

Literature, Geography, Translation

Literature, Geography, Translation:
Studies in World Writing

Edited by

Cecilia Alvstad, Stefan Helgesson
and David Watson

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

Literature, Geography, Translation:
Studies in World Writing,
Edited by Cecilia Alvstad, Stefan Helgesson and David Watson

This book first published 2011

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2011 by Cecilia Alvstad, Stefan Helgesson and David Watson and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-3010-0, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-3010-2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	viii
Introduction	1
Literature, Geography, Translation	
Cecilia Alvstad, Stefan Helgesson, and David Watson	
Part I: Conceptualising World Literature	
Chapter One.....	16
Cosmopolitan Protocols, Multicultural Ends? World Literature as a Programme of Study	
Paulo Lemos Horta	
Chapter Two	28
Translating South-South (And Other Lessons from the Future)	
Christopher Larkosh	
Chapter Three	40
What the World Leaves Behind: Ready-Made Translations and the “Closed Book” in the Postcolonial Novel	
Chris Holmes	
Chapter Four	54
From <i>Francophonie</i> to “World Literature in French”: A Contextual Analysis	
Nicolas Di Méo	
Chapter Five	67
From Cultural Turn to Translational Turn: A Transnational Journey	
Susan Bassnett	

Part II: Geographies of Translation

Chapter Six	82
The Paraphrase as a Colonial Scrapbook: Eighteenth-Century Travelogues in Swedish Translation – The Case of Samuel Ödmann Raoul Granqvist	

Chapter Seven.....	95
Literary Translation and the “Local”: Developing Proactive Reciprocal Models for Cultural Exchange Agnes Whitfield	

Chapter Eight.....	108
The Swedish Periodical <i>Tidskrift för hemmet</i> and the Woman Question in Sweden in the 1860s Cecilia Wadsö-Lecaros	

Chapter Nine.....	120
<i>Ivanhoe</i> and the Translation of English Children’s Books into Swedish in the Nineteenth Century Björn Sundmark	

Chapter Ten	132
Mapping a Reception Field and Considering Its Implications: Modern Greek Literature Translated in France (1945–2005) Thiresia Choremi	

Chapter Eleven	152
A Modern Egyptian Literary Classic Goes West: Translations of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn’s Novel <i>al-Ayyām</i> and Their Paratextual Features Gunvor Mejdell	

Part III: Transnational Texts, Hybridised Genres

Chapter Twelve	172
Indian Ocean Genres Isabel Hofmeyr	

Chapter Thirteen	187
<i>Fouiller le paysage</i> : The Geo-Poetics of Édouard Glissant Christina Kullberg	

Chapter Fourteen	198
Language, Geography, Globalisation: Susana Chavez-Silverman's Rejection of Translation in <i>Killer Crónicas: Bilingual Memories</i> Ania Spyra	
Chapter Fifteen	209
The Transnational Agenda of Lewis and Pound's Avant-Garde Gregory Betts	
Chapter Sixteen	221
Message in a Bottle: The Geography of the Cuban Revolutionary Struggle Peter Hulme	
Contributors	239
Index	244

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 10–1: Translation flows of modern Greek literature in France from 1945 to 2005.

Fig. 10–2: The French editorial field and the establishment of two important publishing groups.

Fig. 10–3: Subsidies given to the translation of modern Greek literature into French.

Fig. 10–4: Publishers who received subsidies from the European Commission.

Fig. 10–5: Publishers who received CNL subsidies.

Fig. 10–6: Translators who received CNL subsidies.

Fig. 11–1. Cover of the fifty-eighth reprint edition of *al-Ayyām*.

Fig. 11–2. Cover to *An Egyptian Childhood. The Autobiography of Taha Hussein*.

Fig. 11–3. Cover to *Le livre des jours*.

Fig. 11–4. Cover to *Barndomsår i byn*.

Fig. 11–5. Cover to *Dagene som var – en egyptisk barndom*.

Fig. 11–6. Cover to *An Egyptian Childhood*.

INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE, GEOGRAPHY, TRANSLATION

CECILIA ALVSTAD, STEFAN HELGESSON, AND DAVID WATSON

Literary studies, broadly conceived, is undergoing a phase of rapid change. This can be seen in the proliferation of, for example, media and performance studies, book history, translation studies, and world literature programmes. The reasons for this development are many, and include the downsizing of the humanities and the erosion of literature's symbolic capital in the digital age, as well as the vertiginous expansion of scholarly interest in literature enabled by the theoretical debates of the 1970s and 1980s. It is equally possible to argue that the shifting cultural position of literature in the West – relative to the ages of realism and modernism – has enabled a more variegated approach to constructing literature as an object of knowledge. In relation to the geographical expansion of literary studies, Franco Moretti has suggested that it is only by bypassing the “theological exercise” of focusing on a canonical fraction of what has been published across continents as literature that a methodologically viable study of world literature can evolve (2000, 57).

The present volume, while not beholden to Moretti's notion of distant reading, exemplifies how critical and pedagogical endeavours that are not restricted to Western, national, or canonical foci, open onto a wealth of intellectual possibilities. Methodologically, the essays draw on and connect three academic fields that share central concerns but surprisingly often remain segregated from each other. The first two of these fields are world literature studies and translation studies; the third relates to the literary concerns of postcolonial studies and – as in the example of Wai Chee Dimock's work (2006) – transnational approaches to national literatures. It should not be assumed, however, that each of the three words in the title is linked only to one of these scholarly fields. Rather, the concepts “literature”, “geography”, and “translation” indicate concerns that are common to all, but that they approach from different angles.

