Introduction

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We live in an age of increasing movement of people, their ideas, beliefs and artifacts. Cultural encounters and influences on a global scale have become richer than ever before, but at the same time, another global movement is becoming even more visible. Walls and borders are constructed and enforced, nationalism, xenophobia, and populism, in all their guises, are growing stronger in place after place. In this contradictory time of openness and enforced borders, as many scholars in the humanities and social sciences, we have found it highly relevant and important to explore how borders are transgressed and put into question, and reflect over the outcomes of such processes. Hence, the present volume aims at presenting a collection of essays that not only focus on narratives of border crossing, but also, taken as a whole, becomes a strong statement of intellectual and theoretical diversity. The readers of this collection will find some of their favorite concepts and ideological standpoints, but they should also be prepared that they will encounter methods and perspectives that feel uncommon and challenge their expectations. Our aim is to show that an understanding of the movement over cultural borders, in all its complexity, also needs to question the processes of theoretical conformity, commonly expressed through the establishment of fields, subjects, theoretical fashions and coteries, and which all too often become an obstacle to critical inquiry. Obviously, each of the chapters in the present collection will benefit from delimitations of topic and perspective, but the heterogeneity of the collection, as a whole, is essential to encourage readers to discover

new ways of thinking. It may be likened to a kaleidoscope moving around the central axis of border-crossing narratives, offering ever new approaches to understanding. The different chapters are also connected by a transnational, or transethnic, research approach, which is essential for studying the multiple dimensions of the collection's central topic and what follows is an outline for a general theoretical framework, stressing in particular its cross-disciplinary quality and the "travelling" of its key concepts.

For the past decades, various disciplines engaged in cultural and aesthetic studies, both in the social sciences and the humanities, have taken a "transnational turn" in a need to transcend the limiting scope of conceptualizing and understanding aesthetic expressions, influences, identity formations, cultural phenomena, social movements and change within an exclusively national framework. In order to better understand the new political, social and economic realities of a globalized world (migration processes of people, artefacts, commodities and ideas) the transnational research approach and transcultural reading practices have been implemented within wide range of research areas. These transnational readings have in different ways been conceptualized as various "turns" (paradigm shifts); hence two serving examples: "the translational turn" in cultural studies, advocating for a broadening of the concept of *translation*, reaching beyond its traditional linguistic context (transmitting from a source to a target language) into wider encompassing complex cultural dimensions involved in all kinds of mediating processes occurring in cultural-encounters (e.g. Bachmann-Medick, 2012; Bassnett, 1998), and the "transcultural turn" in cultural memory studies, which has allowed a shift from the methodological "nation-culture bind" to a focus on remembering across borders of nations and cultures (Crownshaw, 2010; Erll, 2011a, 2011b). The benefit of using a transcultural perspective is that it sets the ground for a broadened understanding of "the many fuzzy edges of national cultures of remembrance, the many shared sites of memory that have emerged through travel, trade, colonialism and other forms of cultural exchange" (Erll, 2011a, p. 65).

Transculturality and a variety of related and interchangeable concepts are applied throughout the volume to describe collective

and individual subject positions in expressions of cultural transfer and exchange. Such concepts have proved useful to capture the recent transformations of societies, communities and identity formations as textures woven of multiple cultural encounters and mutual exchange (e.g., Nordin et al., 2016, pp. 11–13; Welsch 1999). However, it is also important not to overlook that border-crossing cultural encounters and transcultural exchanges are not new phenomena dictated only by recent globalization processes. Rather, cultural exchange has occurred throughout human history and in the words of Laura Doyle, "Transnational studies puts nations back into the dialectical history from which they emerged" (Doyle, 2009, p. 1).

A transnational approach has also become increasingly important in the field of literary studies, in which the recent re-definition(s) and re-thinking of the area of *world literature* has turned more globally oriented and inclusive of non-Western texts. Literary texts are understood as (inter)relational and as entities crossing boundaries and borders. An important recent contribution from this area is the attentiveness to the uneven conditions of symbolic and economic capital involved in how narratives migrate in circulation and translation across borders (e.g., Helgesson *et al.* 2018; Mani 2017; Sapiro 2014). These sociological aspects of a narrative's circulation are addressed in the volume through essays related to translation studies and reception theory (especially in the chapters by Schwartz, Aronsson, Inose, and Egri Ku-Mesu).

Something the examples above (providing cases of transnational research approaches) have in common with the other current transnational discourses fostered within the social sciences and humanities, is their profoundly inter- and transdisciplinary character and the use of "travelling" key concepts (Neumann & Nünning, 2012; Bal 2002). Concepts such as, "cultural transfer", "cultural mediation", "cultural transformation", "cultural negotiation", "reframing" and "exchange" have proved themselves useful to encompass and describe the multidimensional human creative activity taking place within cultural encounters and border zones. The conceptual transfer and this travelling of theories between different fields is not objective, linear, and unproblematic. Concepts are not fixed and established entities, instead they are "travelling

concepts", that is, "dynamic and changeable as they travel back and forth between diverse academic contexts" (Neumann & Nünning, 2012, p. 3; Bal 2002). As noted by Neumann and Nünning: "Approaches, theories and concepts in the study of culture are not only heavily imbued with, and shaped by, particular historical, intellectual and local traditions, they also come with ideological freight and often unconscious biases" (2012, p. 2). This rationale has guided the theoretical and methodological focus of this volume to, first and foremost, not pay critical attention to specific buzzwords or single concepts as, for example, "cultural transfer", "cultural mediation" or "cosmopolitanism." The chapters are instead linked through their explorations of borders and boundaries, a theme chosen, in the words of Wendland: "since interaction (violent or non-violent) between cultures is mainly evident and virulent in their contact zones i.e. on their boundaries, borderlands or frontiers" (2012, p. 57).

