s thought. It means that the subject is in the process of leaving behind ‘molar’ or ‘majoritarian’ society and moving towards the margins—what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘a becoming-minor.’ They describe Kafka’s use of the major language of German as minor because he writes from his position as a Czech Jew.

FENOULHET, 2017: 5

As is the case for Fernando Pessoa, the real homeland of Knopfli is the Portuguese language. Jorge de Sena’s words that serve as the epigraph to the collection *A Ilha de Próspero* (The Island of Prospero, 1972) convey this idea: “the homeland of which I write is the language in which by chance of generations I was born” (Sena in: Knopfli 2003: 343). The language Knopfli writes in is deterritorialized, with the imagery created emerging from various referents and sources of inspiration. Knopfli is a Portuguese-speaking Mozambican poet with a Portuguese and Swiss genealogy who lived in Mozambique until 1975, had a Portuguese passport, and lived in exile in London after 1975. It is precisely in this phase, that of the English “golden exile,” that the writing of *O corpo de Atena* takes place.

The collection *O corpo de Atena* has an unusual structure. After a paratextual introduction, three sections are featured: *Notas para a regulamentação do discurso próprio* (Notes for the regulation of proper speech, 1 poem), *Teoria* (Theory, 5 poems), and *As estações* (The Seasons, 23 poems). Only the first poem is dated (1971). The first two sections constitute a metapoetic discourse that conceives the poetic craft in the tradition of Orphic rites, i.e. a sacred cult, celebrated at night, in solitude and silence.

The unusual and surprising character of what follows lies in the fact that poetic matter of intense intimacy is introduced by poems whose titles simulate an intellectual process or even academic analysis: following *Notes for the regulation*, the section *Theory* includes the poems *Ideia do poema* (Idea of the poem), *Metodologia* (Methodology), *Tradição* (Tradition), *Persistência* (Persistence) and the title poem *O corpo de Atena*. This intellectual process, obviously rooted in the art of scholarly argumentation, is a reference to Western culture, which is also present as a line of imagery in the collection including echoes of classical (Greek antiquity), biblical, and medieval culture. It may be assumed that the very conception of this part of the collection came from contemporary sources of inspiration. In an interview with Patrick Chabal, the poet himself acknowledged the fact that the poem *O corpo de Atena* was “totally stolen from an essay by Georges Steiner” (Chabal, 1994: 197). Moreover, since these are poems and not critical metatexts, such a process recalls the epic tradition, with the steps of proposition, dedication, invocation, and narration representing obligatory phases in the epic of Homeric and Virgilian strain. Nevertheless, whether the inspiration is essayistic or epic, the result of this intellectual procedure must be related to the existence of the collection as a project to be contemplated within the entire totality of the poems. It seems more appropriate to read the poems as referencing one particular guiding idea.

Notwithstanding this apparent inclination towards the intellectualization of the poetic act, subtle references to the Orphic tradition are present in all the poems of *Theory*. Knopflian poetry is thus inserted into the rites of antiquity as well as into the line of visionary poetry in which Rilke occupies a primary place. Several motifs and delicate nuances in the poems of this section emerge as connected to the Orphic myth: the references to madness as a state of rapture, of the need to escape oneself to see clearly; to the loving penetration of words as an act of communing with inspiration; to the dismemberment of the body that relates in one of its multiple meanings to the dismemberment of Orpheus by the Bacchantes; to the night as a sacred space of poetic creation; and above all, to the act of gazing/contemplating that reflects the condition imposed on Orpheus during his return from the kingdom of Hades, followed by the shadow of the dead woman, Eurydice, the Inspiration.

There are, however, additional meanings that relate to the motif of contemplation, which appears explicitly in two strategic places: in the poem *Metodologia* (“Quiet statues of crystal, / intensely we stare at each other, while / flickering, slow and combusting, / the purest light passes through us”; Knopfli, 2003: 436)⁶

6 “Quietas estátuas de cristal, / intensamente nos fitamos, enquanto / trémula, lenta e comburente, / a luz mais pura nos atravessa”.

and in *O corpo de Atena* (“Everyone who has contemplated the body/ of Athena sees beyond. Darkly.” Knopfli, 2003: 439).⁷ In this way, the myth of Orpheus shares sacred space with the myth of Athena. In the iconographic tradition, this goddess of wisdom and warfare usually carries a shield with the head of one of the Gorgons. As Perseus knew, staring at the Gorgon Medusa results in the death of the one who stares. Medusa is a monster comparable in some ways to the Minotaur, as in both cases the act of staring constitutes a transgression by the acquisition of an obscure knowledge which should remain inaccessible to mortals. Let us remember a poem from *O poema, a viagem, o sonho* (2009) by the Cape Verdean poet Arménio Vieira (1941) which ends with the words: “Theseus, in the labyrinth, that one saw the Minotaur.” (Vieira, 2009: 28)⁸ As the myth says, Theseus forgets Ariadne, the woman who loved him and helped him defeat the monster, and unintentionally causes his father’s death. The myth’s lesson may be this: the beholder becomes, in a way, the double of the beholder. Staring at the face/body of the monster, therefore, carries some deep, secret teaching. Moreover, the very act of staring at the forbidden body, in this case the body of Athena, is also fatal. This could be an allusion to the figure of Tiresias, who in one version of the myth stares by mistake at the naked body of the goddess of wisdom. Athena punishes him by removing his sight, but to compensate for this damage, she gives him the gift of understanding the speech of birds. Therefore, “[e]veryone who has contemplated the body/ of Athena sees beyond. Darkly.” (Knopfli, 2003: 439). This is the purpose of the collection: to see beyond, with eyes cast to see inside what one can no longer see, to stare at inner landscapes.

In this sense, Knopfli, possibly inadvertently, develops themes pursued by his fellow countryman Alberto de Lacerda, also an exiled poet. In the verses of the poem “D” (which could mean *Deusa* / Goddess) there is an allusion to the same myth, but inserted into a banal, everyday space: “The other saw Palas Atheneia in a train station/ I saw the goddess of goddesses in a house in Lisbon/ And then I died, as birds emigrate.” (Lacerda, 2018: 39).⁹ The link between secret knowledge (mediated by the staring at Athena’s body), travel (with the train motif), and emigration results in a state of temporary death, a condition necessary for the being to transmute into another being, an essentially nomadic being that crosses various places with a baggage of memories on

7 “Todo aquele que contemplou o corpo / de Atena vê mais além. Escuramente.”

8 “Teseu, no labirinto, esse viu o Minotauro.”

9 “O outro viu Palas Ateneia numa estação de comboio./ Eu vi a deusa das deusas numa casa em Lisboa/ E depois morri, como as aves emigram.”

his back. From this perspective, the Knopflian collection should also be understood as a project thematizing time-space and memory.

The presence of references to Camões in Knopfli's poetry has been discussed in several studies, most notably in the work of Fátima Monteiro. In principle, the intertextuality with Camões, also acknowledged by the poet can be found in *A Ilha de Próspero*, a work which seems to represent a dialogue with Camões' epic. On the contrary, the collection *O corpo de Atena* displays only vague echoes, more shadow-like than is the case with Camões's transparencies. Such umbrae also fall in line with the book's project "to see darkly." In this sense, the first poem of the section *As estações*, the third (and longest) part of the collection, is entitled *Derrota* (Defeat), a work which is symbolically linked to a problem also featured in *A Ilha de Próspero*: the fate of the Lusians, who were finally expelled from the land they had occupied. *Derrota* is, therefore, a reverse of the great Portuguese epic in an anti-epic discourse; Knopfli expresses how his poem "no longer sings, my song weeps"¹⁰ (Knopfli, 2003: 444).

A reflection on the nostalgia felt in the face of loss is linked with motifs that configure an imaginary of the Indian space ("bodies of dark cinnamon sand," "juicy honey/ of sweet fruits," "yeast/ of lost Orient")¹¹ in a move which marks the presence of a particular thematic-cultural line in the nomadic cartography of Knopfli's book. This "reverse route/ of the Argonauts deprived of gods and myths" (Knopfli, 2003: 443) corresponds to the movement of "long tribulations" (Knopfli, 2003: 443), eventually leading to the return journey of a new exodus. Curiously, this same theme was addressed by António Lobo Antunes four years later in *As naus* (1988; *The Return of the Caravels*, 2003), a novel in which the heroes of colonial discoveries return home. Moreover, Knopfli's poem *Derrota* can also be perceived as an allusion to the reverse saga of the colonists who returned to Portugal after their African colonies gained independence.

The very title *Derrota* implicitly relates to the whole decolonization process, echoing as a nefast sign the defeat of the Portuguese at the battle of Alcácer Quibir in 1578 in the symbolism that in 1989 Manuel Alegre would develop a few years after *Atena* in the novel *A Jornada de África* (*The Journey of Africa*). The meaning of the Knopflian poem opens, in this perspective, to a thematic line that not only observes the Mozambican space, but rises to the symbolism of "Sebastianismo,"¹² deepened by the initial motif of madness, which thus

10 "[...] não canta, chora meu canto."

11 "corpos de morena canela de areia"; "travo a terebintina,/ doirado," sumarento mel/ de dulcíssimos frutos," "fermento/ de orientes perdidos".

12 King Sebastian disappeared in battle, but as no one had seen him die, the legend was

transgresses the first Orphic meaning. The tale of Sebastian also incorporates intertextuality with the poem *D. Sebastião* (*Mensagem*, 1934) by Fernando Pessoa. This symbolism is in effect followed in other poems in *O corpo de Atena* such as *O areal* (Sand) and *Cinco meditações junto ao Luco* (Five meditations by the river Loukkos). The myth of King Sebastian is also linked to the figure of the pilgrim, which recalls the famous play *Frei Luís de Sousa* (1843, *Monk Luís de Sousa*) by Almeida Garrett¹³ (“Fingers/ outstretched, palm against palm/ in the pilgrim’s greeting”; Knopfli, 2003: 455).¹⁴ The pilgrim reveals himself fully in the poem *Encontro marcado* (Rendezvous): “... and I wonder, postponing the answer, what have we/ to do with King Sebastian/ and King Arthur, beyond the fog” (Knopfli, 2003: 455).¹⁵ Since this is figuration based on foreshadowings and warnings of occult origin, hardly rational, it is understandable that, always in accordance with the poetic “methodology” of seeing in the dark, *O corpo de Atena* features numerous mystery motifs.

In this universe of mysterious signs, references to mythical figures of English culture and literature are also incorporated. We cannot forget that the English-speaking world, mediated by the Mozambique’s neighbor South Africa, provided several sources of inspiration to the poet. In this regard, Knopfli comments: “We managed very early on to free ourselves from the influence of France. For many years, Portugal was and will be a colony of France. [...] But with the neighborhood of South Africa [...] I began to discover other authors.”

born that the king would return to his homeland when it was facing difficulties. This narrative spread as a current of messianism, probably due to the Jewish substratum. On the other hand, the spread of the legend is related to the political situation: as the king had no descendants, the autonomous Portuguese kingdom ceased to exist and became part of the Iberian Union from 1580 to 1640.

13 Presented to the Royal Conservatory in 1843 and published in 1844, strong symbolic references to *Sebastianismo* can be found in the play *Frei Luís de Sousa*. The pilgrim himself, who is none other than the nobleman John of Portugal who accompanied King Sebastian to Alcácer Quibir, returns home after many years to find that his wife (Madalena de Vilhena) has married another man, the patriotic nobleman Manuel de Sousa Coutinho, with whom she has a daughter, Maria. After the return of John of Portugal, Madalena and Manuel retire to a convent, and Maria dies. The pilgrim (John of Portugal) can thus be understood in a figurative sense as a double of King Sebastian and at the same time as the spectre of a husband returning from a campaign to his wife. This adds a new dimension to the myth of the awaited King Sebastian: his return does not bring salvation but is instead the cause of a family tragedy.

14 “Dedos/ estendidos, palma contra palma / na saudação do peregrino”.

15 “e pergunto-me, adiando a resposta, que teremos/ nós a ver com D. Sebastião/ e o rei Artur, além do nevoeiro”.

(Chabal, 1994: 190).¹⁶ Besides bringing Knopfli closer to Fernando Pessoa, this diversity of influence furrows another deep line within Knopflian nomadic imagery. As a child, Knopfli was an avid reader of adventure stories, a fact also confirmed in his interview with Chabal:

For example, Jules Verne is a late passion [...]. We basically read books by Emilio Salgari [...] novels of 90, 100 pages, rewritten and merely inspired; whether they were cowboys, whether they were corsairs, whether they were from South America. These are the sources, these are the most important sources.

CHABAL, 1994: 196¹⁷

Not surprisingly, therefore, in the first poem of the collection as well as the sole work in the section *Notas para a regulamentação do discurso próprio*, the poetic discourse is replete with the “adventure of language,” conveyed by a “boat flagged with signs, sounds, / rutilate connotations and a secret letter” (Knopfli, 2003: 430), this boat possessing a “hold of surprises, the mysterious route, / and, for sure ... for sure a treasure with island / around” (Knopfli, 2003: 430).¹⁸ The motif of the treasure island, made famous especially in the Robert Louis Stevenson novel of 1882, functions here as the image of the secret which only great poetry can harbor. This also represents a motif that brings the spectral presence of Fernando Pessoa’s *Ode Marítima* (Maritime Ode) and the “song of the Great Pirate” (“Fifteen men on the Dead Man’s Chest. / Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!”; Pessoa, s/d: 164).¹⁹ This confluence of imaginaries belonging to two legendary worlds, Portuguese (King Sebastian from *Encontro marcado*) and British (King Arthur from *Encontro marcado* and from *Morte de Artur / The Death of Arthur*; Percival from *O sono de Percival / The Sleeping Percival*; Hamlet from *As luzes de Elsinore / The lights of Elsinore*). The convergence functions as a mosaic of at least these two overlapping cultural strata.

16 “Nós conseguimos muito cedo libertar-nos da influência da França. Portugal foi e será, durante muitos anos, uma colónia da França. [...] Mas com a vizinhança da África do Sul [...] comecei a descobrir outros autores.”

17 “Por exemplo, o Júlio Verne é uma paixão já tardia [...]. A gente lia, fundamentalmente, livros do Emílio Salgari [...] eram romances de 90, 100 páginas, reescritos e só inspirados; fossem de cowboys, fossem de corsários, fossem da América do Sul. Isto são as fontes, são as fontes mais importantes.”

18 “aventura da linguagem,” “barco embandeirado de signos, sons, / rútilas conotações e uma carta de prego,” “porão de surpresas, a rota misteriosa, / e, por certo ... por certo um tesouro com ilha / em redor”.

19 “Fifteen men on a Dead Man’s Chest. / Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!”

These two thematic-symbolic lines now lead us to a reflection on the pertinence of political and cultural power centers. In Knopfli's poems, King Sebastian may return from his African journey, but he returns old and tired, just as King Arthur no longer celebrates a glorious death on a battlefield, remaining, in his last life path, "alone,/ in his unworthy nakedness, peopled only/ by the demons that, to the end, will/ torment him" (Knopfli, 2003: 465).²⁰ This innuendo lays bare the fate of man, with the irony revealing the fleeting nature of glory no matter how great. Through this ultimate pain and impotence, devoid of fame and brilliance, Knopflian poetry always brings forth great depth and a sharp sense of humanism. What is represented is not only an end of empires, of the Lusiads and Albion, but an end of human life, of *memento mori* and all the *vanitas* it entails. In this way, another thematic-symbolic line, a much more intimate one, is opened up in *O corpo de Atena*, a track which metaphorically devours the preceding lines which are dependent on it, making the somber atmosphere of the collection even more melancholic and ominously emotional. This is the line of Chronos, an image of time mercilessly devouring its children, erasing all the marks of human presence in the world.

This track starts in the poem Memorial de Kish (Memorial to Kish), which deals with the theme of agonized and dead cities in a work that represents one of the zeniths of the entire book. The city of Kish, the first built after the Great Flood, symbolizes an attempt to rebuild, to restart a vital cycle. It is perhaps pertinent to relate this topic to Knopfli's biography. Remembering, once again, that the poet wrote the book in exile in England, the symbolism of the city of Kish may represent his attempt to forge a new life, to rebuild what is left by looking back on what has passed. At the same time, the poem connects to the legacy of Camões by the features of its discourse. Echoes of the verses of the greatest Portuguese poet resound as a background melody through themes of change and bewilderment in the world ("As times and wills change,/ Names, gestures and features change"; Knopfli, 2003: 445).²¹ The imagery of Camões is also refashioned through the central theme of the passage of time, death, and exile. Such a dialogue is substantiated by the occasional reference to the dichotomy of Babylon and Sion found at the end of Knopfli's poem, and which constitutes a link to Camões' *Sôbolos rios que vão*, (*By the rivers rolling in*), and through this to *Psalm 137*, to the work of Bernardim Ribeiro, to the poetry of Jorge de Sena (especially *Sobre esta praia*) and, more recently, to the novel *Sôbolos rios que vão* (2010) by António Lobo Antunes. Both in the biblical tradition

20 "só,/ em sua nudez indigna, povoada apenas/ dos demónios que, até ao fim, o irão/ atormentando".

