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Code-Switching in Arts

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Code-Switching in Arts

Edited by Marianna Deganutti, Johanna Domokos, and Judit Mudriczki

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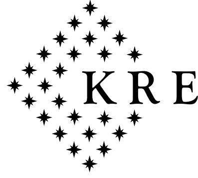
CODE-SWITCHING IN ARTS



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Marianna Deganutti, Johanna Domokos, Judit Mudriczki

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INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism and Code-Switching in Literature and Performative Arts

Linguistic diversity has always characterized aesthetic production since ancient times. Different languages have been often skillfully incorporated in works such as paintings and drawings, literary texts or music compositions, both in openly manifested or clearly detectable ways and in more hidden ones, for centuries. Incorporating more than one linguistic code in literary and artistic production has quickly grown over the last two decades of the 21st century also due to the globalization processes characterizing our era.[1] Let us just think about the Hollywood movies inspired by Greek mythology such as *Troy, Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, *Hercules*, *Immortals* and *Wonder Woman*, which are performed using only English, even though the story refers to an ancient Greek setting. Some movies, such as the recent Japanese movie *Drive my car* even went beyond that—they used not only different languages but also Korean sign language.

Code-switching is certainly a common practice in real life as it "affects practically everyone who is in contact with more than one language or dialect, to a greater or lesser extent."[2] It is, at the same time, widely employed in manifold artistic and literary genres. If we consider contemporary genres such as comic series, migrant literature, borderland novels, climate fiction, intercultural theater, accented cinema, lyrics of rap songs or animes, but also historical genres as that of folkloric tales, epic poems, macaronic poetry or travelogues of past centuries, multilingual or multicultural encounters and contacts occur in high numbers.

Strongly influenced by specific studies in sociolinguistics, second language acquisition, narratology or cultural studies, these multilingual practices have been classified in different ways. Among the most popular definitions, the following stand out: "polylanguaging,"[3] "polylingualism,"[4] "polyglot

[1] Jan Blommaert: *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

[2] Penelope Gardner–Chloros: *Code-switching*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, 4.

[3] Jens Normann Jørgensen – Martha Sif Karrebæk – Lian Malai Madsen – Janus Møller – Janus Spindler: Polylanguaging in Superdiversity, *Diversities* 13 (2011), 23–37.

[4] Meir Sternberg: Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis, *Poetics Today* 2 (1981), 221–239.

literature,"[5] "heterolingualism,"[6] "exophony,"[7] "semiodiversity,"[8] "translingualism,"[9] "literary transnationalism,"[10] "literary code-switching,"[11] etc. These notions have sometimes been used interchangeably but have also highlighted different nuances of the same practice. The result is not only that there is "no coherent, agreed-upon terminology, either within or across specific disciplines (or languages),"[12] but we have a very much deficient methodology to study this exponentially growing field.

In addition to these notions, scholars have also tried to focus more in detail on different multilingual practices. "Since the 1970s, a large amount of research in the field of bilingualism has focused on the mixing of languages in discourse, in particular code-switching and related phenomena, variously called code-mixing, code-shifting, language alternation or language interaction."[13] This list could also be extended to hybridization, interference, and more.[14] Even though fewer studies have been dedicated to written (and literary) multilingual practices[15] than to performing art ones,[16] in this case the result has also been

[5] Hugo Baetens Beardsmore: Polyglot Literature and Linguistic Fiction, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 15 (1978), 91–102.

[6] Rainier Grutman: Traduire l'Heterolingualisme: Questions Conceptuelles et (con) Textuelles, in M. A. Motout (ed.): *Autour d'Olive Senior: Hétérolinguisme et Traduction*, Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 2012, 49–81.

[7] Susan Arndt – Dirk Naguschewski – Robert Stockhammer (eds.): *Exophonie: Anders–Sprachigkeit (in) der Literatur*, Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2007.

[8] David Gramling: *The Invention of Monolingualism*, New York, Bloomsbury, 2016.

[9] Ofelia Garcia: *Bilingual Education in the 21st century*, West–Sussex, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

[10] Steven G. Kellman: *The Translingual Imagination*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

[11] Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: Four Major Literary Code-switching Strategies in Hungarian Literature: Decoding Monolingualism, *Hungarian Studies Yearbook* 3 (2021), 43–63, https://doi.org/10.2478/hsy-2021-0004

[12] Yasemin Yildiz: *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2012, 213.

[13] Mark Sebba: Researching and Theorising Multilingual Texts, in M. Sebba – S. Mahootian – C. Jonsson (eds.): *Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing: Approaches to Mixed Language Written Discourse*, New York, Routledge, 2012, 1.

[14] Gaetano Berruto: Situazioni di Plurilinguismo, Commutazione di Codice e Mescolanza di Sistemi, *Babylonia* 6 (1998), 16–21.

[15] Laura Callahan: *Spanish–English Codeswitching in a Written Corpus,* Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 2004; Mark Sebba: Researching and Theorising Multilingual Texts, 1–26; Penelope Gardner–Chloros – Daniel Weston: Code-Switching and Multilingualism in Literature, *Language and Literature* 24 (2015), 182–193; Dirk Delabastita – Rainier Grutman: Fictionalising Translation and Multilingualism, *Target*, 20 (2008), 164–169; Michela Baldo: *Italian-Canadian Narratives of Return: Analysing Cultural Translation in Diasporic Writing,* London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

[16] Michael Alvarez–Pereyre: Using film as linguistic specimen: Theoretical and practical issues, in R. Piazza – M. Bednarek – F. Rossi (eds.): *Telecinematic Discourse: Approaches to the Language of Films and Television Series*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2011, 47–67; Jannis Androutsopoulos: Introduction: Language and society in cinematic discourse, *Multilingua* 31(2–3), 2012, 139–154; Lukas Bleichenbacher: *Multilingualism in the Movies: Hollywood Characters and their Linguistic Choices*, Tübingen, DE, Francke, 2008; Manfred Jahn: A guide

a terminological disarray. Bearing in mind the rhetorical argument of Paul de Man in *Semiology and Rhetoric* (1973) or such deconstructive philosophical studies as Jacques Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other* (1998), we may conclude that the analytic depth we possess today to approach linguistic diversity of contemporary art appears rather fragmented, as well as confusing.

This publication pays special attention to the dynamically rising code-switching phenomenon especially in the field of literature and performative arts and elaborates innovative frameworks that can be modeled multidimensionally. Here, by multidimensional we mean that our framework takes into account different aspects or dimensions in their interaction between themselves. In this respect, especially thematic, compositional, stylistic, functional and intermedial aspects of multilingual practices of contemporary arts are highlighted. These aspects may vary considerably according to the way multiple languages are qualitatively and quantitatively employed and defined. As suggested by Grutman, "texts can either give equal prominence to two or more languages or add a liberal sprinkling of other languages to a dominant language clearly identified as their central axis."[17] Therefore the same multilingual category would cover not only works with titles in a different language than the rest of the book, but also works which include wider multilingual insertions taking up entire paragraphs or monologues. Furthermore, a multilingual artwork could feature multilingualism in an even more remarkable way, for instance blurring the boundary between the matrix or dominant and embedded or incorporated languages. This brief list obviously confounds multilingual practices of different orders, which are probably not suited to being inserted within the same theoretical framework.

In their previous works, Domokos and Deganutti differentiated between seven major types of code-switching,[18] which can be detected on the level of the text, narration, communication of the fictional world and even in the paratexts of contemporary art works. In defining the types of code-switching from the most common to the less often used ones on a scale of zero (latent

to narratological film analysis, in *Poems, Plays, and Prose: A Guide to the Theory of Literary Genres*, English Department, University of Cologne, 2003, http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.htm, accessed 20 October 2022; Gaëlle Planchenault: Displacement and plurilingualism in *Inch'Allah Dimanche:* Appropriating the other's language in order to find one's place, in V. Berger and M. Komori (eds.): *Polyglot Cinema: Migration and Transcultural Narration in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain,* Berlin, Lit Verlag, 2011, 99–111.

[17] Rainier Grutman: Traduire l'Heterolingualisme, 19.

[18] Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: Four Major Literary Code-switching Strategies in Hungarian Literature: Decoding Monolingualism, *Hungarian Studies Yearbook* 3 (2021), 43–63, https://doi.org/10.2478/hsy-2021-0004; Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: Overt and Covert Zero Code-switching in Sándor Petőfi's *János vitéz* (*John the Valiant*) and Mark Twain's *A Tramp abroad*, *Studia Caroliensia* (2021), 135–149; Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: Zero degree code-switching and the narrative framework, *Polyphonie* (2022) http://www.polyphonie.at/?op=publicationplatform&sub=viewarea&area=1, accessed 28 October 2022.

code-switching) to 6 types (manifested code-switches), the types of intra- and intersentential code-switching as well as the concepts of the matrix and embedded languages proposed by Myers—Scotton[19] were implemented and further articulated. These numbered code-switching types allow us to scale the multilingual qualities of a literary text from latent to explicit manifestations, as well as from the covert usage of the embedded language (zero code-switching, ZCS) to the use of a few foreign words (CS1) and some sentences (CS2), up to a high number of embedded language units in a sentence (CS3) or even various forms of linguistic hybridity defined hereby as lexico–morphologic (CS4), phonemic (CS5) or syntactic (CS6) translingualisms. In all of these types not only grammatical elements interfere, but also the graphemic aspect can have crucial relevance. Moreover, code-switching strategies of an artistic narrative are always influenced by the wide-scale opening up between the current linguistic norms and the freedom of artistic experimentation of a certain period in a certain area. This cultural codification touches not only the manifestation of multilingualism in the fictional world but also its narration, its intermedial fusion, the accompanying paratexts and, not least, how we speak (or not) about multilingualism in our nonfictional communication.