The chapters make use of narratives as looking glasses to examine borders and boundaries and, more specifically, the resulting effects, when they are transgressed and traversed. A globally inclusive perspective has been maintained throughout the volume. The narratives studied, as well as the scholars themselves and their academic abodes, originate from a wide range of linguistic, geographical, and cultural contexts, covering Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, West-African, European, and Central and North American aspects. Each of the chapters includes several geographical positions in addition to identity positions. The variety of perspectives offered in the different chapters often reaches beyond the dominating Western concepts and includes studies that offer a multitude of theoretical approaches that critically examine how border crossings have inspired, or simply resulted in, narratives of geographically diverse sources.

Most of the chapters focus on narratives of fiction. Many of them would fit into the category of "border-crossing fiction" proposed by Black (2010, p. 3). It is the type of fiction that highlights the opposition between the subject and object, the self and the other, and seeks novel ways to overcome, if not reconcile, this opposition. But in this volume, narratives are also understood in a broader sense; the chapters not only examine concepts,

approaches and beliefs materialized in novels, poetry, drama, children's books, and literary anthologies, but also in newspaper articles, criticism and urban myths, and hence attempt to explain the relation between our notion of reality and the expressions or representations of the same. Such narratives have always represented an important vehicle to express complex collective and individual life conditions and identity formations in times of social and cultural change. Critical and representational analyses are thereby crucial for understanding and reconciling both situated historical and social events and new realities in times of social and political transformation.

The concept of the border is also highly ambiguous, and the act of crossing may imply, not only movement from one place to another, but the spaces and positions in-between. All chapters in the collection deal with borders that may be defined as, in some sense, spatial, that is, geographical, national, cultural (ethnic), linguistic, or based on identity constructions. In that sense, their topics are connected to a traditional definition of the border, whereas the process of crossing the border is scrutinized from several angles. Some chapters also go further and explore borders that may be materialistic and geopolitical (market conditions for literary circulation), institutional (established and non-established criticism), or symbolic (sense of belonging, exclusion, marginalization).

The present volume share thematic interest with an increasing number of publications, notably in the field of literary studies, that break away from the related, but narrower, frameworks of post-colonial and area studies. Many of these take the format of edited collections of essays. Important examples are the second volume of *Towards a Transcultural Future: Literature and Society in a 'Post'-Colonial World* (Davis, et al., 2005), which explores South African fiction and examples of world literature in English in the light of transculturality, multiculturalism and hybridity, and *Crossing Borders, Dissolving Boundaries* (Viljoen, 2013), which offers analyses of literary texts and how they enact, and form, bordering processes with the purpose of gesturing towards a borderless world. Related, but with a somewhat different approach, is *Cross Worlds: Transcultural Poetics: An Anthology* (Waldman

& Wright, 2014), which deals with the act of writing itself, and how writers and translators position themselves when they write across borders. Of high relevance is also the volume *Border Aesthetics: Concepts and Intersections* (Schimanski & Wolfe, 2017), which has its focus on the border itself and its significance. Belonging to the field of border studies, which has mostly been concerned with the political, legal, and historical aspects of borders, it shows that the aesthetic aspect of human creativity in relation to borders is a fruitful object of study. In addition, there are two collections of essays produced by the same research group at Dalarna University which initiated the present volume: *Transcultural Identities in Contemporary Literature* (Nordin, et al., 2013) and *Transcultural Identity Constructions in a Changing World* (Nordin, et al., 2016).

These diverse, but still related, publications may display more of theoretical conformity than the present volume, but they all share the aim to increase our understanding of cultural interactions and its ever-changing variety. Readers who are prepared to move beyond the well-known topics, which they are likely to find in some of the chapters, should be confident that they will gain new insights.

The volume has four major parts, within which chapters are gathered under separate headings:

1. In-Betweenness: This part includes four chapters that analyze prose and poetry that describe the state of being outside the borders of a cultural community. This state may be both voluntary and involuntary, both liberating and painful. Topics cover a Canadian novel about the excommunication of a Mennonite girl, the outsider aesthetics of the Japanese-German author Yoko Tawada, a Spanish novel exploring the otherness of characters in the non-spaces of a future society, and poetry formed by the genocides of the second world war.

2. Cultural Transfer: The five chapters that make up this part all discuss and investigate the movement of the narrative expressions themselves. They show not only how such narratives develop and changes in new contexts, but also that

they in turn affect these contexts. Here the chapters deal with the influence of Romanian folk culture on Dadaist poetry and drama, expressions of Islam in the works of an English migrant author, code switching in English novels from West Africa, the Pan-Asian origins of a Japanese Noh play, and the convergence of news narratives on the global level. These topics show how the transfer of a narrative from one culture to another can be both creative and dynamic, but that there are also opposite forces that may dilute and flatten their expression.

3. Cultural Mediation: The four chapters included in this part study both the transmission of literary works and the transmission of culture through literary works. Topics cover the stereotypical pictures of foreign cultures displayed in Swedish anthologies of Italian literature and in the back-translation into Japanese of Japanese culture. A thorough discussion of the concept of transculturality offers tools to understand the process of authorial self-translation from Italian to English, and an analysis of the role of the prosumer in the reception of the Swedish translations of Duras' novels becomes an investigation of the role of the blogosphere in relation to more traditional forms of critique.

4. Travel and Migration: The journey, in all its ambiguity, physical through space as well as conceptual and textual, are presented from different angles in the five chapters of this part. The topics range from representations of liminality in an Equatoguinean migration novel, to German children's stories on migration via a discussion on urban legends in the US and Mexico, and two chapters on travel writing, the first on a non-native writer publishing in Japanese and the second on a Chinese writer publishing in French. The chapters deal with both the actual migration of people and how this is expressed on different levels in fiction, and the metaphorical inner travelling of the protagonists. In relation to the travel of narratives both the translational processes and the cultural reception and adaptation are discussed.