21 "Mudando-se os tempos e as vontades,/ se mudam nomes, gestos e feições".

and Camões' poetry, Sion represents a chronotope of the past and lost happiness, while Babylon, place of exile, symbolizes the evils of the present. Camões, Sena and Knopfli share the biographical coincidence of all being exiles. From this perspective, it is easy to perceive the notes of nostalgia in the poems of *O corpo de Atena* which, as we can see now, do not refer to a post-colonial discourse of Prospero leaving the land of Caliban. The words open a wound on the poet's skin, a wound that is not yet fully healed, as we can read in section 3 of the poem *Cinco meditações junto ao Luco*: "unprepared, we bleed through the night/ out of a burning blood that manages/ from ancient and unsalvageable wounds" (Knopfli, 2003: 472).²²

The weight of tradition that we encounter in each poem of *O corpo de Atena* should not overshadow the fact that this book, along with the collection *O escriba acororado* (*Seated scribe*, 1978) represent in the author's own words "books of the isolation of the man who was, if not banished, at least removed from the homeland, fell into the diaspora and whose poetic evocations always return to the homeland" (Saúte, 1998: 294).²³ The birthplace, the space of past happiness, remains distant, but can be called again into being by the creative act. Along these lines, the collection contains several poems that apparently do not conform to the thematic lines discerned here, but that translate precisely this desire to create and recreate through nostalgia and love. The poet is represented by an anonymous "seated scribe," able, in a repetition of the introductory theme, to stare "ever beyond" (Knopfli, 2003: 448). Through this vision, Knopfli's poem further enters into dialogue with Sebastião Alba's "nomadic" poetry, specifically with *Os escribas* (*The Scribes*), in which the allusion to a secret only confessed to a piece of paper intensifies the emotional theme, the insinuation of a love that may have various trajectories, objects, and ends. The "scribe," both Knopflian and Albanian, recreates the image of the Poet, which is obvious in several references by Knopfli: to a "poet" (*As luzes de Elsinore*), to a "deserted library" (*Villa dei misteri*), and to a "closed book" (*O livro fechado*). Such allusions create the metapoetic isotopia within *O corpo de Atena*, logically related by doctrinal means to the rules of writing, and by creative means to the work of hands, a theme which also accentuated by the trope of sculpting, e.g. in the poems *O escultor / The sculptor* and *A mão de Gian Lorenzo / The hand of Gian Lorenzo*.

One of the paths of this lost love evokes the universe of childhood, with an affirmation that this past Sion corresponds to Mozambique, a space of

22 "desprevenidos, sangramos pela noite/ fora de um sangue aceso que mana/ de antigas e insanáveis feridas".

23 "livros do isolamento do homem que foi, senão banido, pelo menos afastado da pátria, caiu na diáspora e cujas evocações poéticas retornam sempre à pátria".

“[o]bjects familiar, faint, diffuse/ memories of far away.” Thus the space of childhood (“panoramas of childhood, painful, blurred ghosts/ of another time”) is metonymically represented by “an ebony skull” and by the “island in the sun” (Knopfli, 2003, 452).²⁴ This evocation of a lost paradise is dominated by motifs of African nature (especially trees and the sea) which represent the emotional compass of the lyrical subject.

The power of the evocation of the absent place intensifies in the penultimate poem of the book *Um rio votivo* (A Votive River). The subject is consciously positioned within a symbolic Babylon, corresponding explicitly to the space of England. The river that the subject can see in the space of the present, that of exile, is represented by the river Avon, a picturesque image of “a bucolic postcard, swans, gondolas swaying in the soft/ rumor of willows” (Knopfli, 2003: 476).²⁵ While this brings to mind “the sharp daggers of Shakespeare” (Knopfli, 2003: 476) by way of connection with Stratford upon Avon, it also evokes “black rose/ of Marlowe,” “landscapes of quiet grazing,” “arches,” “apses,” “rustic manor houses,” and “[t]emples of perpendicular Gothic,”²⁶ all tropes that characterize the serenity of the English countryside. Such space is overlaid by another landscape stratum in a technique reminiscent of the Intersectionism of Fernando Pessoa’s poem *Chuva oblíqua* (Slanting Rain), with “another river, not this one,” that of “thick/ muddy waters poured, slow/ hemorrhage in the desert of memory” (Knopfli, 2003: 476).²⁷ At this point, it is worth recalling Knopfli’s second collection *Reino submarino* (*Underwater Kingdom*, 1962), which contains the famous and widely quoted poem *Hidrografia* (Hydrography). In this text, the perspective is reversed, with the subject in African space and speaking of European rivers: “Beautiful as rivers are/ the names of rivers in old Europe” (Knopfli, 2003: 121),²⁸ but the beauty of these rivers is simultaneously erased by references to “blood” (Genil), “horror stories” (Rhine), and “detritus” (Seine). The act of naming these European rivers serves to enhance the strength of the affection felt toward African waterways, which are next invoked in a gesture of praise similar to that in Craveirinha’s poem *Hino à minha terra* (Hymn to my land). The poem *Um rio*

24 “[o]bjectos familiares, ténues, difusas / lembranças de longe.” “[...] panoramas da infância, dolorosos, esbatidos fantasmas / de outro tempo,” “um crânio de ébano,” “ilha ao sol”.

25 “um postal bucólico, cisnes, gôndolas oscilantes no rumor/ brando dos salgueiros”;

26 “os acerados punhais de Shakespeare”; “rosa negra /de Marlowe”; “paisagens de tranquilo pascigo,” “arcos,” “absides,” “casario rústico,” “templos de gótico perpendicular”.

27 “outro rio, que não este”; “espessas/ águas barrentas derramadas, lenta/ hemorrhagia no deserto da memória”.

28 “Belos como os rios são/ os nomes dos rios na velha Europa.”

votivo is, however, more symbolic and more mature, since the subject does not feel a need to make his feelings explicit, keeping them in a shadow that is often truer than the lights of any discursive stage. Therefore, with the title *Inominado nome* (Unnamed Name), this work recounting this “votive river,” this Sion of interdicted voices, cannot be named: “I hear it within me, willing or unwilling, that in me/ it is only suffering because in me/ it lives and lasts,/ as long as I last and live.” (Knopfli, 2003: 461)²⁹ Obscurely symbolic, this word cannot be uttered; it is a secret kept in silence, even if this silence cannot eliminate the trail of this unrevealed god. Only the silence of death can give an end to ritual and poetry: “No silence/ will stop it, no end that/ is not my end and my silence” (Knopfli, 2003: 462).³⁰ Thus, with Sion in heart, it is Babylon that must be lived in, a dystopian city with its “river/ of sad denim workers,” “concrete towers in the rusty cutout,” and “gritty urban sprawl” (Knopfli, 2003: 477).³¹ The tome of enchantment and memory can then be closed, as there is no point in suffering, or living with the ghosts. The last verses of the last poem *O livro fechado* (The Closed Book) bear witness to this: “I have closed the book, I have silenced all voices,/ Accounts from afar charged into nothing,/ Speak, only, the silence that follows them.” (Knopfli, 2003: 478).³²

O corpo de Atena thus presents a bridge between two chronotopes: the resigned present of Babylon and the painful past of the song of Sion, reflecting two times and spaces in the poet’s life. The book also demonstrates the coming together of the three spatial, cultural and literary strands that have guided Knopfli’s work from the beginning—the Mozambican, Portuguese and English. It is this poetic of “naturalness” that seems to be more important than any attempt at identity-based (self)definition, as may be gleaned by the irony in *Naturalidade* (Naturalness) in *O país dos outros* (*Other People’s Country*). In her own poem *Naturalidade* (uma carta a Rui Knopfli) [*Naturalness* (a letter to Rui Knopfli)] from the collection *Livro das encantações* (*Book of Enchantments*, 2005), Ana Mafalda Leite (1956–) invokes the merging of influences in Knopfli’s poetry: “I, my dear Rui Knopfli, I marry the harshness of micaias and roses, the purple of slow nights and the moons of the two hemispheres”

29 “Ouço-o dentro de mim, mau grado/ o queira ou não, que em mim/ só está sofrê-lo porque em mim/ vive e dura,/ enquanto eu dure e viva.”

30 “Nenhum silêncio/ lhe dará cobro, nem fim que/ não sejam meu fim e meu silêncio.”

31 “rio/ de operária ganga triste”; “torres de betão”; “grisalho vazadouro urbano”.

32 “Fechei o livro, calei todas as vozes,/ contas de longe cobradas em nada./ Fale, somente, o silêncio que lhes sucede.”

(Leite, 2020: 141).³³ Through the synthesis of symbolic African and European elements, the poetic voice of Ana Mafalda Leite suggests that it is not necessary to choose one world over the other, that both worlds can co-exist within one poetic harmony: “slow flight in lighted shadow, my homeland, passport, naturalness, only one, poetry” (Leite, 2020: 142).³⁴ Verse is the only identity mark in a “liquid border” universe that can be perceived as more than the boundary of “two seas/ the west the east” (Leite, 2020: 143),³⁵ as alluded to in the poem of the same name. This fluidity can be apprehended in terms of Zygmunt Bauman’s modern “liquidity” as a world of dispersed borders, or even without borders.

Moreover, through intertextuality with Knopflian poetry Ana Mafalda Leite does more than react to the question of identity, with which she, a Mozambican poet living in Portugal, must deal with using the same poetic tools. These kinds of moves in fact represent a great tribute to Knopfli as one of the Masters of modern Mozambican poetry, definitively transferring the poet to the center of the Mozambican canon. Luís Carlos Patraquim, another contemporary poet who has persevered through the same existential vicissitudes, pays homage to Knopfli as a poet of his “genealogical” line, especially in his poems about Knopfli’s Prospero’s Island, that is, about Mozambique Island. In particular reverence is shown for the older poet in the works *Muhípiti* (dedicated to Knopfli), *Rui Knopfli* and *Lidemburgo blues* (dedicated to Craveirinha, Knopfli and Sebastião Alba). In this last work, the Knopflian poetic word is inscribed implicitly but forcefully in several ways: through the theme of the Island; by the motif of “green mango” evoking Knopfli’s *Mangas verdes com sal*; by the Rose (“thus I bite the seven petals of the Rose”; Patraquim, 2020: 101),³⁶ which symbolize the Knopflian scar, the acceptance of the European cultural burden; and above all by the launching of a “nomadic dwelling” that houses the diaspora poets, Patraquim, Knopfli as well as Alberto de Lacerda, Fonseca Amaral, Sebastião Alba and António Quadros, all of whom Patraquim has also dedicated poems to. This “nomadic dwelling” juxtaposes the two universes, African and European, in a hermetic symbolism of suggestions and in a language, solid and tasty, tattooed by echoes of various origins (expressions in English and German) that suggest the possibility of building a House from various materials. Moreover, the suggestion of a road of torments, a path which many Mozambicans in search of a better life have taken, resonates in the toponym *Lidemburgo*,

33 “Eu, meu caro Rui Knopfli, eu caso-me à agrura das micaias e das rosas”.

34 “lento voo em sombra acesa, pátria minha, passaporte, naturalidade, só uma, a poesia”;

35 “fronteira líquida”; “dois mares/ a ocidente a oriente”.

36 “assim eu trinqueei as sete pétalas da Rosa”.

a major symbol of nomadic dwelling. As well as referring to the iconic street of the same name in Maputo, Lidemburgo is also the Portuguese version of the name Lydenburgh, a city in South Africa, whose name is derived from Lijdenburg, which in Dutch means “suffering.” This is the symbolic city of torment, bathed by a “river of blood!” (Patraquim, 2020: 99), in which “the wheels of the great trek”³⁷ are recalled, the often uncertain and painful steps of a cross-border journey.

Whether it is a hired hand who crosses the border to survive, or an exile who “in the anchored ship of the songs of Babel and Sion” (Patraquim, 2020: 41)³⁸ finds a new existence in another country, it is always the same figure of the individual absorbed by the desert: “Like the camel that feeds on thorns/ and wanders and drinks and he is the desert/ by the sand of his paws” (Patraquim, 2020: 101).³⁹ The desert, as Rachel Bovet describes regarding Andrée Chédid’s novel *Les marches de sable* (1981, *The Sand Steps*), “appears first as a place of exile, a space for forgetting the past, before becoming a place for the characters to transform.” (Bovet, 2003: 9).⁴⁰ The desert, the sands of which “are indeed the scene of a real metamorphosis” (Bovet, 2003: 9),⁴¹ corresponds to a space of constant movement in which paths can go in any direction. Its vastness, apparent emptiness, and the homogeneity of the landscape evoke the *tabula rasa*, a new beginning. Along with Ana Mafalda Leite, it can be said that “here in the desert the geography of love is a strange drawing/ that the sands and the wind the clouds and the foam/ start again without ceasing” (Leite, 2020: 275).⁴² It is also within the coordinates of this emotional topography that the nomadic Mozambican poets write poetry with a certainty that the desert of the diaspora—even as it constitutes the space of epiphany—does not erase the sand trail of affective memory as a sign of self-affirmation and belonging. Rui Knopfli, a nomad between Sion and Babylon, past and present, center and periphery, Europe and Africa, has taken his place in the Mozambican literary canon.

37 “rio de sangue”; “as rodas do grande trek”.

38 “na ancorada nau das canções de Babel e Sião”.

39 “Tal o camelo que se alimenta de espinhos/ e vagueia e bebe e é ele o deserto/ pela areia de suas patas.”

40 “[...] apparaît d’abord comme un lieu d’exil, un espace permettant d’oublier le passé, avant de devenir un endroit propice à la transformation des personnages.”

41 “[...] sont en effet le théâtre d’une véritable métamorphose.”

42 “[a]qui no deserto a geografia do amor é um estranho desenho/ que as areias e o vento as nuvens e a espuma/ recomçam sem cessar”.

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The Literary Production of Minority Groups in Contemporary Brazilian Literature

Zuzana Burianová

Marginal literature constitutes itself in order to represent the culture of a nation composed of minorities, which as a whole, however, represent the majority.

FERRÉZ, 2005: 11¹



Since the second half of the 1980s, when the fall of the military dictatorship led to political and cultural liberation, debates on minority rights began to ensue in Brazil. In a society shaped by processes of racial and cultural miscegenation with a strong multiethnic and pluricultural character, debates regarding these issues are fundamental. Although the rights of minorities are guaranteed by the 1988 Federal Constitution, which prohibits all racial, ethnic, national, religious, sexual and other types of discrimination, minority groups continue to be regularly exposed to stigmatization and social exclusion in the country.

Minority voices are also growing louder in the field of literature. Since the 1990s an increase in women's and feminist writing has occurred as well as the production of authors from urban slums and of writers claiming an Indigenous or Afro-Brazilian background or LGBTQ+ status. Thus we can observe the emergence of several new literary movements which are not only guided by aesthetic points of view, unlike the majority of earlier literary production. They primarily seek to "valorize the subject of enunciation on the basis of ethical principle" (Patrocínio, 2010: 28)² in terms of racial, ethnic, gender-based and / or socio-economic specificity. Similarly, interest in this production has grown within a wider general readership, the media and academia.

1 "A literatura marginal se faz presente para representar a cultura de um povo, composto de minorias, mas em seu todo uma maioria."

2 "a valorização do sujeito da enunciação amparado no princípio ético".

The aim of this text is to examine the literary production of minority groups focusing on two areas: literature from the periphery (*literatura periférica*) produced by authors who live in the poor peripheries of Brazil's megapolises, and the production of Afro-Brazilian authors (*literatura afro-brasileira*) related to the new wave of Black activism that emerged in the late 1970s.

1 Literature from the Periphery

Socially problematic urban environments and marginalized populations have always attracted the interest of artists, and have become a frequent subject of literary, film and music production since the beginning of the 20th century. Related themes have appeared more prominently in literature since Naturalism, especially in periods favoring socially critical work, such as the 1930s, 1960s and 1970s. However, significant changes have taken place since the 1990s. An increasing number of works depict marginalized contexts such as urban peripheries and slums, so-called *favelas*, and prison environments. In addition to the traditional themes of poverty and the sharp social stratification of Brazilian society, issues of violence, drug trafficking, clashes between police and gangs along with the lack of prospects for the younger generation have come to the fore.

The most striking change, however, is that many authors of this literary production now come directly from the environments which they write about as opposed to earlier writers largely from the middle and upper classes who looked at the periphery from the center. The peripheral sectors of society thus cease to be mere objects of literary production and begin to participate in it themselves, despite the limited material conditions in which they operate. Literature from the periphery is thus produced by authors who were born and lived at least part of their lives in socially excluded communities, thus they are uniquely able to describe the peripheral environment from their direct experience. As described by Alejandro Reyes Arias, a Mexican writer living in Brazil, the middle class intellectual who once served as a “traditional cultural mediator” between the economic elite and the marginalized classes is now “losing his capacity to mediate” (Reyes Arias, 2011: iv).³ Writers and activists from the periphery are now taking over this role.

Critics and authors often refer to this type of literary production as marginal literature. Ferréz, a pioneer and best-known representative, characterizes these

3 “o tradicional mediador cultural [...] vem perdendo sua capacidade mediadora”.

works in his text *Terrorismo literário* (*Literary Terrorism*, 2005), which may be considered the manifesto of Brazilian marginal literature:

It is always good to emphasize that marginal literature is written by minorities, whether racial or socio-economic. This literature is produced on the margins of major centers of knowledge and major national culture, that is, of major purchasing power. Some argue that its main distinguishing feature is language, the way we speak, the way we tell a story, but let's leave this to the experts.

FERRÉZ, 2005: 12⁴

Literature from the periphery or marginal literature is thus a self-representational literary production that defines itself on the basis of territorial, social and often racial criteria. Many authors of this production are of Afro-Brazilian descent and seek to valorize Black culture. This literature remains in close contact with other subcultures of the periphery, such as the hip hop movement, rap music and graffiti art. Marginal literature should be understood as part of a broader cultural and political movement with the goal not only to highlight the problems of these environments, but also to portray them in a new, positive light—not as stigmatized and decadent localities, but as communities with their own culture, language, lifestyle and values. In doing so, such works contribute to overall awareness of the cultural diversity of Brazilian society as well as to the self-awareness of subjects from the periphery. It is a literature that is made in the periphery, deals with the periphery and is primarily intended for the periphery.