This volume explores code-switching strategies used by contemporary artists to compose their multilingual narratives, and also moves beyond the linguistic level in the direction of multimodality. This move proved to be reasonable because the research done by a few authors of this book revealed that verbal code-switching is often activated in artistic media other than printed literature as a consequence of multimediality. In those cases, the semantic component of the verbal expression is infused with visual (e.g. in painting, visual poetry or film narratives), acoustic (e.g. in music), or kinetic (e.g. theater) aspects, which have not been discussed earlier. Thus, the topics addressed in this book include elaborations on the determining factors of artistic language choices, of ways that multilingual artists implement their own experiences and language realities and repertoires in their works, of overt or covert strategies languages of the fictional worlds manifest in the piece of art, of the reasons behind multilingual narrations of multilingual stories, and also of the interaction between multimodal ways of artistic expression. Further investigated questions of the articles include: How does code-switching manifest in literature, on stage and in films? What are the differences and the similarities? How can translation and/or dubbing/subtitles cope with multilingual stories? What kind of language policies functions behind the production and reception of a multilingual work? How do language practices of different communication levels, nonfictional and fictional alike, influence each other? How do readers and viewers manage multilingual narratives and multimodal discourses?

[19] Carol Myers–Scotton: *Social Motivation for Code-Switching: Evidence from Africa,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993.

Table 1. Grammatic and graphemic code-switching types of the four levels of a literary work (level of the text, narration, and fictional world, plus the paratexts)[20]

0 type or covert, and overt c–s (ZCS)	**1st type** or Intra–sentential c–s (CS1)	**2nd type** or Inter–sentential c–s (CS2)	**3rd type** or blurring the border of matrix and embedded languages (CS3)	**4th type** or lexico–morphologic translingualism (CS4)	**5th type** or homophonic translingualism (CS5)	**6th type** or syntactic translingualism (CS6)
It allows the writer to utilize language as a medium without any special reflection on multilingualism, so that the reader can better focus on the storyline.	It is characterized by the sporadic use of foreign words and tags in the sentences of the matrix language.	It corresponds to a text that includes whole sentences in another language.	It is a radically intensive form of code-switching, where the matrix language is almost deconstructed.	It uses a high number of diverse lexical and morphological units in a sentence.	It is neither intra- or inter-sentential, nor it is easy to identify the matrix and embedded languages.	Matrix and embedded languages intermingle due to pidginization, relexification and other forms of interlanguaging

[20] Based on Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: *Literary Code-Switching and Beyond,* L'Harmattan – Károli Books, 2023, in print.

The studies in this volume have emerged out of several international events including four international workshops in November and December 2021 concentrating on zero-type code-switching, a symposium organized on code-switching with unknown languages by the International Comparative Literature Association in July 2022, and an international conference on code-switching in arts.[21] All of these events included not only academic presentations but also artistic reflections, which led to very fruitful discussions between artists and researchers. A few of these artists have been "Elephant-Zookeepers" as Natasha Lvovich called the multilingual artists based on a story related to Roman Jacobson and Vladimir Nabokov, who have not only artistic but academic backgrounds as well.[22] The contributions to this book were therefore structured into academic and artistic contributions. Besides the above–mentioned events, a group of international researchers supported by Károli Gáspár University Budapest and the University of Bielefeld have been meeting regularly to synchronize their research on code-switching. We have learned very much from each other's work and feedbacks, and the process will go on even after the publishing of this book.[23]

In the opening study of the first section dedicated to literary code-switching and entitled *The Politics and Poetics of Language Use in "The Parisian or* Al-Barisi*" of Isabella Hammad*, Helge Daniëls analyzes five salient examples of code-switching and relexifications in "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*" by the British–Palestinian author Isabella Hammad. These examples illustrate how English, the matrix language, interacts with French and Arabic, the embedded languages, and how the multilingual language choices are deeply imbedded in the politics and poetics of the literary text. The code-switches and relexifications not only underscore key moments in the plot and personal traits of the main characters, they also draw attention to implicit authorial comments on gender, orientalism and colonialism ethnography.

Literary history usually presents authors as if they had a monolingual background, whereas the multilinguality of the authors and of the readers is given short shrift. In her study entitled *Interference in Literary Texts Written in French by Russian–French Authors (1990–2000)*, Margarita Makarova sets in her focus recent publications by contemporary French writers of Russian origin, such as Valéry Afanassiev, Vladimir Fédorovski, Iegor Gran, Luba Jurgenson and the Goncourt Prize winner Andreï Makine. This chapter looks for

[21] See the website of langueflow.wordpress.com.

[22] Natasha Lvovich: "Elephant-Zookeepers:" Scholars and Makers of Multilingual Creativity, conference talk, *Code-Switching in Arts*, online conference, 29 September 2022. The story that inspired this naming is recounted in Victoria A. Beana: Past Tense: Nabokov and Jakobson, *The Harvard Crimson*, 4 October 2012, https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2012/10/4/nobokov-jakobson-harvard-academy/, accessed 30 December 2022.

[23] Past and current events including workshops, conferences and Multea monthly meetings are listed at https://langueflow.wordpress.com/

answers to the following questions: Do the above–mentioned bilingual Russian–French authors have common stylistic traits in their novels written in French? Can we distinguish between them and non-bilingual French writers' texts? Is the phenomenon of interference, i.e. traces of Russian language and culture, observable in French texts of Russian–French authors? In order to answer these questions, this chapter explores, on the one side, factors that determined Makine's, Afanassiev's, Fédorovski's, Gran's, and Jurgenson's language choices; and on the other side, cases of Russian linguistic interference in their French novels.

The following chapter written by Malou Brouwer, entitled *Poems–as–language–lessons. Translingualism in Naomi McIlwraith's kiyâm*, investigates linguistic and literary diversity of Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, North America. Due to the immense linguistic diversity in terms of the Indigenous and colonial languages being spoken among them, a wide range of code-switching strategies are reflected in their Indigenous literatures. Naomi McIlwraith, for example, writes in English and Cree in her multilingual collection of poetry *kiyâm*. In this paper, Brouwer argues that *kiyâm* can be read as "poetry–as–language–lesson"[24] as she reflects on learning Cree, on the one hand, but the collection is presented as language lessons for the reader, on the other. Her poetry thus reflects the linguistic context, challenges the settler colonial effects of the imposition of colonial languages, and celebrates the revitalization of Indigenous languages in the face of and despite colonial attempts at erasure and assimilation. In creating translingual poems and using paratextual materials, McIlwraith demonstrates the effects of settler colonialism but also succeeds in countering them.

The next paper addresses a linguistic shift carried out very recently by a renowned French writer. Levente Seláf's article *"Um Mich neu zu Machen". Switching the Language of Poetry by Jacques Jouet* discusses the recent language change by Jacques Jouet, French member of the Oulipo (an acronym for *Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle*, a group of writers and mathematicians who seek to create works using constrained writing techniques). Jouet switched to German, and since April 2022 he has been writing poetry exclusively in German, instead of his native French. It is shown how the genres of his French poetry reappear in German, and what the major steps of the evolution of his compositional technique are as he acquires a higher level of this new language of poetry after a spectacular code-switching at the age of 74.

The final paper of the literary code-switching section, Lisa Schantl's *First Language Roots. Intra-sentential Literary Code-switching in ESL Poetry and Prose*, examines how multilingualism and migration come together in

[24] Heid Erdrich: *Curator of Ephemera at the New Museum for Archaic Media*, Michigan, Michigan State University Press, 2017.

contemporary creative nonfiction and poetry by authors who compose their literary texts in English as their second language (ESL). To add to the framework of literary code-switching proposed by Deganutti and Domokos, these instances are further examined for their co-occurrence with ('weak') or without ('strong') explications in the matrix language. Various functions show how additional layers of meaning and reference can be evoked through a poeticization of the author's migration background.

Reflections on code-switching in literary works are followed by a longer section dedicated to code-switching and multimodality in theater, film, music and performance. One of the most influential theater directors of our times, Robert Wilson, has always implemented very different verbal, cultural and artistic codes into his highly original performances. The chapter by Enikő Sepsi, *Multilinguality in the Work of Robert Wilson,* elaborates on how overt and covert multilinguality supports his transcultural artistic texture on the level of directing and performing. The first part of the study offers an overview of the texts, translations, or visuals used and their interlingual and intersemiotic code-switches manifested in the plays Wilson had previously directed. The second part of the study focuses on the interplay modes of the five languages used in one of his recent performances of *Oedipus* (Budapest, 2021).

The past three decades have witnessed a series of retranslations of Shakespeare's dramatic legacy in Hungary. In the chapter entitled *Multimodal Transformations of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Switching Verbal Codes into Audiovisual Codes for Dubbing Shakespeare into Hungarian*, Judit Mudriczki discusses how recent translations meet the dramaturgical needs of both theaters and the film dubbing industry. Perhaps the first in this series was the 1992 retranslation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the most often adapted Shakespeare play in Hungarian theaters, by one of the most prolific translators, Ádám Nádasdy. Commissioned by stage director Péter Gothár to renew the poetic but slightly archaic language of the canonical 19th century Hungarian translation by János Arany so that it becomes fit for use in his 1994 stage adaptation, in 1999 the same translation was revised and turned into the Hungarian dubbing script for the screen adaptation directed by Michael Hoffman. This choice contradicts the idea historically inherent in the Hungarian dubbing industry that the audiovisual translation of any adaptation of key cultural texts is expected to be based on those literary translations that have been considered as "the most canonical." Mudriczki's paper offers a case study of the transfer strategies that dubbing script writer László Upor used while turning the text translated by Ádám Nádasdy into a dubbing script under the audiovisual constraints of the film narrative.

The purpose of *Cultural Code-Switching. Variations on a Chekhovian Theme* by László Cseresnyési is to share reflections on the Japanese movie *Drive my car*, directed by Hamaguchi Ryūsuke, 2021, which was adapted from a short

story by Haruki Murakami, 2014. Murakami's short story makes a cursory reference to a stage production of Anton P. Chekhov's play *Uncle Vanya*, written in 1896. Both the short story and the film deal with the problem of coping with the pains and pangs of life, i.e. the plight of all characters in *Uncle Vanya*. The first part of this chapter deals with Chekhov's play and its reception. The second part is intended to explore how Murakami and Hamaguchi responded to Chekhov's extreme pessimism about the human condition. The third part discusses role playing, silence, speaking and acting, and the significance of multilingual stage productions such as the one in Hamaguchi's film.