There are alternative ways to group these chapters, but we propose that these headings point at possible points of connection between the texts, which will stimulate comparative readings, and reflections.

In-Betweenness

The four chapters included in the first part of the collection all deal with literary texts that tell stories about people who, for different reasons, find themselves outside the borders of a cultural community. Passing a border is seldom a smooth transition from one state into another, but rather a movement, whether painful or liberating, into the unknown. In anthropology the concept of liminality is commonly used for such states in which a person has left, but not yet arrived, and remains in a sort of limbo outside connections and contexts. The liminality depicted in these chapters is, however, not a temporary state, but a stable position of being outside, of leaving the enclosure of a culture but not fully entering another. And this may well be inevitable, as any individual crossing the border will carry a history of behaviors, attitudes and values, which will affect how this individual receives, and is received by, the world on the other side.

The notion of in-betweenness presupposes the existence of hegemonic and stable cultures, and suggests an outsider's relationship to these. From the point of view of those confident in their belonging to such a culture, the individuals residing in the in-between space are often perceived as odd and alien. They do not longer belong to the place that they left and are forever outside the place that they are aiming for. They are Others, both here and on the other side, and thus their otherness denies an otherness in the simplistic sense of binary oppositions, which has become widely used in academic discourse. Consider, for instance, the often quoted definition by Zygmunt Bauman: "abnormality is the other of the norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness the other of health, barbarity the other of civilization, animal the other of the human, woman the other of man, stranger the other the native, enemy the other of friend, 'them' the other of 'us', insanity the other of reason, foreigner the other of state subject, lay public the other of the expert" (1991, p. 14).

Useful as this binarity may be when dealing with power relations, in which the one defined as the Other is always the oppressed part, otherness in this sense will fail to explain different aspects of being an outsider, even when on the other side, and that this in some cases may even be experienced as something attractive. The more optimistic, or positive, notion of otherness, suggested by Palumbo-Liu (2012), the Other who is an object of our interest as readers (whether we succeed to understand this Other or not), has a general bearing on the act of reading border-crossing literature, and have greater relevance here. It is still an otherness viewed from our point of view, which may be logical considering the semantics of the word, but what we can learn from the first two chapters in the present collection is that the perspective may be turned around and become that of the Other herself.

The concept of in-betweenness is used frequently in postcolonial theory to describe the many ways in which a human being may, at the same time, be both included in and excluded from a culture. For many readers this concept will probably function as a reference to a theorist like Homi K. Bhabha, due to his frequent use of this and related concepts. Compare, however, the German expression "Zwischenraum" that we will encounter in the second chapter. It is the in-between space central for the aesthetics of Yoko Tawada. After reading this chapter, perhaps we will be more apt to recall the name of Tawada as more relevant and up to date, when we encounter writing about this state of being both inside and outside the cage. It may be a celebration of independence and freedom, as in the first two chapters, or a study of alienation and lack of belonging, as in the third chapter, or again, as in the fourth chapter, the painful expression of trauma in which the notion of cultural belonging has ceased to be relevant.

In the first chapter, entitled *Freedom to Know Me: The Conflict between Identity and Mennonite Culture in Miriam Toew's A Complicated Kindness*, Rita Dirks focuses on this Canadian writer's novel from 2004. The protagonist here, Nomi Nickel, is a sixteen-year-old Mennonite girl from southern Manitoba, Canada, who tells the story of her short life before her excommunication from the closed community of the fictional East Village. Set in the early 1980s, the novel details the events that lead up to Nomi's

excommunication, or shunning. Nomi's exclusion is partly due to her embracing of the culture of the surrounding society through popular music and books. Insofar as Toews's novel presents the conflict between the teenaged narrator and the patriarchal, conservative Mennonite culture, the book stands "in-between", at the crossroads of negative freedom ("No Me") and positive freedom ("Know Me"). Rita Dirks argues, that since the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation, Mennonites have sought negative freedom, freedom from persecution, yet its own tenets foreclose on the positive freedom of its individual members. Toews presents this conflict between this early modern religious subculture and postmodern liberal democracy through the eyes of a sarcastic, satirical Nomi, who, in this "Bildungsroman", must come to terms with the dialectic of her hybrid identity: her position of being "in-between" the negative freedom of "No Me" and positive freedom of "Know Me".

In the second chapter, *Questioning the Border in Yoko Tawada's Poetics of Transformation:* Akzentfrei *(2016) and* Ein Balkonplatz für flüchtige Abende *(2016)*, Eriberto Russo, makes a thorough reading of these two books, starting out from research concerned with German intercultural and transcultural literature. Yoko Tawada is an author born in Japan and currently living in Germany, who writes in both Japanese and German, but Russo's study takes only her German texts into account. *Akzentfrei* is a collection of essays, and *Ein Balkonplatz für flüchtige Abende* is a collection of poems. The reading of these two books aims at mapping Tawada's original poetics, as it is discussed in many of her essays and other critical writings. The study is thus an analysis of an author in the light of the author's own ideas, which are largely based on liminality and spaces and on "in-between-ness", the notion of "in-between space" ("Zwischenraum") and the dissolution (and shaping) of borders and borderlines. In this context the French anthropologist Marc Augé's concept of "non-place" ("non-lieux") is put into play. The term refers to spaces of transience, for example airports, where the human beings remain anonymous, spaces that do not hold enough significance to be regarded as real places. The concept of "non-place" goes well hand in hand with Tawada's will not to be defined. Her entire work can

be seen as the presentation of a tendency to refuse to be locked into any category, to be put into any determined and fixed place.