Several predecessors of literature from the periphery should be mentioned. Playwright Plínio Marcos (1935–1999) brought specific themes and language from the São Paulo favelas to Brazilian theatre; journalist and prose writer João Antônio (1937–1996) depicted characters from the underworld of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in his short stories. A person that many see as the principal pioneer in the marginal literature of Brazil, however, is Carolina Maria de Jesus (1914–1977). A single Black mother living in one of São Paulo's favelas, de Jesus's diary *Quarto de despejo: diário de uma favelada* (1960; Eng. trans. *Child of the Dark: The Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus*, 1962), published with the

4 “A Literatura Marginal, sempre é bom frisar, é uma literatura feita por minorias, sejam elas raciais ou socioeconômicas. Literatura feita à margem dos núcleos centrais do saber e da grande cultura nacional, isto é, de grande poder aquisitivo. Mas alguns dizem que sua principal característica é a linguagem, é o jeito que falamos, que contamos a história, bom, isso fica para os estudiosos.”

help of the journalist Audálio Dantas, became a bestseller in the 1960s. Since then *Quarto de despejo* (“storage room” for the outcasts) has been translated into many languages. Writers and artists from the periphery also draw on the counterculture of the military dictatorship period of the 1960s and 1970s. In literature, this counterculture was represented by poetry that was directly labeled “marginal” (*poesia marginal*), reproduced by means of a mimeograph, with copies disseminated outside official distribution channels (the authors were referred to as *geração mimeógrafo* / the mimeograph generation). In cinema, it was represented by the internationally recognized *Cinema Novo* movement which advocated an “aesthetics of hunger” (*uma estética da fome*),⁵ that is, artistic production in which “scarcity ceases to be an obstacle and comes to be seen as a formative element of creation” (Xavier, 2007: 13).⁶

The city which emerged in the 1990s as the center of the new artistic production from the periphery was São Paulo. An important role was played by Cooperifa—Cooperativa Cultural da Periferia (Cooperifa—Cultural Cooperation of the Periphery), a non-governmental organization founded in 2000 by the poets Sérgio Vaz and Marco Pezão with the aim of promoting literary production and reception in the periphery of São Paulo’s South Zone (Zona Sul). Still in operation today, this NGO organizes poetry readings (*saraus*) and other literary events, usually held in bars, where artists and activists from the periphery gather to present their own work and debate current artistic, social and political issues. These poetry readings, literary events and festivals have also spread to the peripheries of other cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte.

The leading figure of literature from the periphery is the author, rapper and activist Ferréz (1975–), who attracted attention with his first novel *Capão Pecado* (*Capão Sin*, 2000), set in his native São Paulo neighborhood of Capão Redondo. In addition to his literary work, Ferréz has also initiated cultural projects that seek to transform the historically conditioned negative relationship between peripheral subjects and literature. Particularly significant is the cultural movement 1 Da Sul—Somos Todos Um Pela Dignidade da Zona Sul (1 from the South—We are All One for the Dignity of the South Zone), which Ferréz founded in 1999 to promote artistic creation and community libraries. Ferréz also organized three volumes dedicated to previously unknown authors of marginal literature. These collections were published in 2001, 2002 and 2004 in the alternative magazine *Caros Amigos* (*Dear Friends*), leading to the 2005 pub-

5 See Glauber Rocha’s manifesto *Uma estética da fome* (1965; *The Aesthetics of Hunger*, 1983).

6 “a carência deixa de ser obstáculo e passa a ser assumida como fator constituinte da obra”.

lication of the book *Literatura marginal: talentos da escrita periférica* (*Marginal Literature: Talents Writing from the Periphery*).

Another important author from the periphery of São Paulo is Sacolinha (Ademiro Alves de Sousa, 1983–). Sacolinha began his literary career with the 2009 novel *Graduado em marginalidade* (*Graduated in Marginality*), and has also contributed to the cultural development of the Suzano district through various literary projects. We can also mention Allan Santos da Rosa (1976–), writer and artist who works in various artistic fields which promote Afro-Brazilian culture. Cláudia Canto (DOB unknown) is the author of *Morte às vassouras* (2018, Eng. trans. *Death to Brooms*, 2020), a book in which she describes her experiences as a domestic worker in Portugal. Poet and organizer of cultural meetings Binho (Robinson de Oliveira Padiãl, 1964–) should also be recognized.

A Rio de Janeiro author well-known outside the country is the novelist and screenwriter Paulo Lins (1958–), whose novel *Cidade de Deus* (1997, Eng. trans. *City of God*, 2006), inspired by his own experience of growing up in Rio's favela Cidade de Deus, was made into an internationally acclaimed film of the same name (directed by Fernando Meirelles in 2002). Other representatives of the Rio de Janeiro peripheral cultural scene are for example: the writer and initiator of community libraries Binho Cultura (George Cleber Alves da Silva, 1980–); Rene Silva (1994–), founder of the independent monthly newspaper *Voz das Comunidades* (*The Voice of the Communities*); Geovani Martins (1991–), author of the short story collection *O sol na cabeça* (2018, Eng. trans. *The Sun on My Head*, 2019) about childhood and adolescence in the periphery; Otávio Júnior (1983–), who captured his relationship with literature in the memoir *O livreiro do Alemão* (*The Alemão's Bookseller*, 2011); and Jessé Andarilho (1981–), author of the novel *Fiel* (*Faithful*, 2014), which depicts the difficulties of life of the young generation living in favelas. Festa Literária das Periferias—FLUP (The Literary Festival of the Peripheries), held annually in Rio de Janeiro since 2012, can be mentioned among the various cultural events promoting the work of creators from the periphery.

The distribution of the literary production from the periphery is usually carried out independently outside official publishing institutions through street sales, the internet, literary events, workshops and festivals organized in the periphery to promote literacy and local cultural production. Nevertheless, some authors are also beginning to receive growing attention from the mainstream book market, media and academic sphere. Comparing with the writings of Carolina Maria de Jesus, only her diaries met with acclaim during the author's lifetime since other genres were neglected by publishers due to their lack of "literary qualities" (Dalcastagnè, 2007: 22). In contrast, today a certain

shift may be detected towards the deperipheralization of this literary production and the decentralization of the literary canon. Still, it would be inaccurate to assume that this is a dominant tendency, since the contemporary Brazilian literature that does manage to reach a broader audience still tends toward homogenization and exclusion.

Language, generally an important factor of social inclusion in Brazil, also contributes to the situation. As a result of the great social stratification of the society, diastatic linguistic varieties are much more prominent in Brazilian Portuguese than is the case of regional variation, despite the large size of the country and the diversity of its regions. Numerous socio-cultural varieties are evident in urban agglomerations, where there has been an intense intermingling of national, ethnic, social and cultural groups throughout history. Based on sociolinguistic studies, two linguistic norms of Brazilian Portuguese have been established: the written norm, a prestigious form of the language that is taught at schools and remains close to European Portuguese, and the colloquial norm which is used in everyday informal communication even by the educated classes and which is quite different from the written norm.

Brazilian philologist and linguist Marcos Bagno, a leading voice against linguistic discrimination in the country (Bagno, 1999), points to a strong linguistic prejudice against informal varieties of language, which are linked to other prejudices—socio-economic, regional, racial, but also cultural (e.g. against the language of rap and hip hop music) and gender-based (e.g. against the so-called *pajubá*, the sociolect of the Brazilian LGBTQ+ community). Moreover, language serves as a tool of domination for the political and intellectual elite, as ignorance of the written norm due to limited access to quality education of a large part of the population, especially in poor rural areas and urban peripheries, results in social and economic exclusion and contributes to the maintenance of the status quo. Language discrimination has thus become one of the pillars of social stratification in Brazil. Bagno has described the primary solution to this problem as the greater democratization of education and the development of respect for existing language varieties.

The use of language, which usually takes on a distinct political and socially critical dimension, is one way authors of literature from the periphery challenge the literary canon in their works. In addition to thematizing peripheral environments and the self-presentation of marginal subjects, the writers work with hybrid language, using oral grammatical structures and slang expressions. They do not merely work with the written standard language by supplementing it with colloquial elements, as it is common with other contemporary authors. These authors go in the opposite direction, drawing on the specific structure and vocabulary of the language of the periphery, which they connect to vary-

ing degrees with the written norm. Thus it is not a question of enriching the language center with linguistic elements of the periphery, but rather of transforming the language of the center by means of the language of the periphery. While some modernists of the 1920s, belonging to the intellectual elite for whom they also wrote, introduced colloquial speech into the literary language,⁷ authors from the periphery, coming from a completely different social class, use their own means of expression and write for their own audience. Literature from the periphery is therefore for linguistic reasons often appreciated by those outside of peripheral areas solely for its documentary value. As Regina Dalcastagnè points out, the potential literary qualities of these works are questioned a priori, not only in the conservative circles of academic and journalistic criticism, but also by many writers for whom “‘literariness’ is a kind of transcendent and transhistorical attribute, rather than a social practice related to the production of hierarchies that privilege some and exclude others” (Rebinski, 2014).⁸

2 Afro-Brazilian Literature

Since the second half of the 1980s, the literary production of Afro-Brazilian authors as well as the interest of readers and academia have seen a steady increase.⁹ As is the case of Indigenous literature, this trend can be related to the political activism that emerged in Brazil in the climate of political and cultural liberation in the late 1970s. These works also draw inspiration from the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the liberation struggle in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, as well as the tradition of resistance to discrimination and racism in Brazil.

The roots of this resistance can be traced back to the slavery era in the slave revolts and escapes. Runaway slaves established their own settlements called *quilombos* in remote places in the forest. After the abolition of slavery in 1888, Afro-Brazilian periodicals, clubs and associations, mainly of a social, cultural

7 In 1920 the illiteracy rate in the country was around 70% (Ferraro, Kriedlow, 2004: 192).

8 “O ‘literário’ é um atributo sobrenatural e trans-histórico, em vez de ser uma prática social, que tem a ver com a produção de hierarquias que beneficiam alguns e excluem outros.”

9 The current generation of Brazilian critics dealing with Afro-Brazilian literature, including Moema Parente Augel, Zilá Bernd, Maria Nazareth Soares Fonseca, Domicio Proença Filho, Oliveira Silveira, Oswaldo de Camargo, Luiza Lobo, Leda Martins and others, has built on the work of a handful of predecessors such as Sílvio Romero, Arthur Ramos, Gilberto Freyre, Henrique L. Alves and Edison Carneiro, and above all on the studies of foreign experts such as Roger Bastide, Raymond Sayers, Gregory Rabassa and David Brookshaw (Duarte, n. d.).

and educational nature, began to emerge in the fight for civil equality and better living conditions for Afro-Brazilians. In the 1930s, a number of these activities took on a strong political dimension; Frente Negra Brasileira—FNB (Brazilian Black Front, 1931–1938) was founded and operated in various federated states during the Vargas regime. A number of culturally oriented groups also came to the fore such as Teatro Experimental do Negro—TEN (Experimental Black Theatre, 1944–1961) in Rio de Janeiro as well as Associação Cultural do Negro—ACN (Cultural Black Association, 1954–1976) and Centro de Cultura e Arte Negra—CECAN (Center for Black Culture and Arts, 1971–1981), both in São Paulo.

Founded in São Paulo in 1978, Movimento Negro Unificado—MNU (Unified Black Movement) remains to this day being one of the most influential groups in Brazil fighting in opposition to racial and social discrimination against the Afro-Brazilian population. In the cultural sphere, MNU gave rise to organizations promoting Afro-Brazilian interests such as Quilombhoje, a cultural association and publishing house. Since 1978 Quilombhoje has continuously published the important series *Cadernos Negros* (*Black Notebooks*) which focuses mainly on committed poetry and short stories by Afro-Brazilian authors, often from the periphery. Similar organizations have emerged in Salvador, Rio, Porto Alegre and other cities. The development of Afro-Brazilian literary production, particularly in the last two decades, has been aided by an economic upswing and improved access to education for the Black population, thanks to among other factors the affirmative action policies of the government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2011). Also significant in this respect was the 2003 law mandating the teaching of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture in primary and secondary schools.¹⁰

Obviously the literary production of authors of Afro-Brazilian origin is not a new phenomenon, with a number of works dating back to the colonial period, for example Arcadian poetry by Domingos Caldas Barbosa (1738–1800) and Silva Alvarenga (1749–1814). Only a handful of writers, however, have penetrated the Brazilian literary canon, such as the representative of Brazilian Realism Machado de Assis (1839–1908) and the Brazilian-Portuguese Parnassianist poet Gonçalves Crespo (1846–1883), and often long after their deaths, as we see in the case of the Symbolist poet Cruz e Sousa (1861–1898) and the Pre-Modernist prose writer Lima Barreto (1891–1922). A number of important Afro-Brazilian authors remain little known to a wider audience, including Maria

10 In 2008, the government expanded this law by introducing compulsory education in Indigenous History and Culture.

Firmina dos Reis (1822–1917), Luiz Gama (1830–1882), José do Patrocínio (1853–1905), Auta de Souza (1876–1901), and Lino Guedes (1906–1951).

Afro-Brazilian literature cannot be represented in one homogeneous stream, as the work of individual authors varies substantially in terms of the depiction Afro-Brazilian issues and questions of racial and social discrimination. Besides, works dealing with Black themes can also be found among the oeuvres of authors not of Afro-Brazilian descent such as José Basílio da Gama—the epic poem *Quitúbia* (1791), José de Alencar—the novel *O tronco do ipê* (*The Trunk of the Trumpet Tree*, 1871), Aluísio Azevedo—the novels *O mulato* (1881, Eng. trans. *Mulatto*, 1996) and *O cortiço* (1890, Eng. trans. *The Slum*, 2000), Graça Aranha—the novel *Canaã* (1902, Eng. trans. *Canaan*, 1920), Nelson Rodrigues—the stage play *O anjo negro* (1941, Eng. trans. *The Black Angel*, 2001), Jorge Amado—the novels set in Bahia, and above all the Romantic writer Castro Alves (1847–1871), “The poet of the slaves”, who dedicated much of his work to the abolitionist cause.

As Luciana Stegagno Picchio points out, the figure of the Black man, unlike the Native inhabitant, is not idealized in Brazilian literature, since in her view the Black male is “too real, too dangerously alive: from the initial slave, he gradually becomes the blood of Brazil” (Stegagno Picchio, 2004: 33).¹¹ While in colonial literature, Black and Mulatto characters appear only for the sake of local color and were frequently portrayed in a folkloric or exotic manner, it is only from the 19th century onwards that these characters begin to be directly associated with social issues. Romantic authors portray the Black man as a human being uprooted from his homeland and alienated from his own culture, as a victim deprived of rights and humanity (Stegagno Picchio, 2004: 34). Even in the socially critical prose of the first half of the 20th century, stereotypical representations of Black and Mulatto characters can be found, for example in novels by Jorge Amado, who devoted a large part of his work to the depiction of the Afro-Brazilian community in Bahia.

This situation changed with a group of artists associated with the social programs of the Black Movement in the 1930s. In their politically engaged work inspired by French Négritude, these authors and other creators sought to rehabilitate the image of Afro-Brazilian culture, criticizing the myth of racial democracy and speaking out against the marginalization of the Black population. Among the most prominent were the poet, painter, stage director and activist Solano Trindade (1908–1974), considered the first modern Black Brazil-

11 “[...] demasiado real, e perigosamente existente. Escravo no início, o negro torna-se, pouco a pouco, sangue do Brasil.”

ian poet. The writer, actor, playwright and politician Abdias do Nascimento (1914–2011) also deserves special mention as an important promoter of Black culture and one of the leading figures in the struggle for Afro-Brazilian rights in the 20th century. As a unique and distinguished representative of Afro-Brazilian production, who also represents literature from the periphery as well as women's writing, should be considered the above-mentioned Carolina Maria de Jesus, whose diary described in painful detail the appalling conditions in which a large part of the Afro-Brazilian population lived at the time of intense modernization of the country.

The new generation of writers who emerged in the late 1970s and gathered around the periodical *Cadernos Negros* openly identified with their Afro-Brazilian origins.¹² These authors focused on Black issues, portraying the figures of Blacks and Mulattoes from their own perspective. In the words of the Brazilian critic Luiza Lobo, “the Black man ceases to be an object and becomes the subject of literature and his own history; he ceases to be a topic (even as a stereotype) to become an author, with his own vision of the world” (Lobo, 2007: 315).¹³

These names and works can be named as among the most prominent representatives of contemporary Afro-Brazilian literature: the poet Carlos de Assumpção (1927–); Conceição Evaristo (1946–), author of novels, short stories and poems and winner of several prestigious literary awards who ran for the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 2018; the prose writer Paulo Lins, mentioned above in the passage on literature from the periphery; the poet, playwright and essayist Cuti (Luiz Silva, 1951–), one of the founders of *Cadernos Negros*; the poet and prose writer Miriam Alves (1952–); the poet and activist Márcio Barbosa (1959–); the poet and prose writer Cidinha da Silva (1967–); Ana Maria Gonçalves (1970–), who won the Cuban literary award Premio Casa de Las Américas for her novel *Um defeito de cor* (*A Color Defect*, 2006); the actress, poet and playwright Cristiane Sobral (1974–); and Itamar Vieira Junior (1979–), whose novel *Torto arado* (2019, Eng. trans. *Crooked Plow*, 2023) won Prêmio Jabuti, the most prestigious literary award in Brazil.

As for the question of the terminological designation of this literary production, *Cadernos Negros*, with its emphasis on committed work, has contributed

12 Nevertheless, not all contemporary authors of Afro-Brazilian origin choose to be classified within this group; Eduardo de Assis Duarte provides the example of Marilene Felinto (1970–), who refuses to identify exclusively with Black issues in her work (Duarte, 2005: 120).

13 “O negro deixa de ser objeto e passa a sujeito da literatura e da própria história; deixa de ser tema (inclusive como estereótipo) para ser autor, com uma visão de mundo própria.”

to the widespread use of the term *literatura negra* (“Black literature”), which by emphasizing its racial aspect seeks to rehabilitate the traditionally negative connotation of the term *negro*. Nevertheless, as the Brazilian critic Eduardo de Assis Duarte points out, the very notion of *literatura negra* can evoke contradictory connotations. On the one hand, it refers to a militant literary work that builds on the legacy of Négritude, while on the other hand it may evoke the folklorizing literary production of representatives of Brazilian Modernist Negrismo¹⁴ (Raul Bopp, Jorge de Lima, etc.), who pointed to the importance of African elements in formation of Brazilian identity and culture.

In recent decades, Brazilian critics have therefore favored the more precise term *literatura afro-brasileira* (“Afro-Brazilian literature”), which first came to be used in the 1940s by the French sociologist and anthropologist Roger Bastide. This designation carries a reference both to cultural ties to the African continent as well as to the transformations of African influences that have occurred in the Brazilian diaspora throughout history (Souza, Lima, 2006: 24). Assis Duarte sees this term as “more elastic (and more productive)” (Duarte, 2010: 121)¹⁵ due to its capacity to more precisely encompass the diverse modes of literary expression of Afro-Brazilian subjects. These modes range from the explicit, committed identification with ethnicity that we see in militant authors such as Luís Gama, Solano Trindade, Carlos de Assumpção and Cuti, to the indirect representation of racial issues offered in the work of Machado de Assis and Gonçalves Crespo.