Attila Molnár's chapter entitled *Performative German in Sándor Vály's Die Toteninsel* analyzes the improvised lyrical opera *Die Toteninsel* by the multimedia artist Sándor Vály. The project was deemed by the artist as a reconstruction of a lost work, specifically the musical aspect of an original German language libretto written by Karl Georg Zwerenz in 1919, telling the story of Arnold Böcklin's painting of the same name *Die Toteninsel* or as it more widely known, *The Isle of the Dead*. The multilingual examination of the piece lies in the opera's performative dimension. Since Vály's cast, by intent, consists of actors without having any German language knowledge whatsoever, the actual singing and interpretation of the original text ends up being largely improvised. Thus, the performed German transforms into an entirely different language, becoming a performative tool, cutting ties with the rigorously written native German. Metaphorically, Vály's initially planned reconstructive work turns out to be more of a deconstruction of language, form, and genre.

Mónika Dánél's *National Legacy in Transnational and Transmedial Transposition. Accented Hungarian Cinema (Roland Vranik:* The Citizen*, 2016)* focuses on "accented cinema."[25] In this chapter, Dánél analyzes Roland Vranik's multilingual movie placed in Budapest, in which, on the one hand, the simultaneity of perspectives, the multifocality and the tactile optics develop the film's "accented style." On the other hand, through the accented speech of the diegetic characters, an African emigrant and an Iranian refugee, the Hungarian language appears as foreign–learned. To obtain citizenship, Wilson learns Constitution Basics of Hungary; through this long learning process in his accented language Hungarian national culture and history turns into an "accented national," in which the foreign (accent) remains equally and permanently audibly present, and consequently the accent becomes the medium for the national. The author argues how through the accent, the national language, culture and heritage could be re-appropriated in a non-nationalistic way and could turn into a medium for solidarity.

[25] Hamid Naficy: *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking.* Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2001.

The chapter by Judit Nagy, entitled *Multimodal Codes of the "Voice" of the Place in the Environmental Artwork of Diaspora Koreans in Canada,* reflects on environmental art works which are "about and in places, and human relations within these places. Hence, the 'voice' of the place is in the work, whether foregrounded or not."[26] That is, the location where these works are conceived and produced forms an organic part of the work. At the same time, the human context of the location also lends it a special dimension or feel, summiting in the "voice" of the place. Often, this "voice" is presented through multimodal codes among which the audience must navigate in order to explore and interpret the given artwork. In accordance with this premise, after defining the notion of environmental art in a broader sense and providing some important details of the underlying philosophy, the chapter reflects on Korean–Canadian environmental artists' concept of the "voice" of the place in the light of the environmental art works they have produced, paying special attention to the multimodal codes they use and how this affects the interpretive process. The analysis focuses on two Korean–Canadian artists, Hyun-Min Yoon and Khan Lee, and their works entitled "The Door Series" and "Spring Dream," respectively.

The closing chapter in the section on code-switching in performing arts, written by Ádám Bethlenfalvy, offers an insight into the use of code-switching as part of applying the Teacher in Role technique in the drama classroom. The paper starts out by offering connections between linguistic code-switching and "dramatic" code-switching through the examination of the work of contemporary dramatist Edward Bond. Then the author goes on to clarify the possibilities of the practical implementation of code-switching in the drama classroom. The paper focuses on the "Teacher in Role" technique, as it provides a variety of ways through which the drama practitioner can legitimately switch codes in a classroom context, and it offers a number of educational benefits in a safe, exploratory environment created by the application of dramatic fiction. Code-switching between teacher talk and role–allowed language offers participants the opportunities to explore their reactions and their own use of language in a variety of situations, while different elements of the fictional context offer a framework for the productive shifting of codes.

The final section of the book contains four artistic reflections and two interviews. The interviews allow readers to get directly in contact with the worlds of the authors asked and gain an insight into their artistic processes. At this phase of multilingualism studies, this is of crucial importance. Its aim is to bridge the gap between the way scholars look at multilingualism of artistic processes and as authors experience it. Cia Rinne, for instance, focuses on the

[26] Beth Carruthers: Ecoart in Canada: A Conversation and a Brief Survey of the Terrain, *Women in Environmental Art Dialogue* 6 (2010).

meaning multiple languages assume in her minimalistic literary production. More specifically she deals with the often unconscious multilingual processes which come into play while writing and their (sometimes unpredictable) consequences—such as any potential political but also historical and cultural implications.

The chapter by the Elephant-Zookeeper Irén Lovász, *Multimodal Code-switching in my World Music Art*, shares a few examples of her singing performances and recordings with multiethnic bands and/or singing in different languages. We could define some of them as individual code-switching by languages and melodies. There are examples of her nonverbal singing and cultural code-switching as well. Singing with multiethnic bands, in fact, is or could be regarded as multi-personal code-switching. Lovász also introduces a case of ethnomusicology when a melody appears as the matrix language, and the embedded languages are Moravian and Hungarian. As concluding remarks, she suggests a few questions for further studies about applying CS terminology of multimodal code-switching for the special features of artistic communication in folk music and world music.

In her contribution, Tzveta Sofronieva explores her multiverse–inspired literary production. As a powerful metaphor used by Sofronieva to describe her multilingualism, the idea of multiverse conveys endless strategies which could inspire a poet. "Multiverse" indeed reflects the possibility to tap into endless sources as well as to mirror the complexity of Anthropocene aesthetics. Indeed, in her poems Sofronieva employs not only different languages and linguistic contributions but also uses mathematical and, more widely, scientific sources. Her multilingual verses therefore inevitably contribute to expand the notion of multilingualism itself.

One of the most multilingual authors, Sabira Ståhlberg, another Elephant-Zookeeper, has been interviewed by the comparative research scholar Marianna Deganutti. In the interview, Deganutti tries to break through Ståhlberg's sophisticated multilingual cosmos starting from an investigation of her multilingual and multicultural origins. This condition, which is often the case of minority and borderland writers, for one example, influences writers in specific ways. For instance, for multilingual writers by birth, the choice of language assumes a relevance which it does not have for writers who acquired other languages later on in their lives (for instance, migrant or exiled authors). Ståhlberg also explains the way she employs her huge linguistic repertoire, which is exemplified in her essay on code-switching with lost languages that follows the interview. Following desert/ed trails of ancient and modern languages and writing systems, the multilingual author, who is also a language nomad and researcher, embarks on a literary–scholarly journey in the Heart of Eurasia. Paths and traces of unknown, forgotten and lost languages, scripts and codes are discovered; existing knowledge and understanding of their

background, present roles, connections and heritage are explored; and processes from thriving and spreading to fading into the shadows and finally being lost in the desert sands of history are mapped out. Scientific and poetic methods, as well as graphic expressions, language mixing, script experiments, references and inferences are used to awaken memories and insights. The journey goes far beyond the aesthetic and linguistic levels discernible through ordinary literary analysis. It challenges readers to look for their own language trails, use of codes and multiple switches in the past and present.

In order to round up both the academic and artistic insights of previous discussions, in the last chapter of the volume Ferenc katáng Kovács interviews Johanna Domokos, an Elephant-Zookeeper and editor of the present book, who claims that languaging serves as a sixth sense to poets so that they can express poetic worlds that move way beyond the verbal. Yet she also explains that her use of Hungarian, her own mother tongue, became more complex as she learned about its relations with other languages not only as a scholar but also as a traveler, and her poetic inspiration deeply roots in these transcultural and translingual experiences. Recalling her own memories, she admits that it was the actual relocation of her family that prompted her to write multilingual works and thus helped her move beyond monolingual literary fields. In her view, one of the main benefits of writing, reading and performing poetry that employs code-switching is that it promotes the interplay between the spoken and unspeakable dimensions of human existence.

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May our work induce deeper insights into the fascinating artistic laboratories of multilingualism.

The Editors

Budapest, January 2023

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LITERARY CODE-SWITCHING

THE POLITICS AND POETICS OF LANGUAGE USE IN "THE PARISIAN OR *AL-BARISI*" OF ISABELLA HAMMAD

Helge Daniëls

Introduction and Brief Outline of the Plot

"The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*"[1] by Isabella Hammad is a novel that defies easy categorization in many ways. In the first place, it is a semi-biographical Bildungsroman based on the many stories that were told within the Hammad family about Midhat, who was the author's great-grandfather.[2] The reader follows the coming of age of Midhat Kamal, a young Palestinian from Nablus, who goes to study medicine in Montpellier during WWI in order to avoid Ottoman conscription and returns afterwards to his native city. The novel is also a love story: central to the plot is a love gone wrong between Midhat and Jeannette, the daughter of Frédéric Molineu, his host in Montpellier. Midhat leaves for Paris when he discovers that Molineu, who is a professor of anthropology, is treating him as a study object and Jeannette, with whom he has a beginning romance, does not support him when he confronts her father. There he enjoys many romantic adventures and discusses politics with his Arab friends. After the war he returns, without his doctor's degree, to Nablus, a city that boils with unrest and revolt against the British Mandate and the upcoming Zionist project.

With its ample and well-researched descriptions of the political situation, the novel reads also as a historical account. It provides a nuanced portrayal of the turbulent years of WWI and the interbellum, when the Sykes-Picot agreement (1916) and the Balfour Declaration (1917) caused upheaval and eventually led to the drastic redrawing of the map of the Middle East. Midhat tries to break free from the strict social traditions prevailing in Nablus and the patriarchal yoke of his absent and standoffish father. Midhat's struggle and play with his identity and alterity, the 'oriental' in France and 'al-Barisi' in Nablus, together with his quest for independence, are intertwined with Palestine's political struggle for independence and the redefinition of its national identity. Even if the novel does not deal directly with the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948—the *nakba* (catastrophe), from a Palestinian perspective—and its consequences (the novel ends in 1939), both the author and the readers are aware that this was the eventual outcome of the colonial deals that were struck

[1] Isabella Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", Vintage Press, London, 2020.