The third chapter, *Immigrants and Other Others in 2020 by Javier Moreno*, written by Carolina Leon Vegas, is a study of the four main characters in the Spanish writer Javier Moreno's novel *2020* (2013). This story offers, in a sinister tone, through the portraits of the oddness or "otherness" of the four main characters, a dystopian image of Madrid in socioeconomic decline in the year 2020. The center figure is Bruno Gowan, a successful businessman of Scottish; he is a Stavrogin-like figure who is the link between the other main characters, Josefina, Nabil, and Jorge. Josefina, the daughter of Gowan, is an anorexic woman attracted by luxury items. Nabil, an unemployed Saharawi man, and Jorge, suffering from Aspberger, are living together in an abandoned plane at an airport. The oddness and uniqueness, of the four main characters form the core of the novel. Further, this otherness adopts many different expressions and is studied in relation to different notions of space and body. Regarding for example Nabil, his otherness is related to space, to his identity somewhere "in-between" Africa and Europe, and to his living in a plane at an airport, i.e. at a place in-between nations. Further the "otherness" of for example Josefina is of a bodily character, related to her anorexia and obsession by her own body. All in all, the portraits of the four main protagonists, as isolated and deviant individuals, build together a world in decline that leaves little to hope for.

The fourth and final chapter in this section, written by Veronica De Pieri and entitled *Human Beings after Catastrophe: Poetical Portraits by Primo Levi and Hara Tamiki*, is a comparative study of two poetical expressions of that extreme kind of "otherness" which is unique to traumatic experiences of disasters and atrocities of global dimensions. The first of these texts falls into the category of the "Shoah Literature", the literature on the Holocaust, and is Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man* (*Se questo è un uomo*, 1947). The second text belongs to the category of the "Atomic Bombing Literature", texts on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and is Hara Tamiki's *This Is a Human Being* (*Kore ga ningen na no desu*, 1948). The aim of De Pieri's study is to demonstrate how, regardless of territorial, cultural, and

stylistic boundaries between the two authors, a similar human response toward catastrophe and disaster can be detected in the two literary productions. The study builds on a comparison on stylistic, figurative, and expressive levels and attempts to reveal the analogous literary solutions adopted by the two authors to depict human's frailty in front of trauma. Both authors were personal witnesses to the disasters and atrocities they describe in their poetic texts. Their strong commitment unveils inner compulsions to bear witness and to convey the catastrophes to the memory of future generations. The comparison between the two poetic texts reveals how they both, even though the terrible disasters they describe were meant to divide human beings, on the contrary ends up overpassing any boundary and unifying different catastrophic experiences by the power of literature.

A question that remains after reading these four chapters is how we should understand the construction of meaning and identity when an obvious belonging to a certain community is not an option. We are often told that these matters are culturally and socially constructed, suggesting that we are helplessly stuck in our history. Even in these chapters, simple labels are used based on ethnicity or nationality, although these become dissolved in the different narratives. What is left becomes an open question. The last chapter suggests that there is a universality outside the realm of culture, here expressed by physical pain. It is the body, the animal, rather than the cultured being. The similarity between the holocaust and the atomic bombings of Japan may indeed give a challenge to any kind of ethical relativism, especially in a time when political leaders again have started to consider the use of nuclear weapons, but it is a specific case. In the other chapters culture is essential for understanding, but not in a firmly contextualized and stereotypical manner. Rather, these chapters highlight the uniqueness of the individuals inhabiting the in-between spaces. The conclusion would be that real understanding is first possible once we break the boundaries.

Cultural Transfer

The second part of the collection consists of five chapters that all investigate how aspects of a narrative, when moved from a

cultural context to another, not only transforms the new context in which they are placed but become transformed themselves. It is in this sense the term cultural transfer is used here, stressing that all forms of cultural expression have multiple origins and will give rise to ever new and mixed forms, when transferred to new times and places. "Cultural transfer" as an established concept is associated with certain movements within cultural history and literary studies. Rossini and Toggweiler trace the concept's origin back to French and German historical studies of the mid-1980ies (2014, pp. 6–7). Attempts to delimit an academic field of cultural transfer studies, mostly focusing on European topics, may indeed be possible to identify, most recently represented by the "Peripheral Autonomy?" project (Broomans, van Voorst & Smits, 2012).

However, the study of how cultures influence each other has been a given in many other disciplines. It makes up an important part of academic fields such as historical linguistics, comparative literature, art history, ethnomusicology, and religious studies, besides cultural studies in general. There is often a focus on the relationship between centers of power and the powerless. Studies may, as in the present collection, deal with the ambiguous influences between the center and the periphery of Europe, the transmission of Sufism in a secular Western Europe, the impact of Chinese culture (and in extension the cultures of the Asian continent) on Japanese cultural expressions, and how English as the language of the colonizer has been digested and recreated by the colonized. Within media and communication studies, the theories of cultural imperialism and the study of the unevenness of the transmission of information offer yet another perspective on the concept of cultural transfer. This may be more colored by political standpoints and activism, but it also offers fruitful topics for fact-based scholarship, as displayed in the last of the five chapters included here. Taken together, they show that different disciplines and different methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of border-crossing cultural influences are possible and offer meaningful results.

In the first chapter, *Between Zurich and Romania: A Dada Exchange*, Amelia Miholca, puts a special focus on the Jewish-Romanian members of the early Dadaist movement, especially Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco. Leaving a Romania where

anti-Semitism was growing, they had found an international scene in Zurich suitable for their artistic activities. Not that the Swiss society was welcoming, but the anti-establishment attitude of the Dadaist community offered an environment in which they could express their ideas. Tzara wrote a manifesto in which he discarded both the Western humanistic tradition and the future. According to Miholca, however, this does not mean that the Dadaists turned away from tradition. What they despised was the Western tradition, which they found responsible for the disastrous first world war. This made their interest turn to ancient or distant "primitive" art, and in the works of the Romanian Dadaists, one can see a clear influence from Romanian peasant culture and Jewish tradition. Miholca mentions the poems of Tzara, which have much in common with both Hasidic songs and the comic and absurd dances performed by the Jewish communities in Romania. She also analyzes the terrifying masks by Janco, which were used in the Dada performances, and traces their origin back to the Romanian midwinter Colinde festival. It becomes an example of how the culture of the periphery becomes part of the mix of influences that inspired a central avantgarde movement that spread over Europe, and eventually many other parts of the world.