According to Assis Duarte, regardless of the period of its publication five characteristic constants can be distinguished in the literary production that can be labeled as Afro-Brazilian (Duarte, 2010: 122–135). The first is the specific thematic focus, which may involve a range of subjects from Afro-Brazilian history to the present, with works often carrying autobiographical overtones. The second constant is the authorship, understood in terms not of an externalizing ethnicity but of racial, cultural and social identification as reflected in the discourse itself. The third characteristic is the point of view that presents the existential experience of Afro-Brazilian subjects and criticizes the value system based on racial prejudice. Another feature is the specific language that captures the speech of Afro-Brazilian communities in terms of intonation as well as syntax and vocabulary incorporating expressions and other influences from African languages. The last characteristic is the audience: most of these authors

14 Although the *negrismo* of Brazilian Modernists was based on European avant-gardes, the Black element was not perceived in Brazil as something exotic, but simply as one of the constitutive elements of the society (Silva, 2015: 374).

15 “uma formulação mais elástica (e mais produtiva)”.

write primarily for Afro-Brazilian readers in order to promote ethnic, cultural, and political awareness. For this authorship and readership, literary production represents a form of activism combined with other activities, including organizing literary meetings, workshops, poetry readings, theatre and rap performances, political events, etc. As indicated above, given the social marginalization of a large portion of the Afro-Brazilian population, many of these works can be included into literature from the periphery. However, Afro-Brazilian production also targets white audiences in order to introduce to them cultural and identity models which defy stereotypes and prejudices, contributing thus to the greater inclusion of the Afro-Brazilian population in the majority society.

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Finding Dialogue through Translation: Literature by Brazilian Indigenous Authors

Eva Batličková, Caroline Ivanski Langer

Whites claim to be smart. We are no less so. Our ideas spread in all directions and our words are ancient and many. They come from our ancestors. We, unlike white people, don't need skins with pictures to keep them from escaping our minds. We don't need to draw them as they do with theirs. There is no reason for them to disappear because they remain immortalized inside us.

DAVI KOPENAWA, BRUCE ALBERT: *Fall from Heaven: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*¹



The recognition of literature written in Portuguese by indigenous authors and issued by Brazilian publishers is a relatively new phenomenon, with the first books appearing on bookstore shelves only in the 1990s.² This wave of literary production is still gaining momentum and is closely linked to a series of indigenous activities dating back to the 1970s called the Brazilian Indigenous Movement (*Movimento Indígena Brasileiro*). The movement greatly impacted the formulation of various new statutes in the new Brazilian Constitution of 1988 that addressed indigenous rights. This decisive legal step initiated a sea change in the relationship of indigenous peoples with the state and society, creating a space for political activism and the gradual transformation of the state's longstanding supportive and paternalistic policies.

The way towards officially recognizing the rights and cultures of indigenous communities has been difficult, with the journey far from over. The fact that

1 Kopenawa, Davi; Albert, Bruce (2015). *A queda do céu. Palavras de um xamã yanomami*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 75.

2 This chapter is based on Kopenawa and Albert's article *Busca de um diálogo intercultural: literatura indígena no Brasil* in *Études Romanes de Brno*, 43, 2: 99–114.

indigenous populations have been subject to the Portuguese (or Portuguese-based) legal system since the very beginning of colonization does not change the situation. The first law directly affecting the indigenous population was issued in the second half of the 16th century (*Lei de 30/7/ 1566*). Containing the highly dubious notion of “voluntary slavery” (Eisenberg, 2000: 139, qt. in: Freitas, Bahia, 2017: 4), this law nominally sought to ensure protection and freedom for natives if they submitted to the Portuguese Crown. The groups affected most were those who agreed to be moved from their settlements to Jesuit villages, where they were catechized and “civilized,” as well as the tribes who allied themselves with the Portuguese in their struggles against other native tribes and colonizers from other countries. The law distinguished these two groups of natives from the “evil savages” (“*gentios bravios*”) of tribes or members of tribes that refused to submit to Portuguese subjugation. Following the decrees of the time, these indigenous populations could legally be enslaved or murdered in so-called “just wars” (“*guerras justas*”) (Freitas, Bahia, 2017: 4–5), a term that widely abused during Brazilian colonization.

The combination of the ineffectiveness of the laws to protect the natives and the frequent violation of these laws by the settlers, compounded by the deadly epidemics introduced by the European colonizers, created a disastrous situation for the country’s indigenous inhabitants. It is estimated that in 1500, when the Portuguese seafarers officially discovered Brazil, around 5 million indigenous peoples were living in the territory in more than 1,000 tribes (Niccio, Cavalcante, Ávila, 2029: 75). In the 1970s, the general prevailing belief in Brazil was that the complete disappearance of indigenous Brazilians was quite inevitable. The situation began to improve a decade later, however, with the new growth of the indigenous population. This phenomenon was linked not only to a better quality of life and easier access to medical care, dramatically reducing infant mortality, but also to the fact that more and more people began to claim indigenous ancestry. Based on the latest population census in 2010, there were 305 indigenous tribes in Brazil, comprising 896,917 people speaking 274 different languages from 4 language families. More than half of these people lived in cities. Nevertheless, the population from indigenous tribes corresponds to only 0.47% of the country’s total, which naturally reflects the low official representation of indigenous peoples in Brazil.

Five centuries of systematic efforts to assimilate or eliminate indigenous tribes have included the suppression of the cultural identity of groups that have submitted to colonization. Various strategies have been developed throughout Brazilian history, notably removing entire communities from their original locations to villages near Portuguese settlements or to locations that required strategic defense against potential enemies. In the Jesuit villages known as mis-

sions, many natives were forced into hard labor and physically punished for offenses that included speaking their own language or engaging in traditional practices. Indigenous religions and customs were uncompromisingly demonized.

The stigma of demonization which remains entrenched in parts of Brazilian society to this day is seen by indigenous activists and intellectuals as a fundamental problem to be confronted. Kaká Werá, for example, speaks of the need to *decatechize* indigenous culture. He calls this process “de-dramatization,” as he associates the original forced acculturation by the colonizers with artistic-cultural construction through theatre:

In the sixteenth century, the Jesuits’ principal educational tool was the theatre through performances staged in the Jesuit colleges. The Indians represented their own death, as José de Anchieta cast them in the role of evil, represented by demons Aimberê and Cunhambebe.³ The shamans were portrayed as these devils themselves. As the shamans were transformed into devils through theatre, their knowledge was also demonized. Take José de Anchieta’s texts from the 16th century and you will see these characters represented: Aimberê as the great demon, Cunhambebe as Satan himself, continuing in this vein. José de Anchieta’s plays, themselves plagiarized from the dramas of Gil Vicente, managed to introduce ideas of evil and good into a culture where such concepts had been practically non-existent.

WERÁ, 2017: 103, in: Dorrico, Danner, Correia, 2018: 351⁴

In the era of the Brazilian monarchy established with the declaration of independence from Portugal in September 1822, the hierarchies of religious discourse in debates about indigenous populations were officially replaced by

3 The Jesuit Father Anchieta was the most important author of plays in 16th-century Brazil. Aimberê and Cunhambebe were Chiefs of the Tupinambá tribe who led a native rebellion against the Portuguese colonizers called the War of the Tamoyo (1554–1567).

4 “O grande instrumento de educação no século XVI dos jesuítas foi o teatro, que aplicavam no colégio. Os índios representaram a morte deles mesmos, porque José de Anchieta os coloca como os personagens do mal. Aimberê e Cunhambebe representam o mal, representam os demônios. Os pajés eram representados como o próprio diabo. Assim, por meio do teatro, os pajés se tornaram diabos e os líderes indígenas e sua sabedoria se tornaram demônios. Peguem os textos teatrais de José de Anchieta no século XVI, que vocês vão ver os personagens que existem lá. Aimberê, o grande demônio, Cunhambebe, o próprio Satã, e assim vai. Os autos de José de Anchieta, plagiados de Gil Vicente, conseguiram colocar a ideia do mal e do bem dentro de uma cultura onde isso praticamente não existia.”

hierarchical proto-evolutionist ideas: “From then on, ‘primitive’ societies were doomed to ‘evolve’ by abandoning their cultures in favor of civilizational advances.” (Freitas, Bahia, 2017: 8) This understanding is reflected in a law of 1825, according to which the natives should be incorporated into the nation by pacifist methods, i.e. “by mild and persuasive means” (decrees issued: 25/5, 18/10 e 8/11/1825, in: Freitas, Bahia, 2017: 9). In 1831, an ordinance was passed regarding the guardianship of the state for orphaned natives. This action initially applied to individuals freed from slavery or forced labor, but in practice was soon extended to all orphaned children of entire native population. Although this legal measure was intended to protect vulnerable members of the indigenous population, it also legitimized the idea of the dispossession and cultural immaturity of the indigenous people, who were destined to “grow up” under the supervision of the state.

Until the early 20th century, the relationship of Brazilian society with indigenous peoples did not change significantly, with debates about “the legitimacy of the use of violence in the process of integrating indigenous peoples” not uncommon. There were even voices in favor of murdering those who would reject civilization. (Freitas, Bahia, 2017: 16)

Nevertheless, this type of discourse had become less and less acceptable in the international context. In 1910, Brazil was forced to create the Office for the Protection of Indians (*Serviço de proteção ao Índio—SPI*), which represented a pioneering venture within the Americas. It is worth mentioning that the Czech ethnographer, photographer and botanist Alberto Vojtěch Frič was an active participant in the events that preceded the establishment of this organization.

At the International Congress of Americanists in Vienna in 1908, Frič accused the Brazilian government of attempting the full extermination of the indigenous population. Frič began his dramatic performance with an uncompromising declaration that the slave chase, the forced evictions, the murders, and the introduction of deadly infectious diseases such as smallpox into indigenous villages was eradicating the native tribes. Moreover, in his text Frič emphasizes that such brutality is not confined to isolated areas of the rubber Amazon rainforest, but is common practice within the thriving European colonies in the southern parts of Brazil (Stauffer, 1960: 169).

Despite the official attempts at stifling its message, Frič's impetus became a prime impetus for a broad debate in Brazilian society about the vulnerable position of the indigenous population which later led to subsequent plans and arrangements which were more ambitious. One of these initiatives was the creation of the above-mentioned Office for the Protection of the Indians. Although it was projected as a progressive measure, in practice the Office was beholden to reify the evolutionist paradigm of gradually integrating the indigenous into

modern society. Only during the 1960s, with the growing prestige and application of the results of anthropological research, was this project and its goals evaluated as outdated. In 1967 the National Foundation for the Indians (Fundação Nacional do Índio—Funai) was founded, an organization more in line with the new times. Nevertheless, even this institution, still active today, initially did not provide a satisfactory solution. Firstly, the old concept of civilizational integration persisted, and secondly, the fact that the Foundation was set up during the military dictatorship (1964–1985), therefore in most cases administered by the armed forces, complicated the situation. Finally, the organization served primarily to expand the possibilities of colonization of the Amazon region, which was considered by the autocratic regime as essential in the economic development and progress of the country (Munduruku, 2012: 30–31).

On the other hand, during this period the foundations of the Brazilian Indigenous Movement were laid. This program proved crucial in awakening a sense of belonging among the native population. From the 1970s onwards, indigenous representatives became increasingly involved in social action against the authoritarian regime, and many Brazilians began to participate in gatherings of indigenous leadership elites:

From this inclusion in the social movement, a pan-indigenous consciousness was born, through which indigenous people began to understand that there were similar problems among their tribes; this resulted in concrete actions in favor of their rights and led to the mobilization of more than 200 indigenous tribes.

MUNDURUKU, 2012: 11⁵

In this context, it is important to highlight the essential role of the Catholic Church, which sought to organize the popular classes, including the indigenous population, during the military dictatorship. With increasing politicization and awareness, indigenous elites found more space to intervene in the newly drafted legislation concerning their communities. Thus, in the new 1988 constitution that was ratified after the end of the military dictatorship, the first specific norm concerning indigenous peoples appeared:

The Indians are recognized for their social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions, and for their indigenous rights in the ter-

5 “Dessa inserção no movimento social nasceu uma consciência pan-indígena, que fez com que percebessem que havia problemas semelhantes entre seus povos, gerando ações concretas em prol de seus direitos, chegando mobilizar os mais de 200 povos indígenas.”

ritory they traditionally occupy, and it is incumbent upon the Union to define, protect and lead to the recognition of all their property.

1988 Constitution, Article 231⁶

As indigenous rights experts Rodrigo Bastos Freitas and Saulo José Casali Bahia argue, this was a moment of change in the prism through which society regarded indigenous peoples. Instead of demanding the acculturation of indigenous peoples to the majority society, a new paradigm of social interaction began to prevail. This change focused on “creating ideal conditions for indigenous peoples to develop themselves” (Freitas, Bahia, 2017: 25). Although the heavy-handed guardianship of the state remained, it underwent a fundamental change. The former scheme conceived for orphaned individuals has been replaced by protective control based on the need to “balance the natural asymmetry of forces [...] due to the recognition that the pressures created by a technological society are significantly stronger than the possibilities of cultural resistance” (Freitas, Bahia, 2017: 30).⁷ The guardianship system remains a highly debated issue despite the positive intentions that Freitas and Bahia emphasize in their text. Indigenous leaders often perceive guardianship as a dead end in which they have to choose between two undignified options: either be branded as “uncivilized” savages before the law with the guarantee of state protection, or be forced into the labor market as “civilized” people under liberal capitalism, which is entirely at odds with their way of life and cultural values.

1 A Place from Which to Speak

Fundamental changes in the legal sphere have opened up space for a broad cultural movement of the indigenous population and its supporters. The 1988 Constitution was the impetus for public efforts to win the rights of indigenous peoples to literacy and education. The 2008 legislation finally included themes and school subjects related to “Afro-Brazilian and indigenous culture” in the curriculum. These changes were reflected in the book market, creating a new

6 “São reconhecidos aos índios sua organização social, costumes, línguas, crenças e tradições, e os direitos originários sobre as terras que tradicionalmente ocupam, competindo à União demarcá-las, proteger e fazer respeitar todos os seus bens.”

7 “reside em compensar a assimetria natural de forças [...] devido à evidência de que as pressões exercidas pela sociedade tecnológica são substancialmente mais fortes que as possibilidades de resistência cultural.”

incentive for indigenous authors to write and publish their works. One of these authors, Olívio Jekupé, here comments on the possibilities presented by the new circumstances a year after the passage of the amended law:

Given the situation, I believe that our communities must fight for the establishment of schools in our villages, because the future of our people's defense lies in education. Through knowledge, we will be prepared to be strong leaders. Those who have the upper hand over us have used this weapon against us to humiliate us. If we are to confront them, why not use the same weapon? A weapon for which no war is necessary, merely conversation, debate.

JECUPÉ, 2009: 16, in: Dorrico, Danner, Correia, 2018: 237⁸

It is no coincidence that a large proportion of the indigenous literary production has been produced with a pedagogical intent, generally oriented towards the reinforcement of ethnic identity (Dorrico, in: Dorrico, Danner, Correia, 2018: 241). The preparation of didactic material is often a collective affair, often created with the help of non-indigenous people, usually anthropologists and linguists. Nevertheless, collective authorship must be considered in a broader context. Far from being limited to the formulation of educational materials, joint acts of creation can be seen as one of the defining features of indigenous literature, since even the individual authors who sign their works usually draw on the ancient narratives of their communities or relate their own experiences to them. Indigenous writers consider this body of legends, tales and rituals a direct source of inspiration, with themselves as a mediator. The focus then shifts from the position of authorship to conceptions of the protagonism, through which it is not the person who speaks, but the "place from which one speaks" which conditions a given vision of the world and literary expression. This place is located in a timeless world or in ancient times (Matos, 2011 qt. in: Dorrico, Danner, Correia, Danner, 2018: 230). Not being bound by or within the modern world entails two fundamental consequences. The first is the aforementioned relativization of the trope of the author-creator, who manifests in indigenous production as "someone in the process of taking on a voice with the capacity to write in the name of defending his people and himself."

8 "Sendo assim, acredito que nossas comunidades têm que lutar para que haja escolas em suas aldeias, porque o futuro da defesa de nosso povo está na educação. É através do conhecimento que teremos líderes fortes e preparados. O dominante usa dessa arma para nos enfrentar, para nos humilhar. Se temos que enfrentá-los, por que não usar dessa mesma arma? Uma arma que não precisa de guerra; só de conversa, discurso."

(Dorrigo, in: Dorrigo, Danner, Correia, 2018: 231) On the other hand, ancient times are always associated with a particular ethnic group, which shows the untenability of the “fantasy of a homogeneous monolith of Brazilian Indians” (Dorrigo, in: Dorrigo, Danner, Correia, 2018: 230). There are no such “Indian times” as such, but the ancient periods of the Munduruku, Potiguara, Guaraní, etc. “The place from which one speaks” is a guarantee for the preservation of the identity of indigenous authors, a starting point for rethinking concepts created in the context of Western culture and a resource for intercultural dialogue:

Proceeding from a non-Western source, this work does not dissolve when it comes into contact with Western structures. [...] The fact that an indigenous author publishes a book does not mean that he or she considers written expression superior to spoken expression, much less Western society superior to (and more civilized than) the ethnic tradition. It is about the need for intercultural dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous people. This legitimates the adoption of symbolic structures such as alphabetic writing as well as conscious publishing strategies to stimulate indigenous thought in the society surrounding them. This is the case for Indigenous writers and theorists who use the terms literature, prose, poetry, and fiction to dialogue with non-Indigenous society. In this dialogue, they reframe such concepts and imprint them with the character of Native American populations, giving new meaning to creative expression. This strategy is used consciously as a kind of resistance to the constraints historically imposed on their languages, rituals, traditions, in short, their ancient times.