[2] Afikra: *Interview with Novelist Isabella Hammad, afikra conversations*, https://www.afikra.com/talks/conversations/isabellahammad, accessed 28 October 2022.

about a century ago and the indifference of the UK, which was well aware that if it were to withdraw, the Zionist project would come to fruition while the Palestinian would not. Keeping this in mind, a novel about Palestine is always, at least implicitly, political. The novel is not only rich in historical details, it also is the story of Nablus. Apart from a detailed portrayal of its architecture and urban space, Hammad offers a fine-grained description of the social and cultural fabric of the historically important town. She describes the delicate balances and tensions between the different social groups in Nablus, addressing gender and family relations, as well as the relations between city dwellers and *fellahin*[3] (peasants), the rivalries and feuds between important middle- and upper-class families, and the relations between different religious communities, not only Muslims and Christians but also the Samaritans. These fine-tuned and well-researched descriptions give the novel an 'ethnographic' twist, simultaneously drawing and commenting on ethnographic texts.

The Poetics and Politics of Language Use

Language (variability) is at the core of the literary aesthetics of this novel. In the narrative and especially in the dialogues, English, French, Palestinian and *fusha* (Standard) Arabic are interwoven in a highly sophisticated way. This interaction between languages and language varieties can be approached in many ways, code-switching being one of them, another by considering the novel through the lens of "hybrid literature."[4] However, my main argument is that the language use in this novel defies straightforward classification. After setting out my theoretical and methodological framework below, I will explore how the intermingling of languages and language varieties, in combination with the mixing of genres and registers (storytelling, proverbs, songs, letters, etc.), is deeply intertwined with the novel's political and poetic dimensions. The code-switches and relexifications, a term that will be explained below, not only invite the readers to step out of their comfort zone, they are also a constant reminder that readers are reading a Palestinian novel that foregrounds a Palestinian perspective on the historical

[3] Arabic words will be transcribed using a simplified transcription system without diacritics that follows as much as possible the transcription used in the novel.

[4] For hybrid literature, see among others, Sherry Simon: Hybridity and translation, in Y. Gambier – L. van Doorslaer (eds.): *Handbook of Translation Studies*. Vol. 2, Amsterdam, Benjamins, 2010, 49–53, and Yasir Suleiman: *Arabic in the Fray. Language Ideology and Cultural Politics*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2013. For an overview of other terms see Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: Four major literary code-switching strategies in Hungarian literature. Decoding monolingualism, *Hungarian Studies Yearbook* 3 (2021), 44. In doing so, Hammad is in the good company of many other Arab authors who write in other languages than Arabic and insert Arabic elements in the main text in English, French, Spanish, Catalan or Hebrew, just to give some examples. When English is the main language, this literature is also often referred to as Anglo–Arab or hyphenated literature.

and political dimensions. In this sense Hammad is "appropriating" English and French, the languages of Sykes and Picot, who divided the Arab Ottoman provinces into British and French mandates during WWI and the interbellum, the era in which the novel is set. This can be seen as a way of "the Empire writing back."[5]

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

In what follows, I will discuss the ways in which English, the matrix language, French and Arabic, the imbedded languages, interact in the text on the basis of five salient examples. Theoretically and methodologically, my analysis is inspired by Michelle Hartman's work.[6] In her analysis of nine French–Lebanese novels by female authors, Hartman discusses the ways in which these authors incorporate Arabic words and expressions into the main text in French in order to comment on gender and class and how the languages interanimate each other, creating a new creative literary language. Hartman describes this interaction between French and Arabic as "gendered interference," "feminist punctuation," and "writing as translation." However, there are some important differences between "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*" and the novels Hartman discusses. For one, the authors discussed by Hartman grew up in Lebanon and spent at least a substantial part of their lives there, whereas Hammad has a Palestinian background but was born and raised in Britain. The novels analyzed by Hartman were published between the 1930s and 1990s, while "The Parisian" was published in 2019. In the Lebanese novels "only" two languages interanimate each other, namely French and Arabic, while Hammad extensively incorporates French and Arabic in the English main text. Finally, the novels discussed by Hartman are all feminist novels, commenting not only but foremost on gender and class. Hammad's novel, though definitely dealing with gender in several ways, is not a feminist novel in particular. Despite these differences, Hammad uses techniques that are similar to the ones described and analyzed by Hartman and they very much yield the same effect as what Hartman describes as "writing as translation," making the novel resemble a "resistant" or "foreignizing" translation, in which the translator deliberately deviates from the conventions of the target language in order to make the readers aware of the "foreignness" of the text and the fact that they are reading a translated text.[7] In combination with the mixing of genres described above,

[5] Bill Ashcroft – Gareth Griffith – Helen Tiffin: *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures*, New York, Routledge, 1989.

[6] Michelle Hartman: *Native Tongue, Stranger Talk. The Arabic and French Landscapes of Lebanon*, New York, Syracuse University Press, 2014.

[7] Lawrence Venuti: *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, New York, Routledge, 1995.

Hammad profusely exploits multiple linguistic techniques, such as the insertion of Arabic and French words, phrases and expressions (either translated or left untranslated) in the main text in English, as well as relexifications (most often left unexplained, with or without cushioning or contextualization). As defined by Hartman, relexification is

> the literal translation of Arabic expressions into unidiomatic, antiquated, or awkward-sounding French [here: English]. In relexification, as opposed to translation, the connection to the original language is left as transparent as possible, and the way that the resulting word or phrase sounds in the target language is almost always "awkward." The relexified expression thus sounds unidiomatic and may not even make sense within the new language, but this is the point of the technique; it does not strive for an "accurate" translation, but rather emphasizes its difference with the main language of the text.[8]

As Hartman further argues, this difference interrupts the main text and forces the readers to pause in order to draw their attention to additional political, social, cultural and poetical meanings that are layered into the text. However, the interruptions will be understood differently depending on the linguistic and cultural knowledge of the reader. The "outsider reader" who does not know Arabic (and/or French) will have to deduce the meaning of the code-switch or relexified item from the context and cushioning and is invited to reflect on the importance of language. The "insider reader" who knows Arabic and has sufficient cultural background knowledge will understand the transliterated or relexified item immediately but will still be given pause by the foreignness or awkwardness of the expression. As a result, both types of readers are incited to reflect on its additional meanings that go beyond the ones that are taken for granted and how they relate to the plot and the (implicit) political and social messages of the text:

> Poetically, the effect of using nonidiomatic expressions that clearly are meant to refer to another language has an immediate effect on the flow of the text. The insider and the outsider reader will also be affected by these textual breaks differently, in that the reader who knows Arabic will immediately supply the relexified expression in its many meanings and be able to continue reading smoothly with this in mind. The outsider reader who does not know Arabic, however, will be stalled for a moment at the relexification and forced to understand the meaning from the context and appropriate cushioning, further reflecting on the importance of language in conveying ideas.[9]

[8] Hartman: *Native Tongue*, 54.
[9] Ibid., 55.

By means of conclusion, Hammad continuously incorporates code-switches to French and (mostly Palestinian) Arabic into the main English text, as well as relexifications. The code-switches to Arabic and French are sometimes, but not always, marked by italics, but the relexifications are never. The code-switches are not limited to culture-specific elements (realia, toponyms, personal names, addressing titles, etc.), but also include discourse markers, connectors and fillers, as well as phrases, sentences and longer stretches of discourse. These elements are often related to the setting and the speakers involved, but not exclusively. As we will see below, some of the ways in which the code-switches are incorporated into the text clearly indicate that they are not merely mimetic, but function in a much deeper way than just representing "how people speak" or providing "couleur locale." In combination with the relexified items and (implicit) linguistic metacomments, the languages are blended in such a way that they can be said to interanimate each other and form one creative literary language, to reiterate Hartman's words.[10] This literary language is in some ways reminiscent of the linguistic repertoire of multilingual speakers, without suggesting an exclusively mimetic function though. In the remainder of this paper, I will demonstrate how Hammad deploys these techniques in "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", by highlighting a selection of striking examples. But before doing so, I would like to dwell a little longer on the insider and outsider readers and the insider–outsider position of the author herself.

Insider and Outsider Perspectives in a Global Literature Market

As a British author with a Palestinian background writing in English, London-born Hammad cannot be anything but conscious of the fact that she addresses multiple audiences. Given the fact that her novel is published by large publishing houses[11] and is globally distributed, a considerable part of her reading audience consists of readers who are interested in, but not necessarily acquainted with Arab culture, history and societies and the Arabic language. On the other hand, she also addresses readers of English who are familiar with these elements. The diverse readership further enhances the obvious given that the novel can, and will, be read and interpreted in multiple ways and that this begs for multilayeredness. This also means that the author can take up an insider–outsider position, an issue that is also discussed by Hartman. It can be presumed that the author taps into the fact that some readers will not

[10] Ibid., 4–7.