For more than a decade now, considerable critical energies have been devoted to world literature as a concept and a practice. David Damrosch (2003, 2008, and 2009) and Franco Moretti (2000 and 2005) are perhaps most frequently cited in this context; other central names are Gayatri Spivak (2003), Christopher Prendergast (2004), John Pizer (2006), Pascale Casanova (1999), Emily Apter (2006), Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (2008), Rebecca Walkowitz (2009), and Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud (2007). The five volumes that emerged in 2006 out of the Swedish research programme “Literature and literary history in global contexts” (Helgesson 2006; Lindberg-Wada 2006a and 2006b; Petersson 2006; Pettersson 2006) add yet further to the scale and complexity of the response to what Moretti identified as the “problem” of world literature, “a problem that asks for a new critical method” (2000, 54).

What is this “problem”, then? One way to put it is that history has overtaken the academic study of literature. While the latter frequently still remains steeped in either a Eurocentric or a nation-based understanding of its task – or both – the velocities of circulation, migration, reproduction, and exchange across countries and continents have steadily accelerated. It is this that has forced the hand of those sections of the academic community that choose to respond to the historical processes of our day.

It is striking, however, to note how easily even the most wide-ranging intellectual undertakings succumb to the centripetal forces of academic bonding (strong agents in the field reinforcing each other), as well as to the inertia of inherited frames of thought. Thomsen’s *Mapping World Literature* (2008) – a substantial and innovative introduction to the field – is symptomatic in this regard. As he maps out the field of world literature studies, Thomsen engages primarily with what has already become the canonical “trinity” of the field, namely Moretti, Casanova, and Damrosch. While there are obvious reasons to invoke these three names, as we do, it seems less prudent to restrict the methodological and theoretical scope of world literature studies accordingly. We should of course reiterate that Moretti is arguing against the canon, whereas Casanova is entirely focussed on canonisation and consecration. Yet both tend to update very old geographies of literature, with Europe remaining securely in the centre of their world literary systems. This is less true of Damrosch’s more flexible approach, but canonisation – as achieved through the transnational circulation and recognition of world literary texts – is at the forefront of his work as well.

With this volume, we are not idealistically claiming that the old Eurocentric geographies and literary epistemologies can be changed by force of ethical arguments alone. There are very real histories of power

and domination that play into this. But there is equally a real risk that the debate on “world literature” seals off avenues to other related fields with rich intellectual heritages of their own, not least postcolonial studies and translation studies. It is notable, for instance, that the ever more frequent calls for a stronger focus on translation among key literary scholars (Apter 2006; Walkowitz 2009; Bermann 2010; Spivak 2010) are seldom accompanied by an engagement with the actual field of translation studies. This is a shortcoming, given that translation scholars have for a long time now, and with a great deal of internal variety, developed their own transnational approaches to literature (and not only literature) that offer alternative geographies or even, through their close attention to textual strategies, bypass the very privileging of geography. It is clear that these approaches deserve greater attention in world literature debates.

Hence, the ambition of this volume is to bring adjoining and overlapping traditions into dialogue. This is not to suggest that various fields have not already embraced the possibilities of staging a dialogue between the concepts denoted by the terms “literature, geography, translation”. In postcolonial studies, for instance, it is impossible to think of the work of Frantz Fanon (1953), George Lamming (1960), Edward Said (1978, 1983, and 1993), Paul Gilroy (1993), Homi Bhabha (1994), Elleke Boehmer (1995), Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000), or Gayatri Spivak (2003) without invoking geography. The Saidian notion of “travelling theory” (1983), Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic* (1993), and Boehmer’s “migrant metaphors” (1995) highlight and problematise the impact of location and mobility on cultural expressivity in ways that had formerly been underemphasised in the anglophone academe. If we include the archives of hispanophone and lusophone literatures in the Americas and Africa, we find an even longer tradition of geographically inflected thought (Schwarz 1992; Sánchez-Prado 2006; Helgesson 2009). It is by way of their often conflictual experiences of geographical and geopolitical displacement that postcolonial scholars have approached literature, an endeavour often theorised in terms of translation – as Robert Young has done (2001) – but rarely with any solid grounding in the theories and methods of translation studies.

Translation studies, of course, has a different genealogy. With its modern disciplinary roots in the linguistics of the 1950s and the scientific dream of “machine translation”, legend has it that James Holmes’ paper “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies”, presented at Copenhagen in 1972, enabled translation studies to come into its own. From these strictly linguistic and even technical beginnings, however, translation studies has gradually begun to address questions of context and function.

After a long tradition of privileging the source text, the target text and culture as well as the routes of translational circulation and the figure of the translator became valid objects of study in their own right, thanks to the work of, among others, Susan Bassnett (1980 and 1993), Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer (1984), Theo Hermans (1985, 1999, and 2006), André Lefevere (1992), Gideon Toury (1995), Lawrence Venuti (1995 and 1998), Bassnett and André Lefevere (1998), Anthony Pym (1998 and 2000), Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1999), Johan Heilbron (1999), and Gisèle Sapiro (2008). One term for this shift is “the cultural turn”. The complexities of this “turn” run deep, but it is worth observing that it brought translation studies in line with the concerns of postcolonial studies, regardless of the fact that a postcolonial theorist such as Homi Bhabha would frequently use a term such as “cultural translation” without any reference to actual translation studies (1994).