DORRICO, in: Dorrigo, Danner, Correia, 2018: 244⁹

9 “Esta produção, oriunda de uma matriz extra ocidental, não se dissolve no contato com estruturas ocidentais. Em outras palavras, o fato de um escritor indígena publicar um livro não significa que ele considera a escrita superior à oralidade, nem tampouco que a sociedade ocidental seja superior (e civilizada) à sua tradição étnica. Mas, por sua vez, que um diálogo intercultural se faz necessário entre povos indígenas e não indígenas. Tal ação justifica a adoção de estruturas simbólicas, como a escrita alfabética e a via editorial como estratégia consciente para dinamizar o pensamento indígena na sociedade envolvente. Assim é o caso dos escritores e teóricos indígenas que utilizam os termos literatura, prosa, poesia, ficção para dialogar com a sociedade não indígena. Nesse diálogo, ressignificam tais conceitos, imprimindo um caráter ameríndio, dando novo sentido à expressão criativa. Esta estratégia é tomada conscientemente como resistência à coibição imposta historicamente às suas línguas, ritos, tradições, em suma, às suas ancestralidades.”

An interesting example that problematizes the preeminence of individual authorship to express the indigenous “place from which one speaks” is the book *A queda do céu. Palavras de um xamã yanomami* (*Falling from Heaven: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*), a collaboration between indigenous activist Davi Kopenawa and French ethnologist Bruce Albert which has become a key text within these discourses. The work was published first in France (2010) and in Portuguese translation five years later in Brazil. The spirit of the book can be splendidly captured in the chapter “Drawings of the Scriptures,” in which the shaman describes the relationship of his oral culture to Western writing culture:

*Omama*¹⁰ did not give us any book with pictures of the words of *Teosi*¹¹ like those of the white people. He immortalized his words in us. But for white people to be able to listen to them, they must be drawn just like theirs. If they are not, the thought remains hollow. When these ancient words come only from our mouths, they do not understand them properly and soon forget them. If they are fixed once and for all on paper, the words remain as present to them as the drawings of *Teosi*'s words which they cannot take their eyes off of.

KOPENAWA, ALBERT, 2015: 77¹²

Although Portuguese is the primary language in which the literary production of indigenous Brazilian authors is produced, these writers do not limit themselves to it by seeking means of expression in indigenous languages that traditionally have used no writing system. Thus, in addition to studying Portuguese, efforts are intensifying to create an alphabetic structure for indigenous languages (Guesse, 2011: 3).

An important characteristic of the literary production of indigenous authors is its strong political and social commitment. While Western literature at least since Classicism has emphasized writing as art, highlighting its aesthetic component above all, the mode of expression of indigenous authors has been termed “voz-práxis” (“voice-praxis”) (Dorrigo, in: Dorrigo, Danner, Correia,

10 The deity of Brazil's indigenous Yanomami tribe.

11 The Christian God in the concept of the Yanomami shaman.

12 “*Omama* não nos deu nenhum livro mostrando os desenhos das palavras de *Teosi*, como os dos brancos. Fixou suas palavras dentro de nós. Mas, para que os brancos as possam escutar, é preciso que sejam desenhadas como as suas. Se não for assim, seu pensamento permanece oco. Quando essas antigas palavras apenas saem de nossas bocas, eles não as entendem direito e as esquecem logo. Uma vez coladas no papel, permanecerão tão presentes para eles quanto os desenhos das palavras de *Teosi*, que não param de olhar.”

Danner, 2018: 333). For the vast majority of these writers, their literary production is an offshoot of political movements, a tool to achieve and maintain the political and social rights of indigenous populations, and a means to preserve cultural identity:

For us, indigenous literature is a way of using art, a pen, as a strategy for political struggle. It is a tool for struggle. And why a political struggle? Because to the extent that we penetrate society and society recognizes us as those who produce culture, as bearers of ancient wisdom and intellectuals, it will also gradually recognize that there is an indigenous citizenship. And that there are certain constitutional rights within that citizenship that do not harm or divide society, whether indigenous or non-indigenous.

WERÁ, 2017: 20; in: Dorrico, Danner, Correia, Danner, 2018: 335¹³

The last aspect that we would highlight in relation to indigenous literary production is the question of orality as understood in two essential dimensions: memory and improvisation. “Every utterance of the narrator is a restatement and a reimagining at the same time, since he is also an artist who masters the play with the syntactic arrangement, tone, and diction to arrive at where he wants to go.” (Calvet, 2011: 54, 55, qt. in: Guesse, 2011: 5).¹⁴ With all its advantages as well as limitations vis-à-vis the spoken word, the written text does more readily allow features such as “repetition, condensation of subject matter, expressions that define the beginning and end of stories, informal and colloquial language [...]” (Souza, 2006, qt. in: Guesse, 2011: 6).¹⁵ Oral elements are not unknown in literary texts, with their presence highly significant in African literatures, for example. Ana Mafalda Leite, a leading authority in the field, considers texts based on the spoken word tradition so crucial that she recom-

13 “Para nós, a literatura indígena é uma maneira de usar a arte, a caneta, como uma estratégia de luta política. É uma ferramenta de luta. E por que uma luta política? Porque, à medida que a gente chega na sociedade e a sociedade nos reconhece como fazedores de cultura, como portadores de saberes ancestrais e intelectuais, ela vai reconhecendo também que existe uma cidadania indígena. E que dentro da cidadania existem determinados direitos constitucionais que não ferem, que não desagregam a sociedade, seja indígena ou não indígena.”

14 “Cada proferição do contador é uma retransmissão e uma recriação ao mesmo tempo, já que ele é também um artista, que sabe jogar com a organização sintática, com o tom, com a dicção para chegar aonde ele quer chegar.”

15 “a repetição, a condensação dos enredos, as expressões que marcam o início e fim das histórias, a informalidade e coloquialidade da linguagem[...]”

mends the use of interdiscursivity, a concept proposed by Ghanaian literary critic Atem Quyzson: “The literary text should no longer be seen as a mirror that reproduces cultural elements, but rather as a field of various angles of interaction between cultural and literary discourses.” (Leite, 2003: 46, qt. in: Guesse, 2011: 6)¹⁶

Daniel Munduruku, one of Brazil’s most prominent indigenous intellectuals and activists, also emphasizes the importance of oral elements in indigenous texts. He views the written and spoken word not as opposites, but as complementary elements:

Written speech is a technique. It is necessary to master this technique to use it for the benefit of the indigenous population. The technique is not a negation of what one is. On the contrary, it is an affirmation of ability. It is a demonstration of the capacity to transform memory into identity, as it is the latter that reaffirms Being to the extent that it needs to enter the mythic universe in order to know the other [...]. There is a fine line between orality and writing, without a doubt. Some want to turn this boundary into a break. I prefer to embrace their complementarity. It is impossible to believe that memory does not update itself. It is important to note that memory is always trying to use new technologies to keep itself alive. Writing is one of these techniques. [...] To think about indigenous literature is to think about the movement that memory realizes to grasp its possibilities to move in a time that seeks to negate it and to negate the population that professes it. Written expression is a consolidation of orality.

MUNDURUKU, 2008¹⁷

16 “O texto literário deve ser olhado já não como um espelho reproduzidor de elementos culturais, mas antes como um campo prismático de interação entre discursos culturais e literários.”

17 “A escrita é uma técnica. É preciso dominar esta técnica com perfeição para poder utilizá-la a favor da gente indígena. Técnica não é negação do que se é. Ao contrário, é afirmação de competência. É demonstração de capacidade de transformar a memória em identidade, pois ela reafirma o Ser na medida em que precisa adentrar o universo mítico para dar-se a conhecer o outro [...] Há um fio tênue entre oralidade e escrita, disso não se duvida. Alguns querem transformar este fio numa ruptura. Prefiro pensar numa complementação. Não se pode achar que a memória não se atualiza. É preciso notar que ela—a memória—está buscando dominar novas tecnologias para se manter viva. A escrita é uma dessas técnicas. [...] Pensar a literatura indígena é pensar no movimento que a memória faz para apreender as possibilidades de mover-se num tempo que a nega e nega os povos que a afirmam. A escrita indígena é a afirmação da oralidade.”

2 The Origins of Indigenous Literature in Brazil

At the first creation of written literature by Brazilian indigenous authors, we encounter the name of Eliane Patiguara. A native of Rio de Janeiro, Patiguara studied Portuguese literature and pedagogy at the Federal University, and later specialized in environmental education at the University of Oru Preto. Patiguara is the founder of GRUMIN (Grupo Mulher-Educação Indígena), a group of women dedicated to the education of indigenous populations, and she is one of the founding members of the Continental Unity of Indigenous Women (ECMIA / Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas). For several years Eliane Patiguara participated in the drafting of the “Global Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” at the United Nations in Geneva.¹⁸ In 2021, she was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Her first poem, *Indigenous Identity*, a landmark in indigenous literature was published in 1975.

Our ancestor used to say: let's have a long life!
 But I am falling out of life and death
 And the guns creak against us.
 But as long as my heart is passionate, is in fire
 The indigenous person in me does not die
 Much less the commitment I made to myself
 To the dead
 To walk with my people step by step
 Steadfastly, towards the sun
 I am a needle that burns in the middle of a haystack
 Carrying on my shoulders the weight of a robbed family
 Stripped of faith, humiliated
 Shapeless, lusterless, disgraced.

First stanza of *Identidade indígena*, in: POTIGUARA, 2004: 102–103¹⁹

In 1989 Eliane Potiguara published her first book *A Terra é Mãe do Índio* (*The Land is the Mother of the Indian*), which won a Prize from the England PEN

18 <http://www.elianepotiguara.org.br/images/historico.pdf>

19 “Nosso ancestral dizia: Temos vida longa! / Mas caio da vida e da morte / E range o armamento contra nós. / Mas enquanto eu tiver o coração aceso / Não morre a indígena em mim / E nem tampouco o compromisso que assumi / Perante os mortos / De caminhar com minha gente passo a passo / E firme, em direção ao sol / Sou uma agulha que ferve no meio do palheiro / Carrego o peso da família espoliada / Desacreditada, humilhada / Sem forma, sem brilho, sem fama.”

CLUB and the Fund for Free Expression, USA. In 1994, she published a textbook on indigenous alphabetization based on the method of eminent Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, a project which received UNESCO financing.

Two years later in 1996 the aforementioned Daniel Munduruku entered into literary consciousness with *Histórias de índio (Indian Stories)*, a book of short stories, various accounts and feuillets about the culture of his Munduruku tribe. The work is classified as a children's book. To date the author has published 54 books, three of them outside of Brazil. Munduruku was awarded second place in the national literary competition Prêmio Jabuti for one of his books for children and young people.

An essential moment in the acceptance by the wider Brazilian society of indigenous literature was the publication of *A Terra dos mil povos: História indígena do Brasil contada por um índio (Land of a Thousand Tribes: the Indigenous History of Brazil Told by an Indian, 1998)*. Here the author Kaká Werá Jecupé presents a vision of the world through the lens of the Tupí-Guaraní tradition, which his nomadic family adopted. The book met with considerable acclaim within the country (Wapichana, in: Dorrico, Danner, Correia, 2018: 75), and Jecupé has since accepted numerous invitations to lecture at universities in the UK, USA, France, Israel, Mexico and India. At the same time, the story of colonial Brazil as told from the point of view of an indigenous man shows that writing in Portuguese does not limit the expression of thought processes of these writers. In this example from one of the first chapters, Kaká Werá explains to the Western reader what it means for the indigenous population to be Indian:

The Indian never called himself or calls himself an Indian. The name "Indian" was brought about by the sea winds of the 16th century, but the spirit of the "Indian" inhabited Brazil before time began to exist and spread throughout the Americas to later express itself in the many names propagated by the traditions of the Sun, the Moon, and the Dream. [...] For the Indian, every word has its own spirit. A name is a soul that nourishes itself from a place, as is said in the Ayvu language. It is life sounded in a certain form. Life is the spirit in motion. Spirit is silence and sound to the Indian. The silence-sound has a rhythm, a tone whose body is the color. When the spirit is sounded, it becomes, it is realized, it has a tone. Before the word "Indian" existed to designate all native tribes, the spirit of the Indian already existed, scattered in hundreds of tones. The tones are divided by affinities, forming clans that form tribes that populate villages and form ethnicities. The oldest gives birth to the youngest. The oldest Indian of this land, now called Brazil, calls himself Tupy, which

in the sacred language abanhaenga means: tu = sound, noise; py = foot, base, that is, the standing sound, the seated sound, the intonation. In this way, the Indian is a quality of spirit embedded in the harmony of the form.

JECUPÉ, 1998: 13²⁰

In September 2020, Julie Dorrico estimated the number of working indigenous authors in Brazil at fifty-seven. Many are not bound by the book market, and like other authors use various platforms such as social networks and blogs to disseminate their ideas and enlighten their audience. The youngest generation also expresses themselves through lyrics within contemporary music, with the rap of young Guaranians a well-known example (Kambeba, in: Dorrico, Daner, Correia, 2018: 42–43). In addition to writers whose work we would classify as belonging to a certain literary genre or blend of genres, there is also a group of writers who have undergone formal university education and who reflect critically upon their culture within academic discourse.

3 The Protagonism of Indigenous Authors in the Intellectual Field

According to demographic surveys conducted in 2010, there were 2,765 indigenous schools in Brazil with an intercultural and bilingual focus, for a total enrollment of 246,000 students from preschool to university courses. In the same year, around 2,000 indigenous elementary and secondary students were registered in the country, with approximately 3,000 in higher education, many of whom studying to become teachers in the network of schools for the indige-

20 “O índio não se chamava nem chama a si mesmo de índio. O nome “índio” veio trazido pelos ventos dos mares do século XVI, mas o espírito “índio” habitava o Brasil antes mesmo de o tempo existir e se estendeu pelas Américas para, mais tarde, exprimir muitos nomes, difusores da Tradição do Sol, da Lua e do Sonho. [...] Para o índio, toda a palavra possui espírito. Um nome é uma alma provida de um assento, diz-se na língua ayvu. É uma vida entoada em uma forma. Vida é o espírito em movimento. Espírito, para o índio, é silêncio e som. O silêncio-som possui um ritmo, um tom, cujo corpo é a cor. Quando o espírito é entonado, torna-se, passa a ser, ou seja, possui um tom. Antes de existir a palavra “índio” para designar todos os povos indígenas, já havia o espírito *índio* espalhado em centenas de tons. Os tons se dividem por afinidade, formando clãs, que formam tribos, que habitam aldeias, constituindo nações. Os mais antigos vão parindo os mais novos. O índio mais antigo dessa terra hoje chamada Brasil se autodenomina *Tupy*, que na língua sagrada, o abanhaenga significa: tu = som, barulho; e py = pé, assento; ou seja, o som-de-pé, o som-assentado, o entonado. De modo que índio é uma qualidade de espírito posta em uma harmonia de forma.”

nous population. In 2010 a total of 12,000 indigenous teachers were dedicated to developing the didactic material used in these educational institutions (Guesse, 2011: 2).

The change in the status of indigenous peoples in the legal system was also reflected in the transformation of their political and social status. One consequence was greater access to universities and research centers, opening up the path to critical and scholarly production for indigenous scholars. The aforementioned Daniel Munduruku, who studied philosophy, points to the need for a theoretical grasp of one's own culture:

If the indigenous ethnic groups merely “translated” Western society into their own mythical references, they would run the risk of being seduced and abandoning the life they fought so valiantly to preserve. It is necessary to interpret. It is necessary to know. It is necessary to let oneself be known. It is necessary to write—even if in blood paint—the history that has been denied so many times.

MUNDURUKU, in: Dorrico, Danner, Correia, 2018: 82²¹

Márcia Wayna Kambeba, a writer and poet with a university degree in geography, comments on the importance of literature for both cultural identification and communication among cultures:

The art of writing contributes to the cataloging by people in villages of the stories told by the oldest among them, which then, turned into books, allows children in school to imagine themselves in this universe by listening to and reading these works. This will give us the opportunity outside of the villages for pupils and other people to delve deeper into a given theme, or perhaps to learn how a particular tribe lives, resists and defends its territory.

KAMBEBA, in: Dorrico, Danner, Correia, 2018: 40²²

21 “Se estes povos fizerem apenas a “tradução” da sociedade ocidental para seu repertório mítico, correrão o risco de ceder ao canto da sereia e abandonar a vida que tão gloriosamente lutaram para manter. É preciso interpretar. É preciso conhecer. É preciso se tornar conhecido. É preciso escrever—mesmo com tintas do sangue—a história que foi tantas vezes negada.”

22 “A arte de escrever tem contribuído para que nas aldeias os povos catalogassem narrativas contadas pelos mais velhos e que, depois de serem transformadas em livro, as crianças na sala de aula conseguissem se imaginar nesse universo pela escuta e leitura dessas narrativas. Ela nos dá possibilidades para que, fora da aldeia, alunos e pessoas possam se aprofundar em determinado assunto ou mesmo saber como cada povo vive, resiste e defende seu território.”

Social anthropologist Ely Ribeiro de Sousa, also known as Ely Macuxi after his tribal affiliation, explains the fundamental importance of understanding the perspective of indigenous culture:

Outside these widely diverse contexts, outside their symbolic realities, their cosmological conceptions, this is simply the reproduction of folkloric ideas about our peoples, building a reification of mistaken images about living cultures, freezing them in an anachronistic and unreal temporality. Our traditional indigenous culture cannot be reduced to the plots and characters of stories and anecdotes merely to satisfy curiosity or the publishing market. In telling our stories, it is necessary to exalt our characters, fantastic plots about spiritual beings and forest animals.

SOUSA, in: Dorrico, Danner, and Correia, 2018: 56–57²³

Certain tendencies of contemporary indigenous scholars can be shown in one representative of the younger generation, Julie Dorrico, who holds a doctorate in literary theory from the Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUC/RS) and has produced a long list of articles and studies dedicated to indigenous authors. Dorrico is the author of *Eu sou Macuxi e outras histórias* (*I am Macuxi and Other Stories*, 2019), for which she won the *Prêmio Tamoio*, a literary prize dedicated to indigenous authors. With other colleagues she currently manages the Instagram profile @leiamulheresindigenas, where she presents visual and written works by indigenous women authors accompanied by short videos with readings of excerpts from their texts. In the narrative about herself, which she filmed as part of the Mário de Andrade Library program (25 May 2021), she emphasizes the importance of social networks for disseminating information outside academia. In her study “Vozes da literatura indígena brasileira contemporânea: do registro etnográfico à criação literária” (“Voices of Contemporary Brazilian Indigenous Literature: from ethnographic record to literary production”), she also emphasizes the adoption of written forms of expression as a strategy for the presentation of indigenous culture:

23 “Fora destes contextos, amplamente diversos, fora de suas realidades simbólicas, suas concepções cosmológicas, é reproduzir ideias folclóricas sobre nossos povos, construindo-se uma reificação de imagens equivocadas sobre a cultura viva, congelando-a numa temporalidade anacrônica e irreal. Não se pode reduzir nossa cultura tradicional indígena a enredos e personagens de historinhas e anedotas para satisfazer meramente a curiosidade ou o mercado editorial. Ao contar nossas histórias é preciso exaltar nossos personagens, enredos fantásticos sobre os seres espirituais e animais das florestas.”