The following chapter, *From the Secular to the Sacred: The Influence of Sufism on the Work of Leila Aboulela*, is a study on the novels of this author of Sudanese origin, who is presently living in Scotland. Billy Gray here makes a thorough hermeneutic reading of her work, showing how her novels have deep roots in Sufism, in its original form that is part of Islam. Written in English and aimed at an international readership, her novels might easily be categorized as migrant literature, but a careful reading of her work reveals that her focus is elsewhere. Gray notes that none of her characters fall into the common stereotypes of this literature, such as the Muslim terrorist or the oppressed Muslim woman. Her interest in Islam is not political, not a matter of identity construction, but aims at transmitting Islam as faith. From a secular post-colonial-studies perspective, her novels have often been criticized, but Gray offers another approach, maintaining that her writing is best understood in its religious context. If this is possible or not for a secular contemporary reader remains an open

question, but the chapter gives an account of the many obstacles an author will encounter when writing about Islam in the present age.

A very different transfer of culture, in this case in the form of language, is dealt with in the third chapter, *Inscribing Difference: Code-Switching and the Metonymic Gap in Post-Colonial Literature*. Katalin Egri Ku-Mesu here gives an account of how the language of the colonizer, English, is used by the colonized, here represented by novels written in English by West-African authors. Using the perspective of the linguist, rather than the literary scholar, she shows the different strategies used to employ code-switching in literary language. These include the direct use of vocabulary and concepts of African origin, the use of a kind of simplified pidgin for character description, and also less obvious ways of including discourse patterns that are alien to normal English but normal for the local culture. It is shown how writers often add explanatory content to aid a reader not familiar with the African context. The chapter ends with a discussion of the results Egri Ku-Mesu found from investigating differences in comprehension among readers of different backgrounds. For readers with a Western metropolitan background, most of the cultural-bound meaning was inaccessible, but readers with an African background showed various levels of understanding, depending on their closeness to the culture of the author. Such results may on the surface be regarded as trivial but give empirical proof that understanding is not a black-and-white matter. As Egri Ku-Mesu argues, even for a reader who finds certain parts of the text unintelligible, these parts have a rhetoric function by expressing a flavor of the writer's culture.

That border crossing and dissolution of identities and belonging are not modern phenomena is exemplified by the fourth chapter, *"Dangerous" Beauty: Imagining the Other in the Noh Play Sesshōseki*, which shows how such themes were treated already in fifteenth century Japanese drama. Here Dunja Jelesijevic offers an account of how different narratives originating on the Asian continent have travelled to Japan and have become incorporated into both folklore and literary texts. Transferred to new places and contexts, combined with other stories and expanded into new

narratives, these finally end up in the form of the medieval *noh* drama, which on its own is a mix of storytelling, poetry, religion, music, dance, acting and singing. The drama in question, "The Killing Stone," is analyzed from the perspective of its main theme, that of movement, transfer, and transformation. It is shown to be both a story about its own history and a fiction about the characters who appear in it, a Buddhist monk, himself a homeless traveler, and a fox spirit which in the form of a beautiful woman has brought evil to several imperial reigns, both in Japan and abroad, and now is fettered inside this poisonous stone. It is a drama about the movement over borders and boundaries which is shown to be, on the one hand, frightful and challenging, on the other, a way to salvation. In that sense, the entire ambivalence towards border crossing that defines much of the post-colonial world, can be seen already in this ancient text.

The fifth chapter in this part of the collection is an investigation of news narratives. When discussing transfer over cultural borders, it is common to think of a movement from one cultural context to another, but in this case, the example is more of a movement of narratives from a local context to an area of global communication where they become adapted to and influence certain master narratives. Jamie Matthews' chapter, *News Narratives across Borders: The Convergence of Interests and Patterns of Meaning in International Media Coverage of Disaster*, has a special focus on the 2011 tsunami disaster in Japan. He offers a broad outlook on recent research on the processes that forms news and journalism and shows that although opportunities for communicating news and events today are available for almost anyone, the main stories told on a global level are still much dominated by a few large news agencies. In the coverage of the 2011 tsunami disaster, much use was made of amateur videos, which were distributed globally by such dominating actors. The major narratives tended to follow similar patterns. Matthews identifies a repeated reference to the apocalypse, a master narrative of the disaster's impact on the world economy, and a stereotypical usage of references to Japanese culture, stressing its otherness. It gives a regrettable picture of a journalism dominated by processes of homogenization; when leading actors start to run into one direction, everyone else

follows. This shows that however diverse and mixed the sources of such a narrative may be, when it rises to the global level and is copied by all and everyone, it does not necessarily turn into that rich and multifaceted expression that is described in many of the other chapters.

It is interesting to note how, in these five chapters, power relations affecting cultural transfer are shown to be highly ambiguous. These are just five case studies that depict only a small part of the processes that make cultural artifacts move from one place to another, but the diversity they present prove that generalized theories based on hypotheses of cultural imperialism are insufficient. When such theories might be relevant, as in the last chapter, it is also important to note how the creative force of cultural interaction stops dead. The English language used by West-African writers may, of course, be seen as a result of the cultural imperialism of a colonial power, but once it is adapted and digested by the culture of the colonized, it is no longer controlled by the colonizer but becomes a tool for new and independent expressions. In the end, the subtle nuances of this new variant of English is no longer accessible to the native British speaker. The same may be said about the Japanese *noh* drama studied in the fourth chapter. The drama in question, as well as the whole genre it represents, is definitely influenced by Chinese poetry and narratives. It is possible to interpret this as a transfer of culture from the central dominating power to the periphery, but it is not enforced, not exported with an aim to expand influence, but is rather eagerly searched for and adapted into an entirely new context, creating a form of expression that today is regarded as uniquely Japanese. Which in turn is ironic, as this mix of cultural expressions becomes a representative of a national culture that in some quarters is hailed as homogeneous. And it should be added that the supposedly Chinese influence here is rather a mix of cultural influences coming from all over the Asian continent. In the cases offered in the remaining first two chapters, the movement is undoubtedly from the periphery towards the center.