[11] The novel was first published in Britain by Jonathan Cape in 2019 and reprinted by Vintage, which belongs to the Penguin Group, in 2020 and by Grove Press in the US.

understand the transliterated and relexified Arabic and French items and somehow need to be guided toward their meaning. This can be achieved either explicitly by means of translation and metacommentary in the text, footnotes or a glossary[12] or implicitly by means of contextualization and cushioning. In this sense, Hammad can be considered an insider who disposes of insider–expertise but remains simultaneously an outsider who knows which knowledge needs to be shared with the outsider reader. Besides, she has the authorial power to decide not to share this knowledge straightforwardly, or even not at all. As an insider, she is at the same time well aware of the fact that because of their linguistic and cultural background knowledge, many of her insider readers will immediately grasp the meaning of the translated and relexified Arabic words and expressions. However, the presence of these items in the text nevertheless will draw these readers' attention and invite them towards a deeper reflection on the text. Hartman describes this as an aspect of what she calls an "ethnographic pact", which "creatively manipulates the truth value of literature" and by means of which "authors set themselves up in a position that consciously posits them as both insiders and outsiders in relation to what they are describing."[13] The interplay between various languages is one of the means by which this ethnographic pact is established:

> Mastery of multiple languages and their complexities is deeply intertwined with the insider–outsider position. Language use and in particular the mixing of languages marked as different are not only therefore ways to set up the pact but also a way to challenge and disrupt conventions once this complicity is established. One element therefore that can be read through this is the production of alternative knowledge, the disruption of colonial ethnographies through imitation and challenge at the same time. This in connection to the author's insider–outsider status allows her to write a text that can creatively challenge colonial knowledge production.[14]

Some aspects of the ethnographic pact will be elaborated on below. For now, however, I would like to push the ethnographic metaphor a bit further by suggesting that in the most salient code-switches and relexifications, Hammad generates what ethnographers would call "rich points," namely something the outsider reader does not immediately understand. As Agar[15] describes, the rich point, here the unexplained code-switch or relexification, signals a gap between the reader's world and the one created in the literary text. In the same way as

[12] However, in this novel there are no footnotes or glossaries.
[13] Hartman: *Native Tongue*, 60.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Michael H. Agar: *The Professional Stranger. An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*, New York, Academic Press, 1996, 31–36.

an ethnographer "learns that his or her assumptions about how the world works, usually implicit and out of awareness, are inadequate to understand something that had happened",[16] the readers learn that their assumptions are insufficient to understand what happens in the literary text.

> A gap, a distance between two worlds, has just surfaced in the details of human activity [here: the literary text]. Rich points, the words or actions that signal those gaps, are the raw material for ethnography [here: a deeper reflection on the meaning of the text], for it is the distance between the two worlds of experience that is exactly the problem that ethnographic research [here: literary analysis or close reading] is designed to locate and resolve.[17]

Moreover, in exactly the same way as rich points are a dynamic given, code-switches and relexifications function dynamically in the text in the sense that the ways in which they are perceived and interpreted by the readers are not static and not restricted to authorial intent. In what follows, I will analyze five examples of such "rich points."

Paratext: "The Parisian" versus "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*"

The attention of the careful reader is immediately drawn by the difference between the title on the book cover, "The Parisian", and the one on the inside title page, "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*." *Al-Barisi* is the transliteration of the Arabic word for Parisian. The italicization marks the word as foreign to the language of the title on the cover and the main text. Rather than using the transliterated Arabic word and then translating or explaining it, the English title is used first and then translated into Arabic. This inversion, together with the fact that this does not happen on the cover but on the inside title page, can be understood as a signal that the author will take the readers by the hand to gradually guide them to the inner meanings of the interplay between English, French and Arabic, here metonymically represented respectively by *The Parisian* and *Al-Barisi,*[18] while indicating from the beginning that this will not be a monolingual reading experience.

The bilingual title is also closely related to the plot and the main character. Despite the condescending way in which he was treated in France, particularly by his host Frédéric Molineu who observed him as an anthropological

[16] Agar: *The Professional Stranger*, 31.

[17] Ibid.

[18] The reference to French is more complex here, but we could argue that French is implied semantically by the meaning of "the Parisian / *al-Barisi*".

study object, and the failed love affair with Jeannette, Midhat loves France and French culture, including fashion. Back in Nablus, his Francophilia, marked by his code-switches to French, gestures and excessive fashion habits are frowned upon by many who start to call him mockingly "the Parisian".[19] It is thus only quite late in the novel that the reader's hunch that the title refers to Midhat is confirmed and explained: "[they] referred to him as "the Parisian" with an affection that slid into derision. "I'm going to the *banque*," was something still said [...], with a flipping of the [...] hand."[20] It is remarkable that in a novel that is dispersed with transliterated Arabic words and relexifications, here "the Parisian" is used and not "*al-Barisi*", while this transliterated Arabic word has already occurred in the title and is supposed to be easily understood even by the outsider reader who does not know Arabic. This choice somehow breaks with expectations because the nickname is used by Arabic speaking characters, a lot of them probably monolingual, in a Nabulsi setting. Why this is the case can be further explored, but we could argue that the use of English in this context draws even more attention to the nickname and the ways in which it "others" Midhat. Besides that, it also underscores the observation that the insertion of Arabic words and expressions aims at much more than the representation of actual speech. One of the leitmotifs of the novel is after all Midhat's alterity. In France he is introduced, addressed or framed by other characters as "du Proche-Orient" (wittily combined with "he is feeling a little *désorienté* at the moment"),[21] "le jeune Turc",[22] "Monsieur l'Arabe",[23] "Muslim",[24]

[19] Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 303, 326, 505. However, for Fatima, when arguing to her father why she wants to marry Midhat, the nickname has a positive connotation because it evokes refinement and the fact that he has lived in France. Ibid., 303.

[20] Ibid., 505.

[21] Ibid., 13. Italics original.

[22] Ibid., 27. This label is ironic because there was a lot of animosity between Arabs and Turks in this era. A large part of the Arab world still belonged formally to the Ottoman Empire, but in the 19th century a sense of Arab identity and nationalism was crystalizing, which competed with an Ottoman identity. At the same time Turkish nationalism was gaining pace in intellectual circles in Istanbul. Though having studied in Istanbul, at best Midhat would have considered himself, apart from Nabulsi, Palestinian and Arab, an Ottoman citizen, but definitely not Turkish. In the perception of most French people at the time there was no difference between Turks and Arabs. This is up to now still to a certain extent the case. It is interesting to note that Jeannette immediately corrects her friend by saying: "Actually, [...] Monsieur Midhat would call himself a Palestinian Arab." This and other examples indicate that Jeannette's attitude towards Midhat is more nuanced and emphatic than that of many of the other French characters.

[23] Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 27.

[24] Ibid., 29.

"Semitic",[25] "the Arabian man",[26] "(the famous) Oriental",[27] "the Arab",[28] "the young Arab",[29] "the Muhammadan",[30] "Mon Exotique",[31] "the Levantine, [...] the figure of the Parisian Oriental as he appeared on certain cigarette packets in corner stores."[32] His Muslim identity is also implied when Molineu offers him a drink and stresses that it is "sans alcool totalement."[33] On the other hand, in Nablus he is nicknamed "the Parisian." His alterity simultaneously troubles and thrills him:

> [H]e experienced a rare moment of self-perception. He felt his presence from the outside, not only in space, but also in time. In a flash he saw this part he played for the men of Nablus as a kind of inverse of his persona in Paris—the part he used to play for women. He was always marked by his difference. Many times during courtships he had even purposely weakened his French—which was then near fluent—and found he could play with ease the sweet buffoon and at the same time retain the glamour of hiddenness. There was always some kernel hidden in the folds, some mystery to long for. He could feel it again now, that double view.[34]

The bilingual title thus also alludes to Midhat's feeling of having a double identity and being always somewhat out of place, as well as his inability to "translate himself from French into Arabic"[35] once back in Nablus. It is interesting to note that Midhat's sense of alterity is very often language-related. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to investigate more systematically how Midhat's otherness is constructed, and possibly deconstructed, by means of code-switches and relexifications as well as metalinguistic comments. Due to space limitations, I will suffice here with just a couple of examples, one of them being when Midhat inadvertently speaks Arabic instead of French and then corrects himself: "'Ah, merci,' said Midhat to the maid as she presented the

[25] Ibid., 43. This is actually how Jeannette thinks how her father would describe Midhat's features. Her musings while observing Midhat form a distance complicate Midhat's presumed otherness: "He could have been European from this distance; the coppery tone of his face, and his dark brow and eyes–these were the only signs that he was what her father would call "Semitic." If she hadn't known she might have guessed he was Italian."

[26] Ibid 53.

[27] Ibid., 55, 81.

[28] Ibid 83. Notice that this description is given by the narrative voice, capturing Frédéric's thoughts: "Frédéric led Patrice in to the blue salon and saw them through the glass, his daughter and the Arab."

[29] Ibid 84.

[30] Ibid 92.

[31] Ibid., 155. Capitals original.

[32] Ibid., 158. This describes the way Midhat thinks he is perceived by Jeannette.

[33] Ibid., 11.

[34] Ibid., 333.

[35] Afikra, *Interview.*

decanter. 'Bikfi, sorry, that's plenty.'"[36] An example of a metalinguistic comment is when the authorial voice draws attention to Midhat's pronunciation of French: "Despite his shyness, his accent was improving, and he pronounced 'le thorax' and 'le capillaire' with the precision of a foreigner."[37] The detailed discussion of the relexification in the next section also underscores, among other things, that Midhat's sense of disparity largely has a linguistic basis.