[...] indigenous voices that could be heard since the time of colonization have been marginalized because they have not penetrated the system of Western knowledge production. When indigenous intellectuals understood this logic, they began to adopt the technical skills of the West so that they could give political and aesthetic visibility to their utterances: they learned the codes and laws, alphabetic writing, the means to produce and publish their words, and how to use media and academic language to defend their ethnicity.

DORRICO, in: Dorrico, Danner, & Correia, 2018: 239²⁴

The entry of indigenous authors into the literary and academic arena is an essential moment which has sparked debates on world culture and literature. Indigenous literature is presented here in its regional birth, defined by the specific historical and social conditions of Brazil in the last fifty years. It is published by major publishing houses, receives international literary awards and is translated into foreign languages, with its authors invited by world universities. All of this also reflects changes in global culture, in the larger discourse, in the contemporary vision of the world. Discussions dealing with postcolonial cultural space is crucial to understanding these changes.

4 Centre and Periphery or “Where Do We Speak from”?

How is the literary production of Brazilian indigenous authors to be understood within the dynamics of the relationship between centers and peripheries in world literature? If we accept that literary centers are perceived as places of attraction in which values are concentrated and condensed, while, dominated by the centers, the peripheral spaces seek a balance and to create their own literary canon with their own axiological criteria and categorizations, then we encounter a fundamental problem with Brazilian indigenous authors. For these writers, our Western literature is not a frame of reference that would serve as a source of their work. This raises the question of the extent to which their production is graspable in terms of center-periphery, but also whether to even

24 “[...] as vozes indígenas, enunciadas desde a Colonização, foram postas de modo periférico por não adentrarem o sistema de produção de conhecimento ocidental. Percebendo tal lógica, os intelectuais indígenas passaram a adotar os domínios técnicos do Ocidente, a fim de que sua enunciação lhes desse visibilidade política e estética: aprenderam códigos e leis, a escrita alfabética, os meios de produção e publicação para sua palavra, como usar as mídias e a linguagem acadêmica para defender seus povos.”

apply terms such as national cultural space, or to understand literature as art, i.e. according to criteria established in Europe since the 16th century. From the previous analysis and the examples provided, it is clear that indigenous authors choose literary creation as a political-social tool in order to protect and preserve their own culture, a goal which is based on entirely different epistemological, ontological and axiological principles.²⁵ Above all, to be included in some Western literary canon is not the primary aspiration of their production.

More light on this issue may be shed by a concept from the Argentine scholar Walter D. Mignolo, who reflects on postcolonial culture through the triadic notion of modernity/ coloniality/ decoloniality. In this paradigm, modernity represents a complex set of power relations (*Los desafíos descoloniales de nuestros días*, 2017; *On Decolonization*, 2018) which cannot be approached as an ontological ramification of history, but as a narrative of European civilization (Mignolo, 2017: 25). Through ideas such as “liberation, progress and happiness” (Mignolo, 2017: 13), this narrative was meant to legitimize colonial and postcolonial violence. Decoloniality, then, is the response of developing countries to modern discourse and an attempt to break out of it by formulating a new narrative based on a non-European setting. Mignolo thus sets himself against the traditional dichotomy of the “modern” and “pre-modern” world, replacing the latter with the term “non-modern” world as a space that stands outside the narrative of Western culture. This deprives Occidentalism of its central position and breaks the non-modern world out of its peripheral position. In place of center and periphery, cultures emerge with different ontological and epistemological perceptions of the world. (Mignolo also relativizes the notion of “worldview” as valorizing only one sense—sight—over the others). Such a position is taken by cultures that cannot be hierarchically

25 An illustrative example of this difference is the cosmology of the Jê tribes in central Brazil, which contemporary anthropologists (Eduardo Viveiros Castro and Philippe Descola) describe through the philosophical concept of “perspectivism.” Situations are always filtered through perception and thought, which can change with or without changes in context: “[The Jê] cosmology is complex, but it can be summarized by two assumptions: the world is inhabited by many kinds of human and non-human beings, and all have consciousness and culture and a specific vision of self and others. Each species sees itself as human and the others as non-human, i.e. as animals and spirits.” (Schwartz, Starling, 2018: 45) The consequence is not only the inverse of Darwin’s theory of evolution, but it also entails also a different perception of the relationships between humans and animals (and spirits), all of which are subjects and form social relationships. This view of reality problematizes our very notions of “nature” and “culture.” In our way of thinking, nature is given universally and cultures are human creations, whereas for the indigenous perception, cultural dynamics are a universal matter that takes place within various natures: humans, animals and spirits. (Schwartz, Starling, 2018: 45–46).

categorized, and no one paradigm can be considered as the sole reference point of epistemological legitimacy (Mignolo, 2017: 15). Thus, Mignolo does not refer to peripheral cultures, but to a liminal epistemology for which the Western narrative is not referential. Hence his distinction between the notions of decolonial (based on the discourse of the “developing world”) and postcolonial (based on European discourse), based on a different “place of speaking.” Mignolo links the political definition of decolonization to the 1955 Bandung Conference (also known as the Afro-Asian Conference), and the theoretical basis of this event to the thought of Frantz Fanon (*Peau noire, masques blancs*, 1952; *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1986). The goal is for states and communities to break out of the power structures of the West and create their own narrative based on global equality (Mignolo, 2017: 15). The decentralization of cultural discourse advocated by Mignolo allows us to view the production of Brazilian indigenous authors in their epistemological and ontological singularity, independent of other frames of reference that tend to place it in marginal positions.

Let us reflect briefly on the question of the use of Portuguese and, with it, the adoption of Western norms of expression by Brazilian indigenous authors. What the writers refer to as a tool in the fight for the preservation of their own identity may be understood in the broader social context of today’s world. Although we have pointed out how simplistic it is to consider the indigenous population as a “homogeneous block,” let us in this case start from the historical conditions that have led all indigenous ethnic groups to a similar fate. Let us consider the total indigenous population simply as an ethnic minority in Brazilian territory that does not even reach half of one percent of the country’s population.

In the 1990s, when indigenous literature began appearing on the shelves of Brazilian bookstores, the British Jamaican sociologist Stuart Hall analyzed the many social changes of the preceding decades that led to changes in the cultural identity of individuals and entire populations. Hall describes one of these new identities in reference to hybrid cultures made up of “people who have been dispersed forever from their homeland” (Hall, 2006: 88). What is typical of these cultures are strong ties to their place of origin as well as a full awareness that the past cannot be undone. To survive, these cultures attempt to translate their origin because they do not want to assimilate, but on the other hand they are forced to coexist with another culture (Hall, 2006: 88, 89). For Hall, although the birth of these hybrid cultures is linked to the massive waves of migration after the end of colonialization, the situation of the communities described by the sociologist is not very different from that of the indigenous Brazilian tribes. They have been, and still are, subject to displacement

from the areas they once inhabited and they are suffering profound and irreversible changes in their environment. The prominent indigenous intellectual and social authority Airton Krenak has spoken disingenuously of colonization as signifying the end of the world for a significant part of the indigenous population:

The man who sailed from Europe and landed on tropical beaches left traces of death everywhere he went. He did not know that he was a walking plague, a bacteriological war, the end of the world; the victims who became infected knew even less. For the indigenous populations who received this visit and died, the 16th century was the world's end.

KRENAK, 2019: 35²⁶

These drastic changes which have taken place over an extended period of time require constant responses from indigenous populations, leading them to fight, negotiate, adapt or move to less accessible areas of the Brazilian rainforest. Their representatives have been forced to translate their own culture not only into a different language, but, most significantly, into a different ontological and epistemological framework. Throughout history these efforts have proven the only way to understand and recognize their own culture and right to exist. Their survival depends on their ability to dialogue with non-indigenous cultures, for which they must use the tools of Western culture. As a result, many establish themselves through this translation and thus contribute to the process of hybridizing their own culture. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to assume that cultural transformation and the adoption of new influences (i.e. hybridization) is a phenomenon unique to postcolonial cultures. Western culture itself has undergone profound transformations after coming into contact with other civilizations. Therefore, the West has no objective reason to qualify the transformation of postcolonial cultures differently from its own, as if only the colonial subjects represented a hybrid or “impure” tradition. In a 2008 essay, French anthropologist and ethnologist Jean-Loup Amselle criticizes the terms hybridism and syncretism that are often used to describe postcolonial literatures:

26 “Um sujeito que saía da Europa e descia numa praia tropical largava um rasto de morte por onde passava. O indivíduo não sabia que era uma peste ambulante, uma guerra bacteriológica em movimento, um fim de mundo; tampouco o sabiam as vítimas que eram contaminadas. Para os povos que receberam aquela visita e morreram, o fim do mundo foi no século XVI.”

The main problem with terms such as hybridism, creolization and parody is that they initially assume, as with the concept of miscegenation, species that are plant, animal or culturally “pure” or “authentic” compared to species condemned to provide through the continuation of the process of hybridization mixed entities that are considered as such more or less authentic. [...] As if the world’s various cultures had not been subjected from the beginning to a whole series of mixing and hybridization. To emphasize the simultaneous hybridization of world cultures is to deny the potential openness of each culture to the others, and thus to deny any possibility of their communicating with each other throughout history.

AMSELLE, 2008:23, in: Schumans, 2016: 10²⁷

If we return, however, from cultural and anthropological considerations to literature, we might approach the issue of the literary production of Brazilian indigenous authors a bit differently. Rather than seeking a definitive answer regarding the place indigenous production occupies in the context of the “centralized universe” of the world republic of literature (Casanova, 2004), we may instead consider the significance of its inscription “on the pattern on the carpet”—in Henry James’s metaphor—and thus its importance in terms of the interdependence of all world literary production. Given that every work, be it written, spoken, published, translated, commented on, critically acclaimed, etc., transforms this composition (Casanova, 2004: 15–18), the birth of written Brazilian indigenous literature also represents an important transformation of the world literary context. With their sundry perceptions of the world at all levels—ontological, epistemological and axiological—new literary universes such as those represented by Brazilian indigenous literature can provide an unprecedented opportunity to move the vision of world literary production into a broader perspective. The very existence of this literature and its (potential) valorization in national and international contexts are signs that these changes have been taking place for some time.

27 “O principal inconveniente destes conceitos de hibridismo, crioulização e paródia é que eles assumem no início, tal como o de mestiçagem, espécies vegetais, animais e culturais “puras” ou “autênticas,” espécies destinadas a dar, no seguimento do processo de cruzamento, entidades misturadas e, como tal, consideradas mais ou menos como inautênticas. [...] Como se as diferentes culturas do mundo não tivessem sido sujeitas, desde o início, a toda uma série de mestiçagem e hibridização. Destacar a hibridização atual das culturas do mundo é negar a abertura potencial de cada cultura às outras e, assim, negar qualquer possibilidade de comunicação entre elas ao longo da história.”

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From the Desert to the Indigenous Utopia, from the Literary Periphery to the Center

The Adventures of China Iron as a Case of the Internationalization of Peripheral Literatures

Eva Lalkovičová

The Adventures of China Iron (*Las aventuras de la China Iron*) is the title of the 2017 novel by Argentinean writer Gabriela Cabezón Cámara (1968–), an author from the generation of what has been called new Argentinean prose (*nueva narrativa argentina*) (Drucaroff, 2011). *China Iron* is presented as a queer rewriting of the foundational Argentine literary epic *El gaucho Martín Fierro* and a reconfiguration of the figure of the *gaucho* as such. The novel was nominated for the International Booker Prize in 2020, attracting both national and international critical attention and decisively driving the author's international consecration and her entry into the space of world literature. This chapter analyses the novel to discuss issues related to the presentation and reception of peripheral literatures in the global literary market as well as their submission to Western universalist values.

1 Paths of Internationalization of Peripheral Literatures: The Case of Argentina

The tensions of globalization have affected cultural productions from the peripheries (in this case, the so-called Global South¹) in specific ways. For the purposes of this paper, we consider the whole of the Latin American literary space as peripheral, although certainly not all global peripheries are in the same position with respect to the centers represented in what can be called the Western world. A number of Latin American authors—let us mention Jorge

1 “[T]he concept of the ‘Global South’ [...] refers to the geopolitical and epistemological fabric that unifies an area of the world—principally those subjected to colonialism—but which may include the South contained within the North. These areas have been subjected to the designs of modernity and have displayed a certain degree of insurgency, but also show discontinuity and conflict with each other.” (Locane et al., 2018: 3).

Luis Borges, Mario Vargas Llosa, Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, more recently Roberto Bolaño—have been absorbed by the Western canon. This leads us to consider whether the position of Latin American literatures on the center/periphery axis is not rather semi-peripheral in the sense of the reciprocal influence between the metropolis and the former colonies. At the very least, we can observe processes of constant dialectical transformation which are, arguably, accelerating in the present moment.

Authors from the peripheral spaces have been traditionally obliged to seek a position in (at least) two different fields: national literature and world literature.² This dynamic can flow in either direction: without being established in the national literary field, it is difficult to enter the international literary space, while international success to a certain extent generates increased interest in the author's work in the national field of origin.

In the case of Argentine literature, it is necessary to consider two moments in time. The first of these moments is represented by the emergence of international publishing houses (e.g. Anagrama or Literatura Random House, the Spanish-language division of Penguin Random House) and Spanish agencies (e.g. Casanovas & Lynch, Agencia Literaria Carmen Balcells, and the Antonia Kerrigan Literary Agency)—most of these located in Barcelona—in the wide promotion of Latin American literature in the European market. Barcelona can thus be considered the literary capital of the Hispanic world, with roots laid down in the 1960s at the time of the so-called *boom latinoamericano* as described by As Jorge J. Locane:

It is also important to highlight that—according to the Balcells model—the agencies with the greatest influence in the promotion of Latin American writers in Europe continue today, with Barcelona as the privileged geographical location. Some operate from Madrid, while the few in Latin America tend to go unnoticed. Thus Barcelona functions even today as the link for literature disseminated as Latin American outside of Latin America, and publications are usually sent from that customs office to Frankfurt and from there to the rest of Europe. Regardless of their fate

2 We understand the concept of world literature as defined by David Damrosch as a specific mode of circulation and reception of literary works: “I take world literature to encompass all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language (Virgil was long read in Latin in Europe). In its most expansive sense, world literature could include any work that has ever reached beyond its home base, but Guillén’s cautionary focus on actual readers makes good sense: a work only has an effective life as world literature whenever, and wherever, it is actively present within a literary system beyond that of its original culture.” (Damrosch, 2003: 4).

in Latin America, the names that these firms sponsor are precisely the names that resonate both in Europe and throughout the world.

LOCANE, 2017: 53³

Although the conditions of circulation as well as its situation in the market have evolved in the past fifty or sixty years, especially in terms of the power of international publishing groups, Barcelona has not lost its position as a vital publishing center for the Spanish-language market.

The second moment comes at the very end of the 20th century with the expansion of the English-language literary market and the emergence of new literary capitals for Latin American works such as New York and London.⁴ In *The World Republic of Letters* (2004), Pascale Casanova⁵ raises the question of the value of universality in relation to the formation of what can be called world literature. As the French critic points out, for a peripheral work to be accepted and consecrated by the authorities of a particular center, it must submit to the center's universalist criteria.

The great consecrating nations reduce foreign works of literature to their own categories of perception, which they mistake for universal norms, while neglecting all the elements of historical, cultural, political, and especially literary context that make it possible to properly and fully appreciate such works. In so doing they exact a sort of *octroi* tax on the right to universal circulation.

CASANOVA, 2004: 154

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- 3 “También resulta importante destacar que las agencias de mayor influencia en la promoción de escritores latinoamericanos en Europa siguen teniendo hoy en día—de acuerdo con el modelo Balcells—como localización geográfica privilegiada Barcelona. Algunas operan desde Madrid. Y las pocas que lo hacen desde Latinoamérica suelen pasar inadvertidas. Barcelona funciona, así, incluso hoy, como el punto de enlace para la literatura divulgada como latinoamericana fuera de Latinoamérica, desde esa aduana suelen pasar a Frankfurt y desde allí, a su vez, al resto de Europa. Los nombres que ellas patrocinan son, independientemente de la suerte que corran en Latinoamérica, precisamente los nombres que resuenan en Europa y también en el mundo.” (Locane, 2017: 53).
- 4 “English is, almost exclusively, the language of this critical industry, reinforcing the view that postcolonialism is a discourse of translation, rerouting cultural products regarded as emanating from the periphery toward audiences who see themselves as coming from the center. The metropolitan locations of the major publishing houses (London and New York, for example) lend strength to this view, as does the increasing number of foreign-language texts from the ‘non-West’ available in translation.” (Huggan, 2003: 4).
- 5 While certain blind spots in Casanova’s model have been pointed out since the publication of *World Republic* almost 20 years ago (see e.g. Guerrero, 2013), we believe that several of her postulates remain relevant in discussions of the dynamics between global centers and peripheries.

In order for authors from (more or less) peripheral spaces to be visible in the eyes of the center, they must exhibit difference, although these variances cannot be too great, otherwise the works recede into the invisibility of the (sub)altern. Casanova interprets this balancing act as stemming from the ethnocentrism “that produces all literary exoticisms” (Casanova, 2004: 156–157).