An important conclusion to draw from these chapters is related to the creative aspect briefly mentioned above. It seems that the more a central power manages to dominate the scene, the less

creativity is found. Or is it perhaps a matter of that creativity is the force that most effectively challenges the hegemony of power?

Cultural Mediation

The four chapters included in this part all address the phenomenon of *cultural mediation*, as they set out to examine different aspects of the multifaceted processes involved in translation, circulation and reception of narratives that have travelled beyond their geographical and linguistic origins into new cultural contexts. *Cultural mediation*, in relation to the translation and circulation patterns of a narrative, should here be understood in its broader cultural sense. By this we mean encompassing both the actual transformation of a narrative's content occurring in the translational process, as well as the involvement and impact of the various agents and institutions (mediators), crucial for the circulation and mediation of a work to take place. These translational processes have recently received an increased scholarly attention in a variety of research fields, beyond and interacting with Translation Studies. Within Comparative Literary Studies the recent re-definition and re-thinking of world literature has shed light on the uneven materialistic, geopolitical and sociological aspects of how literature travels (or does not travel) in circulation and translation across borders in a global marketplace (e.g., Helgesson et al. 2018a; 2018b). Narratives that migrate from one linguistic and geographical sphere into new literary landscapes inevitably undergo a "transformation" (Damrosch 2003), "recoding" (Mani 2017) or "reframing" of their content, in order to meet the expectations and (re)interpretations of new reader communities, as well as conditions of new literary markets. These mediation processes are effectively addressed by sociological approaches to translation and circulation, that also focus on the agents of intercultural mediation and transfer such as translators, publishers, organizer of anthologies, critics etc., (e.g., Shapiro 2014; Roig-Sanz & Meylaerts 2018). Furthermore, a work's circulation into new markets is highly dependent on, and subjugated to, the target culture's materialistic and economic conditions as, for example, publisher's choices, profile and marketing strategies, supporting institutions etc., (e.g., Brouillette 2007).

This diversified and manifold approach to cultural mediation in narratives' translational processes is mirrored in the rich variety of thematic and theoretical approaches fostered in the chapters of this section. The theoretical frameworks – as we will see – cover a wide range of fields, such as Translation Studies, Imagology, Sociology of Literature, Transculturality, Media Studies, Discourse Analysis, and Gender Studies. The topics, concerning geographical border crossings of texts in translation, includes cultural back-translation from Japan to the USA and back to Japan, anthologizing Italian literature in the Swedish market, self-translating from Italian to English and the mediating quality of the reception and critique of French author Margarite Duras' works in Sweden. As such, the chapters included in this section focus both on how to translate the linguistic (vocabulary) and cultural representation (vernacular identity, images, and phenomenon), contained in the source texts comprehensibly into the new target culture context. They discuss how cultural representations in the translational process convey cultural stereotypes, clichés, exoticism, and the uneven power positions (and conditions) in the field of cultural production, as well as examine various agents and materialistic conditions of the book market.

The first chapter in this section approaches *cultural mediation* and the process of re-contextualization of cultural representation conveyed through Italian literary anthologies published in Sweden (1947–2012). In her chapter: *Images of Italy: Cultural Representations in the Peritext of Translational National Anthologies in Sweden*, Cecilia Schwartz undertakes an analysis of the anthologies' peritext (titles, covers, blurbs, notes and prefaces) in order to examine the cultural image they mediate of Italy and the Italians to the Swedish reader. Using an innovative theoretical approach, that combines an imagological analysis (Leersen: the study of literary representations of nations and nationalities) with a sociological approach (peritext of Genette), Schwartz's analysis shows how the anthologies' paratextual apparatus, despite their elegant designs and prefaces written by influential intercultural actors (with academic titles), still recycle clichés and national stereotypes about Italy into the Swedish literary landscape. Hence, concluding that the anthologies' peritext holds and conveys

generic assumptions of Italy and Italians tending to reinforce national clichés and stereotypes in the target culture.

Likewise, the chapter by Hiroko Inose, entitled *Re-Imported Literature or Double Domestication: Shizuko's Daughter by Kyoko Mori*, investigates clichés and stereotypical images conveyed in the transformations of cultural representation that Mori's novel is subjected to, when travelling back and forth between cultures and languages. Mori, although growing up in Japan and using a Japanese setting for her novel, writes in English and published the novel in the USA. The novel was later translated into Japanese. The chapter comparatively examines two parallel strands; the USA and Japanese markets' expectations and reception, together with a close text analysis of how the Japanese translation is filling out the cultural gaps occurring in the translation process. While the Japanese market promoted the novel as "re-imported" and part of the national literature that had come home, the Japanese literary academy criticized it for reproducing stereotypical images and clichés of Japanese culture. In the USA, however, the educational and anthropological aspect of the novel, as a provider of cultural knowledge about Japan was highlighted. Drawing upon the Venutian concept of "domestication," Inose shows how both the original text and the translation have undergone adjustments of cultural content and language use to be more accessible (minimizing its foreignness) to both the American and the Japanese reader. The chapter also includes a discussion on the possible reasons behind Mori not assuming the task of self-translating her text into Japanese, although it supposedly is her first language. Inose argues for a strong connection between Mori´s self-identity construction as American and an outspoken non-identification with the Japanese literary tradition.