Insofar as translation studies addresses literature – its interests are of course much wider – it has elaborated a vocabulary (including such terms as “refraction”, “domestication”, and “foreignisation”) that is indispensable to any understanding of how literature moves across borders. And yet, one can find many studies of world literature that downplay or simplify the insights of translation studies, perhaps because paying close attention to the polyglot, ambiguous, transformative processes of translation inevitably crinkles the smoothness typical of some versions of global-speak, particularly those that seek to bypass questions regarding multilingualism.

We wish therefore to suggest that literature, geography, and translation are concerns central to comparatist scholars in all of these scholarly fields. Ultimately, however, it is a strength that these terms of engagement differ. Some of these differences play themselves out in this volume.

The first section of this book intervenes into and complicates contemporary debates around world literature. The challenges in dealing with the world’s many literatures are indeed various and very real, and, as Paulo Lemos Horta’s essay makes clear, are especially prominent in the teaching of world literature. By drawing on his own experience in designing and implementing a four-year BA programme in world literature at Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, Canada), Horta investigates whether world literature programmes can reconcile the communitarian ends of multiculturalism with the cross-cultural imperatives of cosmopolitanism and comparative literature. For Horta, world literature programmes have the potential to become central to the teaching of literature at higher education institutions exactly for this reason. He argues that such programmes provide an institutional space where workable, contextually determined compromises between cosmopolitan and

multicultural ideals can be discovered, and where it becomes possible to negotiate between, for example, the use of translations and original-language texts in teaching. For Horta, though, the real lesson of world literature programmes is that their success ultimately depends upon the desire of students to pursue both cosmopolitan and multicultural ideals.

Shifting this collection's focus to transnational relations in the Global South, Christopher Larkosh argues for a transcultural approach to literature that unveils lateral, transversal movements between the cultures of Latin America, Southern Africa, and South and Southeast Asia. This approach thus looks not at how literatures from these areas can be placed in a productive relationship with the literatures of the West, but at how they form networks circumventing North-South relationships altogether. Such a shift of perspective effects a radicalisation of the study of world literature: it offers a corrective to the exclusionary politics suggested by a model of transnational connectivity that posits minority groups and cultures in exclusive and uneven relations with dominant cultural formations. Larkosh also draws attention to the politics of language and linguistic diversity: the South-South relations and translations he describes are not best served by a global monolingualism, or by an increasing trend towards global English, but by passages between the various languages of the Global South.

Christopher Holmes also complicates accounts of world literature that posit it as an even, undifferentiated space. Focussing on works by Peter Carey and Michael Ondaatje, Holmes is concerned with the consequences for postcolonial literature of a literary post-national cosmopolitanism. He argues that recent accounts of literary texts self-consciously inhabiting a world literary space imagine the world in terms of translation and translatability, and think of the novel as "actively imagining its circulation, and *texturing* the form of that circulation in a world that has particular ideas about how it should look and behave". The postcolonial novel, according to Holmes, foregrounds in contrast its own illegibility, untranslatability and resistance to assimilation. For Holmes, novels such as Carey's and Ondaatje's mediate between postcolonial and world literatures: they are at once translatable and untranslatable, illegible texts subjected to an ongoing process of translation into a world literary space. Holmes continues hereby the project of mapping the world literary system by pointing towards what within it remains unreadable and singular.

Nicolas Di Méo's essay provides an indirect counterpoint to Larkosh's account of the need to imagine world literary relations bypassing the familiar metropolises of the world literary system. Di Méo focusses on recent debates around the concept of *francophonie*, which has frequently

been understood in neo-colonialist terms, and attempts to replace it with the notion of “world literature in French”. He makes it clear that the hierarchical organisation of the French literary field also structures its relation to other literatures, and that invocations of “world literature” within this context often disguise attempts to rejuvenate French literature. Di Méo’s account of the fate of world literature within France situates debates around world literature firmly with the national ideologies concerning colonialism, neo-colonialism, multiculturalism, cultural integration, and so-called universal values. This account usefully suggests that even if world literature belongs to the world, its conceptualisation frequently remains informed by national histories and ideologies.

In her provocative essay that concludes the first section of this collection, Susan Bassnett offers an account of the history and development of translation studies, from its initial marginal position, through the cultural turn of 1990s, to the present landscape, in which, as the other essays in this section make clear, translation stands central to debates about world literature and the travels of literature through various geographies. Bassnett argues that translation studies should not be conceptualised in disciplinary terms. Attempts to establish translation studies as a distinct field have resulted in the production of an insular, inward-turned discipline. For her, it is outside the field of translation studies – in literary and cultural studies and their examination of the movement of people and texts – where serious and urgent attention is given to “the broader, translinguistic aspects of translation, including translation as negotiation, as intercultural mediation, as a transcultural process”. Hence, she suggests, translation should be treated as a trans-disciplinary concern informing accounts of cultural transactions within an increasingly inter-related world; within such a context, concerns with cultural translations, accounts of translation processes, and creative translation practices form part of a broader “translational turn” towards engagement with “the greater sense of fluidity that marks the world we inhabit and the texts being produced at this time”.

Section two can be read as an elaboration of some of Bassnett’s suggestions, but is above all a group of studies that manifests the importance of closely investigating actual translations, translation histories, and the geographical logic of translation. In “The Paraphrase as a Colonial Scrapbook”, Raoul Granqvist explores the role of translation in colonialist travel writing. More specifically he tackles the Linnaean armchair traveller Samuel Ödmann’s forty-five translations of (mainly) English, French, and German travel writing about the rest of the world. With special emphasis on books about Africa and the Pacific, Granqvist demonstrates how

Ödman edited the works he translated, manipulating them to fit with a nationalistic eighteenth-century civilising agenda. Ödman paraphrased, omitted entire passages, and was generally concerned with producing books that were not too expensive to buy, as his translations in this way would reach more readers. In exceptional cases, especially in passages where the traveller tells about hardships and physical pain, he followed the source text closely, but generally his translations did not aim at the kind of source-target text equivalence the reading public expects of translations today. Granqvist thus not only reveals interesting insights into translational practices of the Enlightenment but also demonstrates how regions outside Europe were mapped and colonised also via translation.