Uncomfortable Encounters: "Enchanted to Make Your Acquaintance"

After a long journey, from Nablus to Alexandria and then subsequently by boat to Marseille and by train to Montpellier, Midhat is welcomed at the Montpellier train station by Jeannette Molineu. This is the occasion for the first of many awkward intercultural misunderstandings. Midhat wrongly takes Jeannette to be Frédéric Molineu's wife. Not being used to unrelated men and women intermingling, it puzzles Midhat that she, rather than his male host, comes to collect him. At the house he is welcomed by Molineu and Midhat introduces himself politely: "Good evening, my name is Midhat Kamal. Enchanted to make your acquaintance."[38] This unidiomatic phrase or relexification—in English one would rather say 'Pleased to meet you' or more archaically 'A pleasure to make your acquaintance'—immediately evokes the French expression *enchanté de faire votre connaissance* and makes the readers pause. This break encourages them to dwell on Midhat's uneasiness in his new environment. Even though he studied French at a French-styled lycée in Constantinople, also referred to in the novel as Konstantiniyye, its transliterated Arabic name,[39] his French is still far from fluent. This is also confirmed by the narrative comment "There were several words in this speech that Midhat did not understand," after Molineu addresses him in French: "On Monday, je crois qu'il y a une affaire d'inscription, and then, you know, tout va de l'avant."[40] The comment somehow reassures readers who do not know French by highlighting the main character's disconcertment over not understanding everything that is being said, at the same time drawing them into Midhat's confusion and uneasiness. On the same page, Midhat's difficulty in understanding French is further underlined by inserting another relexified expression "The lining of

[36] Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 12.
[37] Ibid., 31.
[38] Ibid., 11.
[39] Ibid., 7.
[40] Ibid., 12.

my heart is sewn with questions," which will be revisited in detail below, followed by the narrative comment "Midhat did not understand this last phrase."[41] Moreover, it is not hard to imagine that Midhat must be exhausted by the long journey and probably a bit shy and afraid to make mistakes. All the nervousness and awkwardness is captured by this relexified phrase. This is corroborated by the fact that Midhat on a later occasion says "Enchanted to meet you",[42] which still sounds a bit awkward and triggers the comment "He speaks French very well"[43] and still later "enchanté",[44] suggesting that he is gradually acclimatizing. However, throughout his stay in Montpellier, Midhat continues to feel frustrated about not being able to express himself fully in French: "Of course, it was difficult to communicate any profound sensation, let alone in another language."[45]

The relexified phrase also draws attention to the ways in which Midhat is or feels othered by often well-meant comments, suggesting for example his presumed misogyny: "Yes, I'm sure it must be odd to you, how we treat women here."[46] and more vicious questions such as: "And when will you be returning to your country? […] And will you be practicing medicine in your hometown?"[47] as well as his feeling that his cultural capital is not valued:

> But here in the Molineus' house things seemed to be different, and Midhat was not equipped. He had not read the right books. Even French words felt thicker lately in his mouth, and like a heavy screen they separated him from what he wanted to say. Each day he was more the fool, the foreigner unable to control his own meanings, lost in the wild multiple of language.[48]

His sense of otherness not only results from being an Arab Ottoman citizen in France during the war years, and therefore being perceived as "a citizen of the enemy",[49] but also from being one of the few young men in town, most young French men being sent to the front: "How odd this was, thought Midhat. These three men, too old to fight, dining with three young women left in a

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 28.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 29.
[45] Ibid., 35.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., 130. These questions are asked by Silvain, Molineu's friend, who comments to Molineu, on another occasion not in the presence of Midhat, "Everyone is always walking over your hospitality." Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 113. This clearly indicates that he sees Midhat as a guest who might easily overstay his welcome.
[48] Ibid., 87.
[49] Ibid., 68.

world of women and fathers and crippled absentees, and himself a rarity, not only as an Arab but as a young man."[50]

On another level, these elements of othering elicit (implicit) "ethnographic" comments on the ethics of hospitality. Midhat has a deeply ingrained sense of hospitality, which consists not only of a welcoming attitude towards others, "that Arab impulse to encourage strangers over thresholds",[51] but also of being a gracious guest: "The rules of guest and host were so ingrained, he knew the shame of trespass in his bones."[52] The importance of thresholds and trespass is underscored by the code-switch that will be discussed now.

Thresholds and Trespass: "Habibi, Come with Me aal-maktab"

On the eve of his departure to Montpellier, Midhat is invited by his father to his office: "Habibi, come with me, aal-maktab."[53] This sentence is marked by a code-switch, the sentence starting in Arabic, "habibi", switching to English "come with me" and ending in Arabic "aal-maktab". Depending on the context, *habibi* can be translated as *darling, sweetheart, dear, beloved, friend* etc. Because it is uttered here by a father addressing his son "my dear son" would be the most suitable translation. It is one of the many Arabic addressing titles that are inserted into the main text in English. It is not translated but can easily be understood from the context. The last part of the sentence is *aal-maktab*, which means "to the office". This utterance is not translated either and can only be understood by connecting it to the next sentence: "The office shutters pleated along their joints to disclose the remaining day [...],"[54] implying that they are entering Haj Taher's office after he invited Midhat in.

The untranslated code-switches to Arabic slow down the reading flow and draw the readers' attention to the different layers of the text. Given Haj Taher's standoffish attitude towards Midhat it is not hard to imagine that his father's office is off-limits for Midhat. The fact that Midhat is kindly invited in and receives a precious present, a golden Ottoman watch, together with the gentle way in which he is addressed ("habibi" and "God keep you, habibi. Keep it safe.")[55] underscores one of the rare affective moments between father and son.

[50] Ibid., 90.
[51] Ibid., 100.
[52] Ibid., 121.
[53] Ibid., 24.
[54] Ibid., 24.
[55] Ibid., 24. This watch is an object that entices interesting observations on the differences in timekeeping between the Muslim Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe at the time, the difference between the Gregorian and the Hijri calendar being one of them, but also sunset marking the end of the day for Muslims instead of midnight. The introduction of the "Frankish clock" by the Ottoman sultan meant that Nabulsis kept switching between both ways of

In hindsight, the code-switch also predicts two traumatic events that Midhat will experience in an office and that will change his life drastically. The first one is the shocking discovery of Molineu's secret anthropological notes on him.[56] As already mentioned above, this causes Midhat to leave the Molineus for Paris, abandoning medical school altogether. The second one is when Midhat discovers Jeannette's letter to him that his father kept hidden in his office, together with what is probably a charm made by the Samaritans, in order to keep Midhat from returning to France and marrying Jeannette.[57] The blow is so heavy that Midhat completely collapses and needs to be admitted to a mental hospital, an important twist in the plot on which I will not elaborate.

On another level, the code-switch not only draws attention to the office as an important locus for key developments in the plot, it also highlights the room as a threshold that is connected to the closely interrelated cultural notions of hospitability and trespass mentioned above. Entering his father's office, as well as Molineu's office, without their explicit permission somehow feels as trespassing to Midhat, but also as a way to claim his space and independence: "The last time Midhat had entered Docteur Molineu's study was in that furtive search for inkwells. It was not a room they [Midhat and Jeannette] chose on their secret mornings; it was implicitly out of bounds. And yet standing now in the centre; the woman he loved reading before him, he experienced a new sense of entitlement."[58] Another occasion on which Midhat, after his father's death, claims his space, is when he enters Haj Taher's study in Cairo, the place where he passed away just a couple of days before Midhat's engagement to Fatima. The office "held the smell of his father, the musk, the tobacco."[59] Venting his sorrow, but mostly his frustration and rage over his father's coercive grip on him, Midhat's knocks over his desk:

> Rage flooded his body. He had done everything for this man. For this man's opinion, every choice. And he had succeeded! He was engaged to the Hammad girl! And where was his father? Midhat's whole life, stripped down to feeble reeds. They collapsed without him. He punched down, knuckles first. His fingers felt the ache, and, maddened by it, he pounced with the side of his fist, hammered a rhythm

time keeping. The tension between modernization and traditions was a seriously debated issue at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in the Ottoman Empire, including its Arab provinces. The Ottoman watch then hints at a world marching at two different paces. Moreover, Midhat gives this precious gift to Laurent when he leaves to the front and Midhat imagines at some point that this watch could endanger his friend because it could be perceived as a marker for the "Ottoman enemy." Finally, in the mental hospital Midhat attacks his Jewish roommate because in his delirium he thinks he stole his watch.

56 Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 127.

57 Ibid., 423–429.

58 Ibid., 127.

59 Ibid., 340.

> like Teta's song, and heard a moan seep from his grimacing mouth. He grabbed a piece of paper, observed without reading a title about licencing. All of it was business correspondence. With exaggeration he ripped it down the centre, severing the cushion of a letter Saad from its tail. Ripping the paper was like drawing blood and in the shock of the sound he was calm.[60]

Knocking down his father's desk and ripping the paper is again a kind of trespass by which Midhat can finally, albeit posthumously, give vent to his anger.

However, despite these rare moments when trespassing is liberating, it indicates mostly alienation. The mixed feelings of awe, trespassing, liberation and alienation are clear when Midhat, after receiving a telegram of his father saying that he is proud, enters his father's office to write a reply but is not able to and ends up writing a letter to his friend:

> He walked into his father's darkened bedroom and *with a deep breath* continued into his father's office. He sat down at the desk. […] Midhat opened a desk drawer and a pen rattled; he took it out and pulled a sheet from the stack of paper beside it, *knocking the drawer closed with his foot.* […] [H]e wrote the words "My dear father." […] He reached for a fresh sheet. "Cher Hani, […]"[61]

This is also obvious when Midhat, who is still a boy at the time, enters his father's and his stepmother's bedroom in Nablus because he is looking for something and is violently chased from it by her. This event underscores the psychological impact of his father's remarriage on Midhat. Recalling this as an adult, Midhat acknowledges that "Layla's actions may indeed have done him some harm as a child," but he also indulgently understands that she was very young at the time and "needed to claim her territory and expel the *foreign boy* when he trespassed into her bedroom. Marriage was her life's great venture, and happily, she had prevailed."[62] The importance of marriage in the plot and as a theme in this novel cannot be overestimated and is highlighted by the next relexified expression in our analysis.