Such dynamics can be seen, for example, in the current heightened interest in the literature of sexual and ethnic minorities, authors of African origin,⁶ as well as the wave of literature written by women with a strong feminist and social-critical focus. Global discourses today inevitably affect the form and content of literary production everywhere, a situation which allows authors from the peripheries to more readily come into the view of international critics and audiences. The fact that the most internationalized Argentinian literary works today have for the most part been written by women is clear proof of the salience of dynamics and tensions described above.⁷

An eminent example of the institutions that influence the international consecration of peripheral literatures and allow them through translation into English to enter the international arena is the International Booker Prize for the best book translated into English. The Booker Prize is one of the most prestigious in the literary world, with even the inclusion of a work in the list of nominations enough for it to achieve commercial success (Huggan, 2003: 107–108). In its own way, the Booker functions as a filter through which works from different regions of the world pass to Anglo-Saxon and European markets. In 2020, Gabriela Cabezón Cámara’s name appeared on the shortlist⁸ of nominations for the prize with the English translation of her novel *The Adventures of China Iron*.

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara is an author and journalist born in San Isidro in 1968 who studied literature at the University of Buenos Aires. Apart from her work in magazines and newspapers, she teaches writing workshops in various

6 On the emergence of African literatures, see the essay by Jeanne-Marie Jackson (2022) for *The New York Times* listed among the references below.

7 Characterizing the novels of three Argentine authors—Samantha Schwebelin, Selva Almada and Mariana Enriquez—Ana Gallego Cuiñas admits that, while their works do not embrace many entirely new literary practices or themes, the power of the novels rely rather on their articulation of new feminist attitudes and new processes of subject positioning. Much of world literature has approvingly appropriated this framework, as each work becomes, according to one critic, a kind of feminist commodity in itself (Cuiñas, 2020: 93).

8 The other nominated authors were: *Hurricane Season* by Fernanda Melchor, *The Enlightenment of The Greengage Tree* by Shokoofeh Azar, *The Memory Police* by Yoko Ogawa, *Tyll* by Daniel Kehlmann and the prize-winning work *The Discomfort of Evening* by Marieke Lucas Rijneveld.

institutions. In 2013 she was awarded a scholarship as writer-in-residence at the University of Berkeley in California, where she also gave a creative writing workshop based on *Gaúcho* poetry, and in 2019 she participated in the Literarisches Colloquium Berlin. The writer's first novel was *La Virgen Cabeza*, a work which enjoyed an excellent critical reception both in Argentina as well as in the English-speaking world after being translated in 2017. This was followed by the novels *Le viste la cara a Dios* and *Romance de la Negra Rubia* as well as collaborations with the Argentine illustrator and humorist Iñaki Echeverría on two graphic novels. Set almost exclusively in destitute neighborhoods, the stories of Cabezón Cámara portray the lives of marginalized people and social conflicts. Critics have generally highlighted the author's interest in thematizing the social tensions of today's Argentina along with her unique writing style. Apart from the aforementioned nomination for the International Booker Prize, *Las aventuras de la China Iron* was chosen as one the "best books of Ibero-American fiction of 2017" in the Spanish edition of *The New York Times* and among the 20 best Latin American books published in Mexico, Argentina and Colombia by *El País*.

The Booker Prize website describes *China Iron*: "Gabriela Cabezón Cámara's joyful, hallucinatory novel is also an incisive critique of national myths and a requiem for the casualties of 'progress.'" The inclusion in the list of nominated works has generated a surge of interest in the author and her work, which was hitherto not very well known outside Argentina. This increased attention is documented by numerous reviews, critiques and interviews with the writer.

Gisèle Sapiro describes how today media reception has become an inescapable form of interposition between the mass-produced literary work and its audience, and that "texts seldom reach an audience without any mediation" (Sapiro, 2016: 321). As the critic states, an important role is played by publishers, who direct the entire complex marketing process of the work, from the paratexts, the cover typography, graphics and imagery as well as the presentation of the product in bookshops and the inclusion of the book in collections or series of works based on particular genres or identities (Sapiro, 2016: 322–324). Nevertheless, after publication it is first and foremost academic criticism that activates the canonization of works, with the role of the media to "participate in the reception process as they frame the perception of the text and its categorization" (Sapiro, 2016: 324).

Even within the Hispanic academy, critical interest in *The Adventures of China Iron* intensified⁹ after its inclusion on the Booker Prize nomination list.

9 The novel was first published in Spanish in 2017 by Literatura Random House. Most of the reviews, however, were produced between 2020 and 2021.

This represented the first step towards its internationalization through entry into the English literary market, leading the author to greater renown. Taking into account the dynamics between centers and peripheries, the post-colonial context, and the above-mentioned transformations of the global literary market, it is worth exploring the reception of the novel by Anglo-American reviewers and how the work has been interpreted and framed in this context.

2 China Iron: A Queer Bid for a New Canon

The Adventures of China Iron reimagines the foundational Latin American literary myth of the *gaucho* through a critical and relatively subversive dialogue with the canonical *Martín Fierro* by José Hernández.¹⁰ The novel attempts to re-signify the character of the *gaucho* from a position that might be termed empathetic. Cabezón Cámara reverses the protagonism of the narrative voices by turning Fierro's wife into the character with the most significance. In the original poem "la china" is mentioned merely in passing, and she does not take on much importance within the narrative: "They would gather there the blaze around, / Till the sun rose round and red; / The kettle sang, and piping hot, / They sucked at the circling 'maté' pot, / While their 'chinas,' rolled in their 'poncho's' folds, / Lay snugly yet abed" (*The Gaucho Martín Fierro*, The Second Canto, Hernández, 2000: 7).¹¹ In an interview, Cabezón Cámara described the genesis of her idea to engage with the legend.

- So I started to read *gaucho* poetry and then something I already knew came back to me, but you saw that it's one thing to know something and another to have it touch your body, to have it pierce your body, and it pierced my body that there were no women in *gaucho* poetry. That women hardly ever have any names; some have only two lines.
- Some captive ...

10 An Argentine politician and poet, José Hernández (1834–1886) was author of the most famous *gaucho* epic poem *El Gaucho Martín Fierro*. This two-part work deals with the life of a *gaucho* who, due to the social injustices of the historical moment in which the work takes place, ends up living outside the law. Nevertheless, by the end of the second part the protagonist ends up reincorporating himself back into society. *Martín Fierro* became a book of national importance from which the character of the *gaucho* became an Argentine national mythos.

11 "Y sentao junto al jogón / A esperar que venga el día, / Al cimarrón le prendía / Hasta ponerse choncho, / Mientras su china dormía / Tapadita con su poncho" (*El gaucho Martín Fierro*, Canto II, vv. 145–150).

- But just a little bit. And I said: how fun it would be to tell this, but from a girl's point of view. And I started like that, in that spirit, how nice. And since I'm going to write it, I want her to be immensely happy, not like poor Fierro, who has such a hard time. And since the *gaucho* genre articulates, even without intending to, the consolidation of the Argentine national State from the May Revolution to Martín Fierro in the 70s, I wanted to think of another State, a more beautiful one, where people can fulfill themselves, where they can deploy everything they have, like trees, to reach as high and wide and low as we can. So I tried to write the book in that spirit.¹² (*Infobae*, 24 October 2019)

After the forced departure of her husband Martín Fierro, who has been forced to join the army to defend the borders of the expanding young republic against the Indians, Fierro's wife begins her life alone by adopting a series of new names—China (pronounced “cheena” which means female in Quechua), Josephine Star Iron and Tararira. The surname Iron is the English word for “fierro”, it is a reference to the *gaucho* Martín Fierro. China embarks on a journey of discovery and initiation through a search for her own identity, thus the narrative features elements of the road-movie and functions a kind of Bildungsroman. In the search for her husband and for the land she intends to reclaim from the state, China is soon joined by a Elizabeth (Liz), a young Scottish woman. Along the way, Liz teaches China about English culture and shows her a different world of woman, sexuality and love. The women are later joined by a young *gaucho*, Rosario, who along with China represent a non-stereotypical vision of the traditional models of men and women, a vision breaking with the typical characters of *Gaucha* literature.

The novel mirrors the legendary journey of Martín Fierro. In a wagon filled with various objects that form a small universe of English culture the three protagonists travel across the pampa, spending some time in a fort on the frontier. There the trio meet the Colonel (a parodic recreation of José Hernández) who commands a troop of *gauchos*, until finally they all arrive at the mythical Indian Territory (*Tierra Adentro*) in which the indigenous *lñchiñ* people live. The world of the *lñchiñ* depicted at the end of the novel presents an almost utopian conception of a non-hierarchical and egalitarian society in which gender is fluid and non-binary. Here everyone can decide their own destiny and role within the community, including Fierro himself, with whom China meets again and forgives for everything that has happened between them. In this way, Cabezón Cámara proposes an alternative for the received national narrative.

12 Translation by the author of the present text.

Nevertheless, at the end of the novel, the indigenous population decides to leave the region in search of a new destiny, problematizing the linear goal of the utopian project:

I wish you could see us; but no one will. We know how to leave as if vanishing into thin air: imagine a people that disappears, a people whose colors, houses, dogs, clothes, cows and horses all gradually dissolve like a spectre: their outline turns blurry and insubstantial, the colours fade, and everything melts into the white cloud. And so we go.

CABEZÓN CÁMARA, 2019: 160

Much of the critical reception of *The Adventures of China Iron* discusses a recurring series of themes that (perhaps unfairly) delimit and frame the perspective in which the novel is received. Several reviewers (Croce, 2020; Regazzoni, 2019; Fandiño, 2019; Portela, 2020; De Leone, 2021) highlight above all the style and elaborated language, the theme of sexuality and gender as well as the rewriting and deconstruction of the Argentine national canon through the reworking of the traditional images of the pampas, the “Indian,” and the myth of the white captive. Critics have also noted the unique use of the novel form and the exceptional narrative voice of a marginalized woman as the protagonist, for example this assessment by Susanna Regazzoni: “The famous empty desert according to Sarmiento’s gaze in Facundo changes through the gaze of the protagonist narrator and is transformed in the same way as the classic vision of the Indians who whipped and punished the captives.” (Regazzoni, 2019: 217)¹³ The desert is no longer a place of violence and conflict, it is an idyllic world in which China reaches her full potentiality in a union with nature, a quest which never ceases to fascinate her:

So being in the pampa was like soaring over a scene with no adventures but its own, its shifting skies and our journeying. Over the dark line of the horizon the sun and the air ravel and unravel. When it’s clear, the sun and air are scattered through a prism at different times of day, cut at dawn into reds, purples, oranges and yellows that turn gold as they hit the ground, where the little green takes on a tender and brilliant texture and everything upright casts long soft shadows. [...] But no, back there

13 “El famoso desierto vacío según la mirada de Sarmiento en Facundo cambia a través de la mirada de la narradora protagonista y se transforma del mismo modo como se transforma la clásica visión de los indios que azotaban y castigaban a las cautivas.” (Regazzoni, 2019: 217).

in my pampa, life is life in the air. Even celestial, sometimes; far from the shack that had been my home, the world was paradise.

CABEZÓN CÁMARA, 2019: 44

Laura Fandiño reads China's narrative voice as

[...] a gaze that “illuminates” the Argentinean desert from an unprecedented perspective, disputing and transgressing the geographical, anthropological, economic and symbolic formulations of the Argentinean literary tradition of the 19th century in order to project the possibility of a new foundation. The idea of illumination is installed from the beginning of the novel through the elaboration of a semantic field rich in images that China uses to configure a different view of the dusty space of the desert [...].

FANDIÑO, 2019: 50¹⁴

The novel effectively proposes an unprecedented vision of the mythical Argentinean space that is the pampa, completely reconfiguring its traditional violent and *macho* character.

The novel's vision of the indigenous people is also far removed from established literary representations: instead of the thematization of frontier conflicts replete with attacks and plundering, the imaginary village of the Iñchiñ emerges as a kind of response to age-old debates regarding civilization versus barbarism. Also central is the reworking of the character of Martín Fierro—the foundational model of the *macho* and provocatively violent *gaucho*. The novel completely transforms Fierro by removing him from the violent environment of the pampa and the expectations of received gender roles, and by relocating him to the utopian community of the Iñchiñ. Nevertheless, this attempt to re-signify the *gaucho* character, together with the rewriting of traditional literary images and motifs does bring certain limitations, which will be discussed below.

14 “[...] una mirada que ‘ilumina’ desde una perspectiva inédita el desierto argentino disputando y transgrediendo las formulaciones geográficas, antropológicas, económicas y simbólicas de la tradición literaria argentina del siglo XIX para proyectar la posibilidad de una nueva fundación. La idea de iluminación se instala desde el inicio de la novela a partir de la elaboración de un campo semántico rico en imágenes que la China utiliza para configurar una mirada otra del espacio polvoriento del desierto [...]” (Fandiño, 2019: 50).

3 An Exoticized Subversion

We will here analyze the appropriation of or even the complete rewriting of history in the novel. Following the time and space of Hernández's original work, the narrative takes place at the end of the 19th century. Between 1878 and 1885, the military campaign known as the Conquest of the Desert was directed against various indigenous tribes. In an effort to obtain land for cattle breeding, the army of the young Republic of Argentina undertook a process of the extermination of these tribes in a series of events which have become viewed as one of the most tragic chapters in the history of Argentina. The novel does not ignore this dark side of the national narrative:

Until the rain came again and once more we'd see a cemetery of Indian braves at our feet: we could make them out because they were one with their weapons and animals, as if the heroic skeletons of the pampas were centaur fossils, said Liz.

CABEZÓN CÁMARA, 2019: 28

Although historical violence forms the background for the storyline, this is nevertheless overshadowed by the idealism embedded in the elaborate linguistic stylization. Further, it may be said that a number of critical issues related to the extermination of indigenous tribes, class differences as well as colonial relations in general has been discounted.

Concerning the representation of the battles and massacres of the Conquest of the Desert, our view is that the novel morphs into merely an exotic product destined for an international audience, thus it fails to explore its full subversive potential. The work seems engaged in a tug-of-war between two antagonistic interests: economic, i.e. related to the current constellation of the literary market and the dynamics described in previous paragraphs, and artistic, i.e. the positioning of the writer in the field and the struggle for symbolic capital. The fact that most critics frame the novel from the perspective of subversion of the national canon is to some extent related to the current demands of the public and the publishing market, as we shall see below.

Subversion and literary transgression characterize a substantial part of contemporary literature in processes which highlight various marginal and marginalized voices in literary history and absent from the canon. Many works are thus oriented towards new markets and new consumer publics. As the case of Cabezón Cámara and her novel demonstrates, the coin of subversion has two sides: on the one hand, more or less successful attempts (in the sense of including hitherto excluded voices and perspectives) at reconfiguring the

canon, on the other, the reality that this move is inevitably tied to discourses that influence cultural production, i.e. the subversion of traditional views of gender, sexuality and the role of men and women brings a specific symbolic value within the current configuration of the global literary field.

Here we draw on Graham Huggan's (2003) notion of postcolonial exotic, a paradigm which reflects on the material conditions of production and reception of postcolonial works in relation to the influence of the institutions of the literary world. Huggan explains how what he calls "the exotic" has become a commodity in the global literary market both from the perspective of writers and from the perspective of critical production and academia. Huggan refers in this sense to the rise of the research field of Postcolonial Studies, a discourse which he is a part of:

For the exotic is not, as is often supposed, an inherent quality to be found "in" certain people, distinctive objects, or specific places; exoticism describes, rather, a particular mode of aesthetic perception—one which renders people, objects and places strange even as it domesticates them, and which effectively manufactures otherness even as it claims to surrender to its immanent mystery.

HUGGAN, 2003:13

In other words, the exotic is not an immanent characteristic of the text but a specific form of reception of postcolonial works, which are subjected to the critical interpretation and reaction of the centers. Huggan warns that within the cultural field of postcolonialism, "exoticism may be understood conventionally as an aestheticizing process through which the cultural other is translated, relayed back through the familiar" (Huggan, 2003: ix). In this sense, Huggan emphasizes the fact that the process of translating the foreign always passes through the familiar, as exoticism functions in a way that must attribute familiar meanings to everything foreign. While cultural differences may be assimilated to a certain extent, their absolute assimilation into the center is limited:

Exoticism, in this context, might be described as a kind of semiotic circuit that oscillates between the opposite poles of strangeness and familiarity. Within this circuit, the strange and the familiar, as well as the relation between them, may be receded to serve different, even contradictory, political needs and ends.

HUGGAN, 2003: 15

Huggan also draws a clear distinction between postcolonialism and postcoloniality, two closely linked concepts, yet two different regimes of value, the distinction between which may reveal aspects of the dynamics to which works like Cabezón Cámara's novel are subjected. Huggan's definition of postcolonialism is based on the theory of Pierre Bourdieu and the concept of cultural capital and the need for its accumulation in order to legitimize writers within the literary field. Postcolonialism, according to Huggan, "[...] becomes an anti-colonial intellectualism that reads and valorizes the signs of social struggle in the faultiness of literary and cultural texts," while postcoloniality contains its own value regime that "pertains to a system of symbolic, as well as material, exchange in which even the language of resistance may be manipulated and consumed." (Huggan, 2003: 6):

Postcoloniality, put another way, is a value-regulating mechanism within the global late-capitalist system of commodity exchange. Value is constructed through global market operations involving the exchange of cultural commodities and, particularly, culturally "othered" goods. Postcoloniality's regime of value is implicitly assimilative and market driven: it regulates the value-equivalence of putatively marginal products in the global marketplace. Postcolonialism, by contrast, implies a politics of value that stands in obvious opposition to global processes of commodification.

HUGGAN, 2003: 6

Seen thusly, postcolonialism, understood as a network of anti-hegemonic discourses (be they literary, academic, political, etc.), incurs a significant symbolic value within the cultural field. Yet at the same time, postcolonialism cannot completely escape the system it opposes nor the dynamics that govern it, thus resistance may be transformed merely into a palatable commodity within the cultural field. The critical reception that Cabezón Cámara's novel has received in the English-speaking world follows some of these dynamics. Among the varying reactions, reviews in the two notable newspapers *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* stand out. In general, many of the English-language reviews have based their reception on a feminist reading of the novel in the sense of deconstructing traditional gender roles, highlighting the protagonist as a marginalized character, or as James Smart (2020) labels her, "Fierro's neglected wife." In his review for *The Guardian*, Smart also emphasizes an interpretation of the work as a subversive response to Hernández's work and, thus, to the national canon; this delimiting frame of the novel seems to be based solely on the alternated protagonism of China as the main character instead of Fierro.

New York Times critic Jamie Fisher labels the novel “a masterly subversion of Argentine national identity” (Fisher, 2020). Similarly, Smart draws attention to the deconstruction of traditional male and female roles.