Agnes Whitfield in “Literary Translation and the ‘Local’: Developing Proactive Reciprocal Models for Cultural Exchange” advocates a “reciprocal turn” in translation studies. Taking French-English and English-French literary exchange in Canada as the main focus point, she identifies issues to be addressed if we are to develop pro-active models for reciprocal, cultural exchange, and she draws attention to the fact that subsidies may increase the number of translations considerably. In the Canadian context only a few dozens of literary works had been translated before 1960, which meant a considerable increase in the number of available books when 1,236 titles received a translation grant between 1972 and 1992. The number of subsidised translations again increased in the period from 1993 to 2005. On a slightly more negative note, Whitfield also points out that quantity and quality do not necessarily go hand in hand. In a closer analysis of what works were and were not translated (and currently available for the readers), she concludes that although the subsidised translations include different genres (children’s literature, drama, fiction, non-fiction, and poetry), most works considered as culturally significant for each of the cultural communities are currently unavailable in translation into the other language.

Cecilia Wadsö-Lecaros scrutinises the relocation of the mid-nineteenth-century Woman Question from English to Swedish readers. The Swedish journal *Tidskrift för hemmet* was centrally concerned with women’s social position, female education, and paid work, issues that in Sweden were very radical at the time. Wadsö-Lecaros shows how the journal drew extensively on British material in its first formative years as a way of legitimising what could potentially be conceived of as threatening ideas. The two Swedish editors Leijonhufvud and Olivecrona translated and adapted British argumentative articles, works of fiction, and poetry and also introduced references to British works in their own articles. Wadsö-Lecaros demonstrates that the British ideas were not adapted

uncritically, but were introduced as a starting point for a debate on women's conditions in Sweden. Towards the end of the 1860s the journal made fewer references to the British debate. By then, according to Wadsö-Lecaros, "the issues that had been raised were established enough to be discussed without the agency of a foreign debate".

In "*Ivanhoe* and the Translation of English Children's Books into Swedish in the Nineteenth Century", Björn Sundmark investigates the two translational changes that took place in nineteenth-century Sweden that were hinted at by Wadsö Lecaros: English became the most important source language for translations, and new genres were imported via these English translations. With a focus on the genre of children's literature, Sundmark examines the case of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, which was indicative of both these changes. *Ivanhoe* was initially translated for adults, but as in England it was later accepted as reading material for children. In England *Ivanhoe* started to be marketed for children in the 1870s, and shortly after that abridged versions began to appear. One of the first versions adapted for children was the anonymous Swedish 1878 translation *Richard Lejonhjerta: Berättelse för ungdom efter Walter Scotts roman Ivanhoe* (Richard the Lionheart: A tale for the young after Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe*). This edition displays amendments with an eye towards the child reader, such as the removal of open references to sexuality. Other changes include a more positive portrayal of the Saxon characters and less background information on why the Jews were despised.

With Thiresia Choremi's chapter, which employs the exacting methods of translation sociology, our focus shifts to southern Europe and the reception of modern Greek literature in France from 1945 until 2005. Contrary to a common but disingenuous image of translation and international consecration as based on objective criteria, Choremi demonstrates how the modest circulation of Greek literature in French translation has been disproportionately influenced by political events, state intervention, and not least the small group of "importers" (i.e., translators, editors, and publishers) who select and also brand the translated works on behalf of the target audience. As a case in point, no less than a third of all translations from Modern Greek into French over the sixty-year period were produced by ten individuals. It is also notable that the number of translations increased dramatically during the period of the military junta in Greece. After yet another decade-long spike in translations after 1989 – arguably the era of EU optimism – the number decreased yet again, this time due to the ongoing commercialisation and conglomerisation of the

publishing industry. As Choremi demonstrates, translation histories are always also political, social, and economic histories.

In “A Modern Egyptian Literary Classic Goes West”, Gunvor Mejdell examines various translations of Tāhā Ḥusayn’s semi-autobiographical novel *al-Ayyām* (The days) into English, French, Swedish, and Norwegian. Mejdell’s comparative study focuses on how these translations target European readers through paratextual means such as covers, titles, prefaces, postscripts, and notes. She argues that these paratexts both familiarise readers with the socio-cultural context of Ḥusayn’s novel, and reflect the ideologies and shifting contexts of the novel’s translators, editors, and publishers. Tāhā Ḥusayn’s *al-Ayyām* emerges from this discussion as a remarkable example of the cultural translations taking place between East and West, and of how the relationship between these geographical locations changes over time.

Section three, finally, moves across the boundaries of both literature and translation proper to explore emergent ways of conceptualising region, place, genres, and literary multilingualism, as well as transnational perspectives on the “old newness” of avant-garde modernism.

As the shape of the world changes dramatically, Isabel Hofmeyr points out in her essay, older intellectual maps (Cold War area studies models, North/South, First/Third World) no longer make sense. One response to these changing circumstances has been to focus attention on the Indian Ocean, an area which brings into sharp focus many of the significant forces shaping contemporary world history. As an arena in which Sino-Indian competition will play itself out, the Indian Ocean makes apparent new configurations in the “South”. The engagement with oceanic studies which a study of the Indian Ocean demands opens up new vistas in transnational work, particularly by raising questions of lateral (rather than North/South) linkages. More generally, the historical experiences of the Indian Ocean offer a counterpoint to those of the Black Atlantic which has become invisibly normative in much social and political theory. While providing an overview of this emerging scholarship, this paper asks what these new developments mean for the way we make sense of literary circulation.