Marriage: "Signing the Book"

The relexified phrase "the signing of the book" occurs more than once in the novel.[63] Insider readers will immediately recognize it as an unidiomatic

[60] Ibid., 340–341.
[61] Ibid., 327–328. Emphasis is mine.
[62] Ibid., 182. Emphasis is mine.
[63] Ibid., 19, 239, 326, 377.

translation of the Arabic expression *katb al-kitab*, which means the signing of the marriage contract.[64] The relexification is not explicitly explained and will therefore confuse outsider readers who do not know Arabic; they can only understand it from the context and cushioning as well as its repetition in the text. It is mentioned the first time when Midhat's father Haj Taher Kamal, who is a widower, decides to remarry in Cairo where he directs one of his business branches: "He did not take long to decide. He wrote to Layla's father, and within days they had arranged the signing of the book and the wedding date."[65] The expression is mentioned a second time when Midhat tells his cousin Jamil that he wants to marry Fatima Hammad, who is considered out of bounds for him because her family is much wealthier than his. Jamil jokingly tells Midhat that she is already engaged to somebody else: "You know, [...] she is marrying him. [...] They signed the book already."[66] Midhat proposes anyway and, after initially refusing, her father consents. The third time the expression is mentioned is when the news of Midhat's engagement starts to spread. However, this time the expression is translated as "the signing of the betrothal contract".[67] This is an idiomatic but rather archaic English expression with religious connotations, which actually covers the meaning of *katb al-kitab* very well. It also draws the attention of the readers in a way that is different but comparable to the way in which the relexified expression does. The readers are just the same compelled to pause and reflect on its deeper meanings. The expression is mentioned a fourth time in the context of one of the subplots, when Midhat's close friend Hani marries his much younger cousin in order to save her from her money-hungry uncles: "Within a few minutes, they had signed the book of marriage."[68]

By inserting this relexified expression, together with its archaic translation, four times in the text, Hammad produces yet again "rich points" that make the readers pause and invite them to reflect on marriage outside the frames that they take for granted. Besides that, the relexified expression and its archaic translation signal the importance of marriage in the plot and in Midhat's life. As mentioned above, Haj Taher's marriage to Layla marked Midhat's childhood and further alienated him from his already aloof father. Upon Midhat's return to Nablus, Haj Taher coerces him to marry because of Jeannette's

[64] This legally binding contract, which also stipulates the dowry (*mahr*), is signed when a couple gets engaged. During the engagement period the couple have the opportunity to get to know each other and to prepare together with their families the wedding ceremony, which usually takes place a couple of months (but sometimes years) after the signing of the contract.

[65] Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 19.

[66] Ibid., 239.

[67] Ibid., 326.

[68] Ibid., 377.

letter he intercepted only a few days before his arrival by setting an ultimatum: either Midhat marries, or he is disinherited.[69]

However, the rich points, in the form of the repeated relexified expression, also function on a deeper level of the literary text as they punctuate marriage as a recurring theme which allows the author to give a gendered comment that toys with the ethnographic genre. Contrary to prejudiced expectations, Midhat's case clearly demonstrates that men, even if they have more freedom of action, can suffer as much as women under patriarchal pressure. Moreover, once the decision is taken, it is clear that women powerfully take the matter into their hands and make all key decisions. Teta,[70] Midhat's paternal grandmother who affectionately raised him after his mother passed away, does not give in when Midhat at first refuses the idea of marriage. She actively searches for a bride and even takes Midhat to the Samaritans for a charm to help him overcome his refusal. She arranges for a meeting with Fatima and her mother so that Midhat can have a glance at Fatima through the keyhole, social restrictions on the intermingling between men and women not allowing for more. As social custom has it, Midhat proposes to Fatima via her father, who initially refuses because he has his hopes up for a better candidate, but also Fatima's mother, who prefers Fatima's first cousin, has a clear say in the matter. And last but not least, it is Fatima who takes the actual decision of marrying Midhat. Despite her young age, she opposes her parents' preferences and convinces her father that she wants to marry Midhat[71] and this is what happens at the end.

Moreover, in the description of the details concerning marriage the author establishes her insider–outsider expertise. The whole episode is described with a keen eye for "ethnographic" detail: the complementary actions undertaken

[69] Ibid., 191–193.

[70] *Teta* means grandmother in Palestinian Arabic. This lexical item is used throughout the text without being translated. Due to limited space, the importance of the grandmother figure in this novel, and Palestinian literature in general, cannot be further explored here. However, it is important to indicate that Hammad dedicates her novel to her own grandmother, Teta Ghada, who was Midhat's youngest daughter as follows: "for Teta Ghada لكل التفاصيل (*li-kull at-tafasil* (for all the details)). This is the only switch to Arabic script, which enhances its salience. This peritextual element underscores the semi-biographical character of the novel, which is confirmed by epitextual evidence in the form of interviews with the author. The Arabic script is also evoked in the quote referred to above: "severing the cushion of a letter Saad [ص] from its tail". One might wonder why the author choses to transliterate the Arabic words and expressions rather than use the Arabic script as the outsider reader still does not understand the meaning of the transliterated Arabic words and phrases. Several reasons could be given for this choice. For one, the use of two scripts with different writing directions entails practical editorial issues. Secondly, the outsider readers, even if they do not understand the transliterated items, get a sense of these words by means of transliteration. Besides, they can look them up on the internet if they want more explanation. The use of the Arabic script would not allow this.

[71] Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 303.

by the male and female characters prior to the engagement, the actual proposal which is done in the presence of as much as possible male members of the groom's[72] and the bride's family,[73] the dowry *(mahr)*,[74] the wedding ceremony *(zaffeh)* including the reading of the first surah of the Koran *(fatiha)* and the rather clichéd description of the awkwardness of the wedding night for a couple that barely knows each other.[75] This whole episode and the way it is described implicitly entail the authorial comment that, contrary to prejudice, gendered power relations *within* the framework of social and religious traditions at the beginning of the 20th century in conservative Nablus, while at the same time recognizing the difficulties that women face, are much more dynamic and negotiable than many outsider–readers would assume. This is further sustained by other references to marriage. Teta in her attempt to convince Midhat to marry, confides to him that before her marriage to Midhat's grandfather she loved another man, but that she quickly grew to love the husband chosen for her by her family.[76] Also the subplot of Hani's marriage to his much younger cousin Sahar entails an implicit ethnographic comment on marriage: this at first sight misogynist traditional marriage between first cousins is sealed in order to protect the young girl from her uncles and Hani is not as free in his decision as it might seem. The couple develops a lively correspondence while Sahar is still at school. Moreover, as Hani declares himself, marriage changed his conservative position on the role of women in politics and he fully supports Sahar's political involvement: "Of course, I wasn't married back then. And marriage does change everything."[77]

This means that Hammad does not merely describe Palestinian wedding customs and traditions, but she also intervenes and comments on how gender relations in Palestinian society were (and to a certain extent still are) perceived by outsiders (bear in mind Midhat's implied misogyny in some of the comments by some of the French characters analyzed above). This ethnographic comment is further developed in the novel by a reversal of the "ethnographic gaze" at marriage and gender relations in France. On the evening of his arrival, Molineu invites Midhat to the marriage of his niece and he comments: "[S]o you will see a French wedding! Marriage ceremonies are the key, really, to a culture. You see a wedding, you understand a society."[78] Additionally, the awkwardness of Midhat's first night with Fatima is not all that different from Molineu's wedding night with Ariane, Jeannette's mother.[79] Moreover, when Jeannette visits an

[72] The Arabic word for this is *jaha*, but is not mentioned in the text.
[73] Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 328–329.
[74] Ibid., 345.
[75] Ibid., 346.
[76] Ibid., 259.
[77] Ibid., 408.
[78] Ibid., 11.
[79] Ibid., 64–65.

older male friend of the family, this elicits Molineu's comment: "I did say you should take Midhat. It's not really appropriate for a young lady, I'm sure everyone must think I'm horribly irresponsible,"[80] implying that in early 20th century France men and women intermingling was not totally unrestricted either. Apart from this, when Midhat ponders marrying Jeannette, he assumes that both fathers would resist and that the mixed marriage would be frowned upon in both societies. All these examples suggest that, despite the differences, there are also many similarities between Montpellier/France and Nablus/Palestine.[81] Furthermore, Midhat has the feeling that he somehow breaches Molineu's hospitality by falling in love with his daughter: "The rules of guest and host were so ingrained, he knew the shame of trespass in his bones."[82]

As the discussion illustrates, the rich points, in the form of the relexified and archaically translated expressions, highlight the importance of marriage in the plot and simultaneously establish and question the "ethnographic pact" between the author and the reader, allowing for nuanced gendered comment. In this way Hammad implicitly challenges orientalist and neo-orientalist views on gender relations in Palestinian society, which we have seen to be held by some of the French characters in Montpellier as well, and suggests that these are more complex and dynamic than often thought. By describing gender relations in France, Hammad reverses the gaze, suggesting that these relations are not always all that different. In what follows we will see that the novel also comments on colonial ethnography and orientalism more directly. This comment is punctuated by yet another rich point in the form of a relexification.[83]

Reversing the Orientalist Gaze: "The Lining of my Heart is Sewn with Questions"

As we have seen, with its "ethnographic" descriptions, the novel indirectly enters into dialogue with biases against Muslim and Arab societies,

[80] Ibid., 53.

[81] These similarities are also suggested by descriptions of the similarities between the landscapes of Montpellier and Nablus: "You know, the hills here are the same as our hills. They seem to think I live in the desert." Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 58. See also Ibid., 8, 10, 35, 119.

[82] Ibid., 121.

[83] Other "ethnographic" comments occur when the funeral of Haj Taher is described, the description of the Samaritan community etc. Due to a lack of space, they cannot be dealt with here. A special case are Midhat's explanations to Jeannette of Arabic expressions and words, geographic locations etc. (see, e.g., Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 13, 45, 70) because they transform Midhat from an outsider in France who needs a lot of explanation to an insider–expert who is explaining his language and culture to an outsider. In these conversations with Jeannette, Midhat is an active subject who choses what to share and what not, rather than the role of passive research object into which he is pushed by Frédéric Molineu.

especially concerning gender issues. However, it also comments on 19th and early 20th century orientalism, which was one of the cornerstones of British and French policies in the Middle East. As we will see, Hammad's "ethnographic" descriptions of Nabulsi society, marriage being only one of the themes, are in dialogue with the "ethnographic work" of two French characters, namely Dr. Molineu and Père Antoine.