The interconnection between Self-translation and the writer's identity formation is also emphasized in Arianna Dagnino's chapter, entitled *Self-Translation in Transcultural Mode: Francesca Duranti on how to Put 'a Scent of Basil' into One's Translations*. Dagnino examines the reasons motivating Duranti to self-translate her novel *Left-Handed Dreams* from Italian into English. From the perspective of viewing the self-translation as simultaneously "a dynamic process" and "a product," Dagnino provides insights

into the linguistic and cultural mediation, as well as the creative writing inherent in the self-translation process. The chapter uses an intersectional theoretical framework of transculturality, self-translation, and identity formation, which is mainly applied to an interview conducted with the writer. It is combined with a comparative text analysis, tracing Duranti's translation strategies. As such, the chapter is rich in theoretical reasoning in relation to the self-translation process, as well as in discussing the reasons that could motivate a writer to self-translate. In the case of Duranti, Dagnino argues for a connection between Duranti's process of self-translation and her multilingual and transnational background, forming a "process of cultural identity mediation." The analysis of Duranti's translation strategies shows how she has taken advantage of the self-translation process to write a new cultural identity for herself through the cultural repositioning of her authorial voice in the target culture.

In the final chapter of this section, the cultural mediation focus is headed towards an important mediating actor in the process in which translated works reach new readers in a target culture – the literary critique. Mattias Aronsson's *Established and Alternative Literary Criticism: A Study of Marguerite Duras's Works Reviewed in Sweden*, compares a corpus of reviews of Duras' works published in the (established) Swedish press with (alternative) reviews published on the Internet by bloggers. Aronsson starts out with a discussion on the uneven distribution of cultural capital in the field of cultural production, between established criticism – inhabiting dominating positions in highbrow newspapers – and the relatively new phenomenon of alternative criticism on the internet. Drawing upon media theories (Jenkins), conceptualizing these new interacting bloggers as "prosumers" (consumers/producers) and sociology of literature (Steiner), Aronsson effectively sheds light on the new importance of this "commercially valuable" (many followers) agents of "alternative criticism," both as voices and as challengers of traditional cultural hierarchies, in the modern literary market. Furthermore, the theoretical framework includes discussions of gender and reader-response studies as it methodologically makes use of discourse analysis (Wodak). Through a comparative analysis of the two discourses, Aronsson argues

that the established criticism characterizes as a "pseudo-objective discourse," written in a neutral authoritarian style that disguises subjective opinions as facts. In contrast, the alternative discourse is written in a subjective and self-centered manner, relating the narratives to their own private lives. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the aspect of interaction in the blogosphere, and as such contributes to the introduction of this question into the field of reader-response theory.

The role of a cultural mediator is often to introduce the foreign, explain the different, and negotiate understanding over cultural borders. When there are language differences to overcome, translation becomes essential, and the four chapters included in this part all relate to different aspects of translation. What is striking here is that the translations, and the way they are transmitted and received, always tend to create a distorted picture. The creation of stereotypes is common enough when the foreign is explained, but there are also subtler ways to make a text accessible, as when the author translating her own text into a different language aims at creating a new identity for her as a narrator, which is closer to the reader's culture. Perhaps such simplifications are inevitable, but they take away some of the challenges of reading and the enjoyment of discovering an unknown world. As shown in the last chapter, readers' expectations differ widely, and to some it is more important to build a reputation as critics, than to aim for a cultural encounter. Explaining the fineries of cultural difference seems not to be the most urgent concern. And this also illustrates the problems facing the translator/mediator.

Travel and migration

Travel and migration are two concepts closely linked to the idea of people and individuals physically moving and crossing territorial borders. This part of the collection includes studies dealing with narratives that address different kinds and aspects of this physical journey of individuals and narratives' features when crossing over national and linguistic borders. The chapters' perspective on the theme of migration and travel simultaneously centers on the actual physical journey, and the metaphorical inner journey of facing difficulties and personal development for the protagonists.

Hence, the novels analyzed in the chapters belong to literary genres that contain the idea of a physical and metaphorical journey of personal (spiritual and moral) development: the Bildungsroman, urban legends, border-crossing literature by non-native authors, and migration and travelling literature for children and adults.

Studying narratives that focus both on the factual outer circumstances and personal inner processes of migration and travelling from one physical geographical place to another, demands a reconfiguration of the notion of space. The border-crossing zones of cultural encounters inhabited by locals, migrants, refugees, and travelers present their specific challenges. Several of the chapters opt for theoretical approaches informed by the reconfigurations (the move beyond polarities) of the meaning of space (as a contact zone), as for example, different takes on "liminality" and Homi Bhabha's two concepts "in-betweenness" and "third space" (Bhabha 1994: 53–56). Besides these concepts, the chapters in this section problematize cultural and linguistic encounters departing from concepts as "untranslatability," "cultural translation," "otherness," and "deviant other."

The first chapter, *Liminality, Migration and Transgression in El metro by Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo*, written by Carles Magriñá, provides a comprehensive genealogy of the concept of *liminality*. Drawing upon Turner, Magriñá stresses the fruitfulness of the concept for containing ideas of ambiguity, ambivalence, and instability, through embracing the potentiality for transformations, and creating new identities and cultural syntheses of integration in society. The chapter begins with an explanation of the marginal position of the Equatoguinean novel in studies of literatures in Spanish at Spanish-speaking universities and shows how the novel is a hybrid of the European genre of the Bildungsroman and African oral traditions. The plot of the novel analyzed revolves around a young Cameroonian man forced to leave his village and start a new life as an illegal immigrant in Spain and thus ties into the theme of the dangerous route of migration and border crossing. However, the focus of the analysis is not on the theme of globalism and migration per se, but rather looks at the main character's personal identity development throughout the novel and the phases he goes through in a fictional rite of passage. Through a narratological approach and the analysis of chronotopes, word

choices and verb forms, Magriñá demonstrates how liminal spaces such as boats, subways or disputed territories are used to emphasize the in-between state of the protagonist in his new country of residence. The chapter concludes by asserting that crossing the border into a fictitious world might be a way to get a better understanding of important social issues such as migration.