In her article, Christina Kullberg focuses on the Martinican writer-philosopher Édouard Glissant’s reconceptualisation of writing as a means of engaging the multiple histories embedded in the landscape. When Glissant calls for Caribbean literature to be geographical by engaging in an archaeological relation to place, he is in fact simultaneously opening up for writing to become national *and* transnational. In her reading of Glissant’s novel *La Lézarde*, Kullberg characterises this as a “geo-poetics”

echoing Deleuze and Guattari's geo-philosophy. By engaging geography in such a way, the text becomes at home in a world which is more and more often described as creolised.

Obvious though it may seem, the importance of multilingualism – and the refusal to abide only by the norms of hegemonic languages such as English and French – to achieve such a geo-poetics is somewhat understated in contemporary scholarship. In Ania Spyra's reading of Susana Chávez-Silverman's *Killer Crónicas*, we are confronted by one contemporary writer's quite astonishing rejection of translation. Instead of following the more common practice of hinting at cultural difference by inserting the occasional "foreign" word in an otherwise coherently anglophone text, Silverman mixes English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and even Nahuatl and Zulu as she traces her own migrations between Argentina, Mexico, the United States, and South Africa. For Spyra, Silverman's novel manifests a "cosmopoetics" – the resonances with "geo-poetics" are obvious – which runs counter both to "the monolingual norms of nations" and "the homogenising claims of global English". Insofar as Silverman expresses a sense of belonging in her novel, it is in terms of a geographical destiny, of feeling at home on a particular latitude in the southern hemisphere, rather than in a given place.

While the three foregoing essays all add to the contemporary interrogation of national constraints in literature and literary studies, Gregory Betts' essay serves as a reminder of the long history of transnationalism – and also of its potentially dubious aspects, as manifested in early twentieth-century avant-gardism in Europe. In Betts' reading of Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound, even their fateful political turn to fascism should not be seen as a retreat to the nationalist camp. As with other avant-garde movements, such as surrealism and futurism, the vorticism of Lewis and Pound was aimed at a universal, purportedly global, reshaping of society through art. Their enemy was capitalism and its trivialisation of culture, and their antidote was to collapse the boundaries between art and society so as to allow for, in Betts' words, "a revolutionary, transnational culture with renewed vitality" which was "limited only by the entire human population".

Clearly, the European avant-gardists fell short of achieving their revolution. In contrast, an actual revolution did take place in Cuba, and Peter Hulme concludes the volume by examining some cultural artefacts from before and after this historic event. Hulme develops a fittingly unconventional approach to narrative and literature, grounding it very concretely in geography rather than the print medium. Emerging out of a collective project at Essex University with the heading "American

Tropics”, Hulme’s article recalls the part that geography – and particularly the mythical status of Oriente, the eastern backlands of the island – played in fashioning the national and revolutionary identities of Cuba. Ironically, the political antagonists Fulgencio Batista and Fidel Castro both came from Oriente, a fact which put them at a social disadvantage in Havana but, arguably, strengthened their national standing. As Hulme demonstrates, it is the repeated and differently mediated inscriptions of the Turquino mountain by, among others, the geographer Núñez Jiménez, the Swedish botanist Erik Ekman, and even Castro himself (who chose to meet with the international press on top of the mountain in 1957), that makes the geographical part of Oriente an essential ingredient in national as well as transnational imaginings of Cuba. This is Glissant’s geo-poetics with a difference: not primarily a tracing of the creolised and transnational histories of a given place, but rather the enlisting of place in the divergent interests of national consolidation.

While the planet Earth ultimately, and thankfully, eludes our grasp, the essays that constitute this volume will have added to the widening of the world of literary studies. From the southern hemispheric Babel of Chávez-Silverman to the Scandinavian destinies of the Tāhā Ḥusayn, from Indo-African satires in the Indian Ocean to the world literature programme in Vancouver, world writing continues to intensify and complicate our understanding of the one world that we share and through which we are divided.

Works cited

- Apter, Emily. 2006. *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bassnett, Susan. 1980. *Translation Studies: An Introduction*. London: Methuen.
- . 1993. *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bassnett, Susan, and André Lefevere. 1998. *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Bassnett, Susan, and Harish Trivedi (eds). 1999. *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Bermann, Sandra. 2010. “Teaching in – and about – translation.” *Profession*, 2010, 82–90.
- Bhabha, Homi. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Boehmer, Elleke. 1995. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Le Bris, Michel, and Jean Rouaud (eds). 2007. *Pour une littérature-monde*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Casanova, Pascale. 1999. *La république mondiale des lettres*. Paris: Seuil.
[*The World Republic of Letters*. Trans. M. B. DeBevoise, 2004. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.]
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Culler, Jonathan. 2010. "Introduction: Critical paradigms." *PMLA* 125 (4): 905–15.
- Damrosch, David. 2003. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2008. *How to Read World Literature*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- . (ed.). 2009. *Teaching World Literature*. New York: Modern Language Association of America.
- Dimock, Wai Chee. 2006. *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1953. *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Paris: Maspero.
- Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso.
- Heilbron, Johan. 1999. "Book translation as a cultural world-system." *European Journal of Social Theory* 2 (4): 429–44.
- Helgesson, Stefan (ed.). 2006. *Literary Interactions in the Modern World*. Vol. 2. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- . 2009. *Transnationalism in Southern African Literature: Modernists, Realists, and the Inequality of Print Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Hermans, Theo (ed.). 1985. *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*. London: Croon Helm.
- . 1999. *Translation Systems: Descriptive and Systemic Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- . (ed.). 2006. *Translating Others*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Lamming, George. 1960. *The Pleasures of Exile*. London: Joseph.
- Lefevere, André. 1992. *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London: Routledge.
- Lindberg-Wada, Gunilla (ed.) 2006a. *Literary Genres: An Intercultural Approach*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- . (ed.). 2006b. *Studying Transcultural Literary History*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Moretti, Franco. 2000. "Conjectures on world literature." *New Left Review* 1: 54–68.
- . 2005. *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History*. London: Verso.