The *gaucho* Martín Fierro, the creation of poet José Hernández, is one of the great figures of Argentinian literature: a singer who relates the camaraderie and hardship of cowboy life. But in Cámara’s International Booker-shortlisted novella, first published in Spanish in 2017, he’s a bit-part player in a wild trip across the pampas that leaves traditional gender roles in the dust.

SMART, 2020

The Iñchiñ community is described by Smart as “an indigenous society of fluid genders and magic mushrooms” (Smart, 2020), thus focusing attention on the idealized aspects. Yet the review completely ignores the novel’s comment on traditional representations of indigenous people in Argentine literature and the historical context in which the novel takes place, two discourses the book engages with on a fundamental level.

The reviews of both Fisher and Smart celebrate the vivid description of the pampa landscape and the protagonism which nature takes in the novel: “Short-listed for the International Booker Prize, ‘China Iron’ showcases a remarkably fresh vision of life on the 19th-century pampas” (Fisher, 2020). Nevertheless, this representation is a simplistic vision of the pampa understood as an exotic landscape for an international audience. As Regazzoni (2019b: 206) points out, such emphasis marginalizes other ways in which the novel is *de facto* transgressive, such as for example the parodic play on the character of Hernández, or the new alternative representation of the literary space in which the Argentine national identity was formed.

The interpretation of the novel in reviews like these is reduced to a handful of palatable characteristics¹⁵ that suit the universal/global values of the market and are comprehensible to a public less informed on the subject of Argentine national and literary history. The complexity of the novel is thus translated for the international public into an image of merely the exotic.

This reductive process also highlights an interesting moment connected to the relationship between Argentina and Great Britain, which is the focus of

15 Fisher, for instance, at some point makes reference to the genre of Magical Realism, which is not an unusual marketing strategy for American literary production: “It’s easy to categorize “China Iron” at first as Magical Realism, but it’s something else entirely” (Fisher, 2020).

much of the Anglo-American criticism of the novel in an implicit critique of the British colonial system.¹⁶ An example of this procedure is this review in the UK newspaper *The Daily Star*:

China's voice—and Camara's skill as a writer—are strongest when speaking of brutal and systemic injustices through ordinary events of their excursion. An example of this is how the British Empire's nation building ideologies overshadow Liz's budding relationship with her. Liz speaks of the wonders which Britain has discovered: tea illustrates India, whisky, her native land; French craftsmanship in skill petticoats and gowns; Chinese paddy field and its curly roofed pagodas. Liz populates China's perspective with her own, in which the British Empire is at the top (quite literally, in her notion of the world map), controlling and navigating the fates of far off countries.

JAHAN, 2020

Read from the perspective of a critique of British imperialism, the relationship between China and Liz is aligned with the constellation of the postcolonial exotic cultural field of reception. The reading of this significant aspect of Jahan's critique emphasizes the tensions of colonial relations inscribed in the novel, leaving aside other prominent aspects of the narrative which are explored in interpretations from within the Hispanic sphere. The novel in fact is not very deeply concerned with the issue of British colonialism and British-Argentine relations, in contrast to the work's interpretation by UK critics. Through such solipsistic readings of the work, the value of the exotic may clearly be seen to operate and even predominate in this critical field.

Regarding notions of the postcolonial exotic in terms of transformations of world literature through emerging publishing centers, Cabezón Cámara's novel can be read as a cultural product subjected to the opposing tensions that frame the processes of internationalization of peripheral literatures towards established global centers. While the work presents certain subversive pretensions towards traditional literary images, it also leans towards the canon as such and how the canon has been constructed, i.e. along with its gentle subversions, the novel acknowledges and at times celebrates the numerous voices and identities that had not been included and represented. On the other hand, the author's entry into the international literary field through translation into English and

¹⁶ Within the field of academic criticism of the Hispanic milieu, this seems a moment that has not been analysed to a sufficient degree.

the accumulation of cultural capital through the interest of Anglo-American critics has been framed by readings that decontextualize and suppress certain aspects of this subversion, recoding the work as an exotic product and preparing an international public to receive it as such. In this sense, *The Adventures of China Iron* is reframed as a cultural artefact in which the antagonisms that Huggan describes in terms of the difference between postcolonialism and post-coloniality come into conflict.

4 In Conclusion

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara's most recent novel enters into dialogue with the canon through the exploration of one of the fundamental works of Argentine literature, rethinking the values surrounding the legendary character of the gaucho Martín Fierro and the very foundations of the mythology of the nation. In this way, the novel proposes the potential transformation of Argentina's national mythos, including the ways it was originally constructed. *China Iron* shines light on those previously invisible, postulating a new and radical social proposal that seeks relief from oppression by the imagining of an inclusive and non-hierarchical type of society. Cabezón Cámara thus inverts the traditional civilization/barbarism binary: "civilized" values are to be found within the marginalized society of the indigenous which exist far from urban centers.

The subversive potential of the work—which encompasses an important part of its critique—implicates traditional literary images, such as those of Indians, the pampas, and women, but this vision remains not fully developed, as it overlooks a number of the related critical issues mentioned above. While these themes are in fact reflected in the novel and are interspersed episodically in the reflections of the characters throughout the narrative, they are not explored in depth, and they have been aestheticized and romanticized. It is precisely this pervasive idealization—of the protagonist China, of (Hernández in the personage of) the Colonel, of Fierro and his transformation along with that of his relationship with China, of the landscape, of the concept of civilization as represented by English culture, of the utopia in which the indigenous people live in the Indian Territory—that limits the subversive power of the novel, since it does not really take the critique as far as some academics and journalistic critics have read into it. In the end, the novel recreates one literary myth by turning it into another, idealized myth, thereby managing to arouse critical interest and accumulating a type of symbolic capital. It should be said that our interpretation does not attempt to label this process as positive or negative, but

rather to uncover certain dynamics related to the production and reception of peripheral literatures in global centers.

Thanks to numerous readings of the novel by academic critics and the media, the book has come to occupy a prominent place among the new Latin American literature in the international space. The value of the exotic, as Graham Huggan describes it, frames the media reception of the work within the UK and the US. While this process allows the work to become part of world literature, this goal is accomplished by conforming to the norms and expectations of global publishing centers, the institutions of which present and market themselves as open to peripheral and marginal literatures in the sense of geographical and / or social provenance.

The interesting case of this novel reflects possible ways in which peripheral literatures enter the global literary field, or world literature, in the form of exotic products subjected to the values of the center. The question is whether these two goals are not mutually exclusive within the current configuration and dynamics operating within the global literary and publishing market, i.e. breaking out of received dynamics to radically and consistently challenge received canons and the values they represent, while at the same time entering the global literary space and gaining the consecration of the centers, which is the *sine qua non* for a work to come to the attention of critics and readers. The issue of providing a voice to marginalized populations without idealizing their individual stories and without turning them into objects and products of the market represents an inescapable challenge for any potential alternative canon.

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Conclusion

Petr Kyloušek

The patient reader who has reached this point now has some of our ideas regarding the complexities of the treated matter. In closing this book, it may be worthwhile to share in summary several partial findings, which we hope will supplement the reader's own observations.

1. Apart from the general characteristics concerning center-periphery and periphery-center relationships, our analyses of individual cultural areas have revealed several specific factors of influence. One of these is the demarcating threshold effect of language. It can be said that the presence and pull of liminal spaces along with the phenomena of bilingualism, biculturalism and cultural interference appear frequently. Multilingualism—historically documented and formally traced in many prominent writers—is a common phenomenon. Nonetheless, it still may be said that modern literatures, as they have been shaped since the 16th and 17th centuries and continue their endless re/formations into discrete entities, constitute linguistically enclosed literary fields. Linguism remains a valid method of characterizing literatures, movements and individual works no matter how much they fit or transcend the brittle boundaries of states and nations within Francophony, Hispanophony or Lusophony. For transitions between fields, translation continues to play a mixed role. While translation remains vital as a source of dissemination and valorization, one limiting factor is that each environment chooses what it translates and what it integrates into its own culture. A second factor is the inequality between large and small languages and the resulting cultural fallout.

2. The various modes of cultural, political and economic power of European centralities during the colonization and decolonization period were determining differential factors in shaping the Romance literatures of the Americas and Africa. It is worth exploring the precise effects of this power on the modalities of deperipheralization processes.

French colonization, which culminated in the second half of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century, was linked with cultural and literary expansion to create a dominant centrality. This seems the quintessential model of a strong monocentric center-periphery relationship. Yet such a strong center in no way prevents deperipheralization. On the contrary, the concentration

of peripheral elements in the center may create, as it was the case in Paris, incentives for deperipheralization processes (Part 2, Chapter 12). Deperipheralization has been successful precisely in the countries in which the previous political detachment of the cultural peripheries enabled the establishment of independent institutions, for example a (semi)autonomous and separate book market (Haiti, Quebec). Nevertheless, the very continuity and regeneration of a robust center with a significant concentration of peripheral elements also entails considerable influence from the periphery on the center's aesthetics, as was clearly the case for Paris during several periods.

The relative weakness of Spain and Portugal in the 19th and 20th centuries, their collapsing or crumbling colonial empires, as well as their culturally semiperipheral literary position within Europe have generated intersecting cultural spaces within the Hispanophone and Lusophone spheres. As a result, in general Hispanophone and Lusophone cultures tend to be polycentric. This has allowed Hispanic America, Brazil and, more recently, Angola and Mozambique to transform their own deperipheralization into intergrouping and internally globalizing dynamic areas, with individual authors and their works emerging as global entities (Part 1, Chapter 4, Part 1, Chapter 7, Part 1, Chapter 9, Part 3, Chapter 21, Part 3, Chapter 23).

The late onset of Italian colonization and its short-term duration did not create strong incentives for the Italianization of the colonies. Therefore, the cultural impact of decolonization came only half a century later with the migration waves of the second half of the 20th century. Yet even here, new stimuli have reshaped the Italian literary canon in intriguing ways.

3. Center-periphery and periphery-center relations flow through complex hierarchical systems. Often a particular center and its peripheries are themselves peripheral components of a superior center, which itself is subject to change in center-periphery status over time. In the linguistic and cultural sphere, this is clearly illustrated by the case of Louisiana (Part 3, Chapter 15): the peripheral position of Louisiana Creole to Cajun, which in turn is peripheral to French, which is peripheral to the Anglophone culture of the United States. This example also shows how the potency of Anglophone centrality and the lateral influence of French and Quebec centralities fragment the Francophone space of Louisiana and inhibit an identitarian unification that may lead to autonomization and deperipheralization.

Elsewhere in the Francophone area, the problem of the original hierarchy has evolved either to a separation of the linguistic norm and the literary field (Quebec), or to a dual and mutually interacting linguistic and literary situation between Creole and French (Haiti), or to an attempt to introduce peripheral

elements of Creole (Martinique), Arabic, Berber (Maghreb) and African languages into literary French (Part 1, Chapter 3, Part 1, Chapter 8, Part 3, Chapter 16, Part 3, Chapter 17). Here too, the hierarchy seems to have prevailed in the dominating French centrality vis-à-vis the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa and the French Caribbean. Exceptional cases include Haiti, autonomous but in a semiperipheral position vis-à-vis Quebec and France, as well as the deperipheralized centrality of Quebec, which is simultaneously in a semiperipheral position vis-à-vis Paris and dominating within its North American peripheral spaces.

4. The above points show that hierarchization also defines the relationships among cultural areas, and that centralities may be characterized as strong, weak or somewhere in between. Among the Romance literatures, the French language continues to dominate. The strength of French puts Portuguese and Spanish literatures in a semiperipheral position at particular historical moments, which, in turn, affects through French references the processes of deperipheralization of American and African literatures. The authority of a strong center can also operate in reconfiguring the literary canon of a weaker centrality, for example, the Spanish and Hispanic canon (Part 2, Chapter 13) and the Italian canon (Part 2, Chapter 14).

In addition to French literature, the influence of Britain and the centrality of the United States in the second half of the 20th century has been asserted in the Romance literatures of the Americas and Africa (Brazil, Angola, Mozambique). The influence of the North American academic milieu is also evident in shaping the concept of Hispanic American literature (Part 1, Chapter 3) and the presentation of the Hispanic American Boom, to which the Anglo-American perspective is applied alongside the influence of French centrality and the contribution of the Barcelona center. Finally, the United States plays a significant role in the reconfiguration of the geographically proximate Hispanic American space, be it the creation of an autonomizing cross-cultural semiperiphery of Chicano literature in the North American Aztlán region (Part 1, Chapter 5, Part 3, Chapter 20), or the reconfiguration of the American-Cuban and American-Dominican literary fields (Part 3, Chapter 18, Part 3, Chapter 19). In all these cases, the tendency is not only one of deperipheralization, but also one of incorporating and integrating cultural diversity into the dominant Anglophone culture of the United States.

5. The dominance of the English language and Anglophone literatures is central to the question of cultural and literary globalization. It should be emphasized that situations vary in terms of an individual penetrating the world system

(Part 1, Chapter 10, Part 2, Chapter 14, Part 3, Chapter 24) as well as the penetration of a literature as a structured system (Part 3, Chapter 23, Part 3, Chapter 24). The question is whether, how, and in what form one literature, as a whole or in part, can enter into another literature, or into *Weltliteratur* (Part 3, Chapter 24), and within the larger system constitute not a merely disperse list of authors and works, but a subsystem of its own. Apart from what have been called the great literatures, which can incorporate entire segments of their canon into this world field, such a case can probably only be observed when authors assert themselves in groups, as was the case with the Hispanic American Boom novelists (Part 1, Chapter 4). The opposite case (Part 3, Chapter 24) is the entry of an individual whose work is subject to the axiological configuration and expectations of the receptive field. Can we then also consider in such a case—within *Weltliteratur*—the formation of subsystems shaped by aesthetically similar works from different national literatures? It is also clear that such globalized works may not have the same importance and significance in their home literature or internationally within other literatures. Perhaps we need not refer to the principles of structuralism, to Bourdieu or Even-Zohar to think through such divergences in transcoding and meaning-making.

6. If the previous points suggest a globalizing view, it is also appropriate, even imperative to reverse the perspective to emphasize the norms and values of the former American and African peripheries. In what ways have the processes of autonomization and deperipheralization contributed to world culture in general, and how are they contributing today? First, it is necessary to underscore what has been dispersively indicated in the individual chapters: the Americas and Africa were and are much more intensively integrative than the former European centralities—ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and literarily. The reasons for this lie in the axiological shaping of the literary field, as discussed in Chapter 1. One consequence is an integrative paratactic structuring that has established a distinctive type of literary tradition and different modes of literary canon formation since the 19th century. This, in turn, has entailed a qualitatively unique setting of the relationship between autonomy and heteronomy (Chapter 1, Part 1, Chapter 2); hybridity and new aesthetic principles such as third space, migratory or nomadic tropes, conceived in different ways in the various national literatures (Part 1, Chapter 2, Part 3, Chapter 16, Part 3, Chapter 18, Part 3, Chapter 19, Part 3, Chapter 20, Part 3, Chapter 21, Part 3, Chapter 23); innovative conceptions of memory linked not to temporality, but to spatiality (Chapter 1, Part 1, Chapter 2, Part 3, Chapter 24), which implies a new, distinctive structuring of imagination and narratives (Part 1, Chapter 4, Part 3, Chapter 23, Part 3, Chapter 24).

These peripheral principles have significantly entered into *Weltliteratur*, influencing the aesthetics of the former European centralities. The innovativeness of the peripheries is key to the complex center-periphery/periphery-center dynamic, whether within individual national literatures, interliterarily, or globally.

7. The study of former peripheries from the point of view of their peripherality-centrality enables us to form fresh perspectives on globalization. The metaphor of Grimmeau and Klinkenberg's gravitational model (Introduction, Chapter 1, Part 1, Chapter 3) points to the dynamics of centripetal and centrifugal forces, even where the economic factors of globalization are most salient—in the editorial and publishing spheres. Here, the centralization and homogenization of globalizing forces encounters resistance and provokes fragmentation. A clear need is thus shown for particularity in creating independent publishing houses and book markets (Part 1, Chapter 3, Part 1, Chapter 4, Part 1, Chapter 5, Part 1, Chapter 10, Part 3, Chapter 24). The innovations emanating from these milieus have proven attractive to a wider audience—be they individuals (Part 2, Chapter 14, Part 3, Chapter 24) or groups (Part 1, Chapter 4, Part 1, Chapter 5). Individual authors and communities from formally marginalized and peripheral areas have entered the literary field and taken a strong position within centers as productive participants, themselves creating their own new general trends. As centers and peripheries flow among nations, centers and peripheries within and among groups play their roles in the dynamics of innovation and authentication. Clearly some of these effects have been global, for example the formation of global online communities.

8. Relativization in conclusion: the question of culture and symbolic goods is closely related to axiology. Cultural values cannot be said to exist without and outside of their social recognition. If the recent entry of Amerindian authors into Quebec literature enriches the cultural dimension, will a similar situation occur in Brazil (Part 3, Chapter 23)? How will Brazilian Indian communities negotiate the relative entry of their own, quite differently oriented vision of culture and literature into the Brazilian center, Lusophone center, or even the global context? Will they choose not to enter at all, if that is even possible? What about African cultures and languages? What has been conceived as *Weltliteratur* in Europe has been shown in many contexts as a overly limiting frame. The same may be said for theories of the globalization of literature.

On behalf of all the contributors to this book, we wish you endless pleasure as you continue to peruse the works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama as well as

the transgeneric and transmedial texts explored in this volume. As particular themes are made universal, and universal themes are expressed through individual lives and concrete issues, conversations among centers and peripheries continue to evolve, as do the peripheries and centers themselves.

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What is center and periphery? How can centers and peripheries be recognized by their ontological and axiological features? How does the axiological saturation of a literary field condition aesthetics? How did these factors transform center-periphery relationships to the former metropolises of Romance literatures of the Americas and Africa? What are the consequences of various deperipheralization contexts and processes for poetics? Using theoretical sections and case studies, this book surveys and investigates the limits of globalization. Through explorations of the intercultural dynamics, the aesthetic contributions of former peripheries are examined in terms of the transformative nature of peripheries on centralities.

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