The theme of migration and personal development is also central in the second chapter, *"Bestimmt wird alles gut": Journeys and Arrivals in Contemporary German Children's Books* written by Anneli Fjordevik. The chapter analyses eight picture books published in German, which all are written on the theme of forced migration due to war. The chapter sets out by discussing the structure and perspective of the texts studied and specifically focuses on the topics of leaving home, language barriers, and experiences of otherness in the arrival situation. The classical narrative structure of "home" – "away" – "home again" often found in children's literature is identified and discussed in relation to migration and the search for a new place to call "home," a factor which according to Fjordevik adds a new dimension to these children's stories. The chapter concludes by discussing the over-all happy endings of the stories and argues that, although happy endings are no longer considered necessary in children's literature, a topic like migration might warrant an exception.

The third chapter deals with the migration and transformation of tales rather than humans. In *Same Urban Legends, Different Bad Hombres: The Risk of Narratives across Borders about Deviant Others*, Gonzalo Soltero demonstrates how folk narratives utilize the social mistrust found in a community to create a collective identity of a "we" and a "them." Soltero departs from the assumption that the function of an urban legend is to provide a fictional narrative that "explains an intricate world and alleviates anxiety" and tightens social bonds of the immediate group. The chapter compares the reception of and reaction to two urban legends circulating in the US and Mexico in addition to tracing its point of transit. Soltero demonstrates that even though the narrative structures of the legends and the content are the same, the representation of the villains' identities change depending on which side of the American/Mexican border the story is told.

Through a metaphorical reading of the legends' meaning, Soltero argues that the value of these legends is not, in the first place, of portraying reality, but rather reflect a real fear. Soltero ends the chapter with the paradoxical conclusion that although the legends travel across borders, and thus show the cultural similarity and co-existence between the people in the border areas, the vilification of the other contributes to a greater will to enforce borders and border controls due to a fear of the unknown other.

The fourth chapter in this part is Dan Fujiwara's analysis of a fictional travel record, *Travel in Rībi Hideo's Novels or the Search for an Alternative Style of Writing in Japanese*. Like the first chapter of the section, this chapter approaches the theme of crossing borders both through the content of the novel and through the new style of writing that the novel exemplifies. The plot of the story focuses on a traveling protagonist but more than the plot itself, it is the style of the novel that is analyzed in the chapter. Fujiwara shows that Hideo's style, characterized by "multi-lingual simultaneity," constant "language-trouble" (untranslatability between languages), and hybridity, forms an alternative style which breaks with the monoethnic ideology long prevailing in Japanese literature. The experiences of travel described in the novel are according to Fujiwara above all a linguistic adventure since the main character is troubled with various usages of language. Fujiwara argues that the questions posed by the main character provoke the reader to think critically about the potentials and limits of language and the effect languages have on identity. Although this could be read as an example of a globalized world, the chapter argues that Hideo's novels instead should be understood as a critique of globalization, since they focus on the un-translatable words and the loss of meaning that the main character suffers in his attempts to make himself understood during his travels. The chapter concludes that even Hideo's choice to write in Japanese rather than English can be seen as an act of resistance to globalism and argues that the use of English is a driving force behind globalism.

The fifth chapter, *A "Spiritual Journey" through the "Middle" Kingdom: Travel and Translation in François Cheng's Translingual Novel*, written by Shuangyi Li, examines the novel *Le Dit de Tianyi* by François Cheng. The novel was originally written in French and

it was later translated into Chinese and published with a preface by the author himself. Thus, the novel crosses cultural borders in several ways through its Chinese writer utilizing French, generic hybridity, translation and finally its theme of traveling. Drawing upon Bhabha's theories of cultural translation Li argues that the relationship between travel and translation in the novel is particularly interesting due to the author's trans-lingual creative practices. He continues that contrary to most ideas of travel, where the goal is to move from one place to another, Cheng's writings, even though concerned with travel motifs, aim to describe the position in between two locations, which he describes as the position of becoming, the place towards which everything navigates. The movements across cultural borders described in the novel therefore, Li concludes, create a liminal space, a "horizontal transcendence" (from Irigaray) which he argues is neither European nor Chinese but instead provokes a rethinking of the subject of cultural representations from a position in between, simultaneously rendering something new and recreating something old.

Travel and migration may be regarded as two sides of the same coin, but, as these five chapters show, the journeys experienced by the traveller and the migrant are very different in nature. The travellers studied in the two last chapters carry several traits of traditional cosmopolitanism. Both are male. They are intellectual and highly theoretical in their reflections, and their travels are voluntary, driven by curiosity and interest. The migrants, however, are miserable. They are often poor, forced to leave their home countries and they struggle in their new environments. Being outsiders, they encounter both hatred and contempt, fear and suspicion. It may be a coincidence, but it seems typical that their gender is more diverse. And so, a black-and-white picture emerges of the wealthy (at least in the sense of cultural capital) and aloof traveller opposed by the suffering and wretched migrant. It is not that the authors of these chapters have aimed at highlighting this contrast, their interest lies elsewhere, but this contrast reflects the stereotypes that are alive in the narratives they have studied. It is easy to be ironic about the leisurely-paced traveller who can afford exploring his interests in the philosophical problems of understanding, but there is, in fact, no opposition between him and

the migrant. On the contrary, it is precisely the intellectual project these travellers venture into that will give us the key to a world which is more welcoming to migrants and refugees.

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