- Petersson, Margareta (ed.). 2006. *Literary Interactions in the Modern World*. Vol. 1. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Pettersson, Anders (ed.). 2006. *Notions of Literature across Times and Cultures*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Pizer, John. 2006. *The Idea of World Literature: History and Pedagogical Practice*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Prendergast, Christopher (ed.) 2004. *Debating World Literature*. London: Verso.
- Pym, Anthony. 1998. *Method in Translation History*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- . 2000. *Negotiating the Frontier: Translators and Intercultures in Hispanic History*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Reiss, Katharina, and Hans J. Vermeer. 1984. *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan.
- . 1983. *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- . 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Sánchez-Prado, Ignacio M. (ed.). 2006. *América Latina en la "literatura mundial"*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Sapiro, Gisèle. 2008. *Translatio: le marché de la traduction en France à l'heure de la globalisation*. Paris: CNRS.
- Spivak, Gayatri. 2003. *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2010. "Translating in a world of languages." *Profession*, 2010, 35–43.
- Schwarz, Roberto. 1992. *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture*. Trans. John Gledson. London: Verso.
- Thomsen, Mads Rosendahl. 2008. *Mapping World Literature: International Canonization and Transnational Literatures*. London: Continuum.
- Toury, Gideon. 1995. *Descriptive Translation Studies – And Beyond*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Venuti, Lawrence. 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge.
- . 1998. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London: Routledge.
- Walkowitz, Rebecca. 2009. "Comparison literature." *New Literary History* 40 (3): 567–82.
- Young, Robert. 2001. *Postcolonialism: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

PART I:

CONCEPTUALISING WORLD LITERATURE

CHAPTER ONE

COSMOPOLITAN PROTOCOLS,
MULTICULTURAL ENDS?
WORLD LITERATURE AS A PROGRAMME
OF STUDY

PAULO LEMOS HORTA

Attempts to reconfigure comparative literature to encompass more of the globe beyond the discipline's traditional strength in European languages and literatures are attaining new levels of research interest, pedagogical currency, and institutional support in the North American academy. Among several new initiatives one notes the summer institute for world literature conceived by David Damrosch at Harvard, Princeton's certificate in translation and intercultural communication, and the four-year undergraduate programme in world literature at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver (the site of the ACLA annual meeting in 2011 on the theme of world literature / comparative literature). The passage from world literature as a distinctive research approach to an institutionalised programme begs the question of whether there is a disconnect between the call for a world literature and the tools available for its study. An increasingly global history, Stefan Helgesson (2009) notes, has overtaken a discipline of literary study that remains beholden to national or Eurocentric conceptions of literature. Susan Bassnett (2009) concurs that the turn to world literature in the academy has occurred before its establishment as a discipline. In his plenary address at the ACLA in New Orleans in 2010, Sheldon Pollock (2010), professor of Sanskrit at Columbia University, observes that for all the talk of world literature, comparative literature remains overwhelmingly European in terms of research in its leading programmes and journals and the languages required for its study at the undergraduate and graduate level. Franco Moretti, David Damrosch, and Pascale Casanova are concerned with this

tendency toward hypercanonicity in the circulation of texts as works of world literature given the disproportionate influence of London, Paris, Frankfurt, and New York as markets and arbiters of taste. Recent work has sought to question the assumption of European or American models of world literature as natural or paradigmatic, asking what world literature might look like (as an approach, a theory, a programme) from the vantage point of India or Iran.¹

From the vantage point of new programmes in world literature that seek to engage diversity via curricular innovation, it is timely to revisit reports on the state of comparative literature that see the paradigm of globalism replacing that of multiculturalism (Bernheimer 1995, Saussy 2006). Were the authors of these reports correct to identify multiculturalism and world literature as competing models for greater inclusiveness in the academy? If so, what sort of attention to diversity will world literature represent programmatically and pedagogically? Charles Bernheimer's 1993 report presented the discipline at a crossroads, faced with the choice of comparative literature or multiculturalism as alternative models for curricular inclusiveness and cross-cultural inquiry. Should the field remain an elite enterprise distinguished by the reading and teaching of foreign language works in the original and their deep contextualisation? Or should it more democratically aim at multiculturalism understood by Bernheimer in terms of identity politics and the freedom to read decontextualised works in translation? Bernheimer's "oversimplified dilemma" is useful as it anticipates the fundamental questions that would be asked of research and teaching initiatives in world literature: do these initiatives adhere to the original language protocol of comparative literature, or do they rather signal a multicultural rethinking and expansion of the domain of English? The Bernheimer report further anticipated subsequent scholarship that would suggest that comparative literature might be undone by the widespread adoption of its goal of making literary inquiry more global and cross-cultural, which multiculturalism as a project would seem to promise to deliver in a more accessible and popular manner.

How would the terms of debate from the postwar American context that shaped the goals and standards of comparative literature as a discipline translate elsewhere? Bernheimer stresses the defining experience of World War II, both for European exiles and refugees and returning American soldiers, in shaping the ideals and standards of postwar comparative literature in the United States. The discipline's lofty goal in this view entailed nothing less than the cultivation of a cosmopolitan class, equipped with the linguistic and cultural expertise to deal with international questions and concerns. Historically, comparative

literature's original language protocol was necessarily elitist both in the sense that it could only be pursued at elite research institutions possessing excellent language and literature programmes and in the sense that it signalled more exacting standards than adjacent programmes at those same institutions (Bernheimer 1995, 21–27; 28–38). The elitism of this protocol is reinforced in the recommendations of Bernheimer's 1993 report, which couple the requisite of an "unusual" and "exceptional" expertise in foreign languages and cultures with the new imperative of mastering a non-Western language, criteria only likely to be met, in the view of one class-conscious critic, by the "children of the elite classes" in global metropolises who "find their way to privileged institutions of higher education" (Chow 1995, 110).

In an American context, the impetus for multiculturalism as an alternative model for cross-cultural inquiry was a function of the enfranchisement struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. Within the academy, the idealistic goal of multiculturalism is the symbolic presence of content representing different constituencies defined in terms of the politics of identity, authenticity, and recognition. The language protocol of multiculturalism is more democratic in that the comparative work it envisions can be pursued with reference to a single linguistic or national tradition. Rey Chow states this case positively in her response to the Bernheimer report:

Instead of asking our students to learn Arabic or Chinese [...] what about asking them to study black English, English as used by writers in British India, or English as used by present-day Latin American and Asian American authors? (1995, 114)

She questions the cosmopolitan ethics of multilingualism as an ideal, since non-Western languages and cultures are already taught in the academy under the guise of area studies programmes in which (in her view) knowledge can be placed at the service of instrumental concerns in the manner described by Edward Said in *Orientalism*. Chow's is a dissenting voice within the context of the comparatists contributing and responding to the 1993 report. For these scholars, multiculturalism (defined in terms of cultural essentialism and identity politics) represented the forfeiting of the discipline's cosmopolitan standards and ideals. Within the framework of what Tobin Siebers terms the "cola wars" between comparative literature and multiculturalism, partisans liken the former brand to cosmopolitan fashion houses like Armani and the latter to a knock-off brand. In Siebers' own analogy of rival diet plans, one option requires exercise and the other promises a magic pill: "most people try the second method because it is

easier” (1995, 197). Siebers ventured that comparative literature could not compete with multiculturalism because the latter had found “a marketing strategy that makes it available to more people” (196).

However, the most seminal articulation of the concept of multiculturalism, Charles Taylor’s “The Politics of Recognition”, calls for much more rigorous work in the labour of cross-cultural inquiry than the user-friendly version of multiculturalism denounced by scholars of comparative literature.² For Taylor, multiculturalism cannot be merely the symbolic presence of different representative vantage points in the classroom, in the form of de-contextualised and hence translatable content. Taylor (1994, 69) shares with comparatists like Bernheimer a cosmopolitan concern with disentangling deep from superficial modes of cross-cultural inquiry (he terms the latter multiculturalism on demand). Concerned with the project of fashioning multicultural citizens, Taylor brings to his critique of on-demand multiculturalism an attention to its constraining effects on citizenship and access to and participation in public culture. In his view, to praise the familiar in an unfamiliar culture is to be at once homogenising and patronising, for a favourable judgment with reference to familiar default standards of the products of a culture “not intensely studied” constitutes a case of praising the other “for being like us” (71). Such a “feigned” favourable judgment “given to placate its perceived beneficiary” is an act of “breathtaking condescension” and of exclusion, because “to be an object of such an act of respect demeans” (70). For Taylor the cause of citizenship in a multicultural society would be ill served by a multiculturalism defined in terms of the symbolic presence of voices representative of different constituencies, without the benefit of deep cultural or linguistic knowledge.

Taylor ventures that nothing less than what Hans Gadamer termed a “fusion of horizons” is needed:

We learn to move in a broader horizon, within which what we have formerly taken for granted as the background to valuation can be situated as one possibility alongside the background of the formerly unfamiliar culture. (1994, 67)

Taylor sets a rigorous threshold for the investigation of possible new cross-cultural canons and contexts in the academy. Consideration of the value of a foreign cultural artefact must be “demonstrated in the actual study of the culture”, a study that may necessitate the transformation of familiar standards of aesthetic and cultural value (67). From the vantage point of comparative literature, it is difficult to see how the intense and transformative study of another culture Taylor calls for could be

accomplished in the absence of the foreign language acquisition and deep cultural contextualisation associated with the discipline historically. Indeed, a recent paper that seeks to tease out the implications of Taylor's use of Gadamer's notion of the "fusion of horizons" suggests that his account of multiculturalism implies the imperative of foreign language study (Leitch 2008). While Gadamer had in mind the task of evaluating concepts and values from a different historical period within the same culture, within the broader context of Taylor's oeuvre the engagement with a different culture points to the significance of language study.

The privileging of world literature as *the* portal programme in literature at Simon Fraser University/Surrey represented a programmatic response to the brand wars between cosmopolitan and multicultural modes of cross-cultural studies, and between the deep and on-demand variants of multiculturalism. Within Greater Vancouver, which has a higher percentage of foreign-born residents than New York or Los Angeles, Surrey is a particularly diverse suburb, since two-thirds of the population is comprised of first or second-generation immigrants (one in four are from South Asia and one in six from China or East Asia). What choices were made between the different models and brands of cross-cultural inquiry available? The programme in world literature represented an attempt to approximate the historical protocols of comparative literature given institutional constraints. The administration approved a world literature programme that called for all majors (including those already bilingual or multilingual) to acquire a new language and promised resources for foreign language instruction (notably in Urdu, Arabic, and Persian). While a revision of the language requirement was made necessary due to budgetary cuts to language instruction, in the absence of a formal requirement 80 per cent of current majors and minors pursue foreign-language study and a significant number partake of a year of study abroad. The challenge for the programme is to seek disciplinary protocols and assignments that might do justice to linguistic and cultural specificity in teaching world literature in English translation. If the institutional landscape prevented the adoption of the protocol of requiring reading texts in the original languages, the demographics – with almost half of entering students proficient in a second, often non-Western language – are favourable to this programmatic quest to experiment with new disciplinary protocols and assignments.

The new programme in world literature proposed cross-cultural inquiry as an animating principle to engage the East/West, North/South cross-cultural makeup and curiosity of the population. The challenge was to design a programme that fit not only the diversity of the students but also

their cross-cultural experiences and yearning: students in metropolitan Vancouver are already leading cross-cultural lives and exposed to different cultural norms, practices, and products on a daily basis. The objective was to produce students who conceived of learning about other cultures and languages as a continual and lifelong process, whether they were to continue in academia or not. In designing the curriculum, my goal was to approximate the protocols of comparative literature to the extent possible in translation – to keep alive the sense of the original text and its cultural and historical context while being attentive to shifts in meaning in its reception in foreign contexts. An early influence on my thinking in this respect was the work of Roberto Schwarz on the fertile mismatch between European form and ideas in the work of Machado de Assis and the context of nineteenth-century Brazil (Schwarz 1992), and in graduate school I would gravitate to theorists of world literature interested in how works and genres travel across cultures such as Franco Moretti and David Damrosch (who themselves built upon the work of Schwarz and Eduardo Coutinho). David Damrosch's definition of world literature as the movement of literature across time and space proved particularly useful in curricular design, for his work on world literature served the needs of a programme that sought to place cosmopolitan ideals at the service of a multiculturalism of substance rather than surface. Damrosch had given systematic consideration to how cross-cultural questions and contexts could be explored in an undergraduate programme in world literature in translation. I shared his concern with rigorously teaching cross-culturally and, if need be, in translation, and his preoccupation with resisting the hyper-canonisation of world literature via the inclusion of "minor" literatures (2009, 194).

Yet can the communitarian ends of multiculturalism be reconciled with the cross-cultural imperative of cosmopolitanism? How to reconcile the claims of diversity and inclusivity towards "minor" traditions such as the Portuguese, relegated to the status of minor literature by international literary markets, and the rigour of cosmopolitan protocols that call for the acquisition of new, non-heritage languages? It was a formative experience when first teaching a course at the university level (Introductory Portuguese at the University of Toronto) that first persuaded me of the need for a world literature portal programme as a bridge between the protocols of comparative literature and those of departments of national language and literature – but where should the accent lie? I was disconcerted to find that on the day José Saramago was awarded the Nobel Prize, my ethnically Portuguese students expressed a mixture of confusion, anger, and disbelief, for they had internalised the sense that the Portuguese

language had not produced a worthy canon of texts to be studied. Arguably the fault lay with an official government policy of multiculturalism that stressed through its grants and practices folklore at the expense of high culture, dispensing funds for folkloric dances but not for the translation from languages such as Czech or Portuguese into French or English.³ This formative pedagogical experience persuaded me that an ideal undergraduate programme in literature should open students to the possibility that works of value were possible not only within English but across a variety of cultures. The lesson for me was ambiguous: Did we need better multiculturalism, or less of it? Should ethnically Portuguese students in Toronto be encouraged to study “their own” language and culture over others? Taylor’s articulation of multiculturalism accentuates at once the communitarian claims of belonging and the necessity of understanding between cultures (also defined in a communitarian manner). At once he affirms the communitarian claims of culture, and the presumption that other cultures may have contributed something valuable as an act of faith worthy of possible and rigorous verification.

Ultimately, while the privileging of cross-cultural curiosity as the programme in world literature’s animating principle dovetailed in some respects with Charles Taylor’s argument for a high threshold for meaningful cross-cultural inquiry and dialogue and a “fusion of horizons”, it nonetheless was intended also as a departure from multiculturalism understood in Taylor’s underlying sense of the politics of recognition of communal identities. Taylor positively articulates the communitarian claims of a politics of identity, authenticity, and recognition. For some of Taylor’s critics from the vantage point of the rival principle of cosmopolitanism, notably Anthony Appiah, the politics of recognition Taylor advocates risked compelling a script of identity and behaviour for minority communities (1994, 163). Indeed, my survey of former students in Toronto and Vancouver suggested that students did not want to be grouped on the basis of their cultural heritage or ethnicity. Students complained that in previous contexts (in high-school classrooms and student clubs) they had felt pressure to speak on behalf of ethnic communities and to behave in a prescribed “authentic” manner (precisely Appiah’s cosmopolitan objection to prescriptive modes of multiculturalism). A student complained of being excluded from a student club allegedly about culture on the basis of her ethnicity; another complained of being asked to “play the Hindu” in classrooms and on multicultural cable television, where he hosted shows on Bollywood and Hinduism; a third complained of having to choose between multiple affiliations in a city where the rate of intermarriage is 8.9 per cent. Tellingly, a current world