As already mentioned, Molineu partly saw Midhat as an anthropological study object, eliciting information from him on Arab proverbs, customs and traditions, as well as the religious minority community of the Samaritans, with the aim of developing a dubious—to say the least—social Darwinist theory. Molineu's secret intentions are alluded to by the relexified expression "The lining of my heart is sewn with questions."[84] The reader immediately feels that this expression comes across as unnatural. For the reader who knows French it evokes *être cousu de*, meaning a huge amount of something. The expression then can be interpreted as "my heart is / I am full of questions." Molineu utters this phrase during the conversation analyzed above and, as we indicated, one of its layers is that Midhat was still struggling with his French. A second layer of meaning, however, refers to Molineu's hidden research intentions that go far beyond a healthy curiosity about the cultural background of his guest and are, as it were, hidden in "the lining of his heart". The sartorial metaphor is also rich because Midhat is fond of fashion. Moreover, once back in Nablus, he is groomed to enter the textile business of his father and eventually starts his own clothing store, *Nouvautés Ghada*.

The other anthropologist is Père Antoine, also referred to in the novel as Father Antoine (English) and Abuna Antoine (Arabic). He is a French missionary ethnographer who lives in Jerusalem and who writes an ethnographic study about Nablus. He has lengthy conversations with the inhabitants of Nablus and makes notes about the important families, their alliances and feuds, as well as their relations with the *fellahin*. Therefore, he has a keen eye on the social texture of Nablus, as well as the political sympathies of its inhabitants. Due to his ethnographic immersion in Nabulsi society and his fluency in Arabic, he has direct access to Palestinian society and is much more empathetic than Molineu. His long-standing experience in Palestine and close interactions with Palestinians put him in a complex insider–outsider position that is in some ways comparable to, but also different from, Midhat's situation in France.[85] Again a couple of code-switches, of which I will give only one example, underscore this: "'Just milk for me,' Antoine said to the server. The boy looked blank. 'Bas haleeb.' Antoine pointed at the jug."[86] His position is further complicated

[84] Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 12.

[85] A few fleeting encounters between Abuna Antoine and Midhat allude to a certain sense of mutual recognition between the two characters.

[86] Hammad: "The Parisian or *Al-Barisi*", 312.

when the Arab revolt against the British presence in Palestine and the Zionist project breaks out in 1936. The British army deems his field notes invaluable and he is lured, despite his doubts and his sympathy for the Nabulsis, into espionage for the British. The French sisters who run the local hospital, however, adopt a totally different position. They secretly support the Nabulsi rebels by, among other things, hiding weapons for them.

In the text, the author's detailed "ethnographic" descriptions, including descriptions of architecture and urban space, are indirectly in dialogue with the "ethnographic work" of both Molineu and Père Antoine and can be read as an implicit critique on orientalism. We could say that Hammad reverses these characters' orientalist gaze by using her authorial power to describe them. This is one way in which the extradiegetic comment, albeit referring to a specific element in a subplot, "To invent one's self was to resist the inventions of others: to forge was to author."[87] can be understood.

The reversal of the gaze is not limited to the authorial control over these two characters, though. It also consists of the descriptions of French society and the Provencal landscapes. As discussed above, these observations, often alluding to similarities between French and Palestinian societies, can be read as implicit comments and frequently take an "ethnographic" twist, which is also the case for the following remark on the rather closed community of vignerons: "In distinction to the northern Gauls, they clung to the archaic identity of Occitania [...]"[88] and for the descriptions of French dialects. The implicit comments on orientalist ethnography are sometimes voiced explicitly by the extradiegetic narrative voice, here on popular and academic orientalist imagery:

> the inhabitants of those apostasized [sic] subaltern continents who had so defected from civilization as they occurred in picture books and nursery rhymes and the imaginations of French children. [...] Docteur Molineu lurked at the edges with his notebook and his analysis, his charts of cranial development, observing him [Midhat] at the dinner table.[89]

Many other examples of (implicit) comments on orientalism and the orientalist gaze could be given, but it is clear that this relexification creates yet another rich point that underscores the "ethnographic pact" between the author and the reader, a pact that is at the same time questioned and reversed.

[87] Ibid., 402.
[88] Ibid., 41.
[89] Ibid., 158–159.

Conclusion

In this article, I have analyzed five salient examples of how the intermingling of three different languages is deployed in order to convey multilayered messages to diverse reading audiences. I have demonstrated how these code-switches and relexifications create “rich points” in the text that stall the reading flow and invite both insider and outsider readers to further reflection on the deeper meanings of the text. Apart from highlighting key elements in the plot, the interplay between the matrix language (English) and the embedded languages (Arabic and French) in combination with the mixing of genres (letters, songs, proverbs, storytelling) establishes the insider–outsider position of the author, allowing for (implicit) comments on colonialism and orientalism, as well as gender. It is needless to say that, with its abundant code-switches and other forms of language mixing, this polyglossic[90] novel offers a rich reservoir of other examples. Even if an exhaustive analysis is impossible, code-switches, relexifications and metalinguistic comments underscoring the iconicity of sartorial elements, the psychological dimensions of the plot, including the relation between magic and psychiatry and the impact of being orphaned at a young age, as well as religious minority groups such as the Samaritans are but a few examples that are worth dealing with in further research. Also, Midhat’s as well as other characters’ (such as Abuna Antoine) complex outsider–insider positions, and how different ways of “othering” are intricately underscored by the procédés mentioned above, deserve to be investigated more systematically by drawing a more detailed linguistic map of the novel.

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INTERFERENCE IN LITERARY TEXTS WRITTEN IN FRENCH BY RUSSIAN–FRENCH AUTHORS (1990–2000)

Margarita Makarova

Russian–French Writers' Language Choices

Andreï Makine (1957–), Valéry Afanassiev (1947–), Vladimir Fédorovski (1950–), Iegor Gran (1964–), and Luba Jurgenson (1958–) are contemporary living French writers of Russian origins. Andreï Makine is perhaps the most famous among them since he is a Goncourt prize winner and a French Academy member. V. Afanassiev is a writer, poet, and pianist. V. Fédorovski is a former diplomat who now writes books mostly about Russian politics and cultural history. Andreï Siniavski's son, I. Gran, is a writer and former *Charlie Hebdo* journalist. L. Jurgenson is a translator, writer, and professor at the Sorbonne.

The corpus consists of the following novels in French published from 1990 to 2000: *Confession d'un porte–drapeau déchu* (1992) by A. Makine, *Lettres sonores* (1995) by V. Afanassiev, *Les Deux sœurs ou l'art d'aimer* (1997) by V. Fédorovski, *Éducation nocturne* (1994) by L. Jurgenson, *Acné festival* (1999) by I. Gran. Only five contemporary Russian–French writers meet our selection criteria: Russian is their native language,[1] they are all of Russian origins, and they wrote prose in French between 1990 and 2000. They are quite unknown and remain unstudied, compared to other Russian–French writers of the 20th century.[2] The corpus could have included other books by these authors. However, only ten years from 1990 and 2000 represent a common overlapping period for them.

Code-switching can be defined as a use by bilingual or multilingual authors of forms from an "embedded" language or languages in literary texts written in a "matrix" language (referring to the terms introduced by C. Myers-Scotton[3]). But there is another meaning of code-switching: a complete change of the writing language. Thus, all the authors of the corpus switched from Russian to French to write their novels. A. Makine and I. Gran made their literary

[1] It is difficult to know which language was the first one the author acquired. This has to be taken into account when creating the corpus. In the case of the authors of our corpus it is clear from their biography.

[2] For instance, Henri Troyat (1911–2007), Romain Gary (1914–1980), Irène Némirovsky (1903–1942), Elsa Triolet (1896–1970), Nathalie Sarraute (1900–1999), etc.

[3] Carol Myers-Scotton: *Duelling Languages: Grammatical Structure in Codeswitching*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997.

careers entirely in French, whereas V. Afanassiev, V. Fédorovski, and L. Jurgenson used both languages to write their literary texts.

Russian linguists N. Azarova and S. Bochaver study poetic bilingualism from a sociological perspective. Some poets, Singaporean poets, for example, choose to write in English rather than Chinese, as this gives them an opportunity to attract more readers.[4] It can also be a means to bypass the censorship. For A. Makine, V. Fédorovski, and V. Afanassiev the choice of language and place of publication for their books is closely linked to their content. They speak truthfully about the demerits of the Soviet Union and Russia. Andreï Makine, for instance, talks about exiles, repressions, compares Russia to Europe and Asia, etc. All three writers left Russia[5] as adults (therefore they are not bilingual since childhood) and two of them applied for political asylum.[6] L. Jurgenson and I. Gran emigrated at a very young age together with their parents. Their language choice is due to the move to a new country.

This leads to the following questions: 1) is it possible to find examples of interference[7] in the literary texts written by contemporary French writers Jurgenson and Gran, almost French native speakers as they moved in France as children? 2) is it possible to find examples of interference in the novels by contemporary French writers A. Makine, V. Fédorovski, and V. Afanassiev who became bilingual as adults?

CASES OF INTERFERENCE IN THE NOVELS BY RUSSIAN–FRENCH WRITERS

None or almost no cases of interference were found manually, while reading the books of the corpus. There are no cases of interference or calques in the novel *Les Deux sœurs* (1997) by V. Fédorovski. Some examples that today might be called interference were actually borrowed from French in the late 18th and

[4] Наталия Азарова – Светалана Бочавер: Типология поэтического билингвизма, in В. Фещенко (отв. ред.): *Образы языка и зигзаги дискурса, сборник научных статей к 70-летию В.З. Демьянкова*, Культурная революция, 2018, 476–477.

[5] In the case of A. Makine and V. Afanassiev, the Soviet Union.

[6] These are A. Makine and V. Afanassiev. By the way, there are extremely negative reviews of the novels by Makine and Afanassiev in Russia: Татьяна Толстая: Русский человек на рандеву, in *Знамя* (6) 1998, 200–209, https://znamlit.ru/publication.php?id=500, accessed 15 October 2022; Елена Черемных: Литературный труд знаменитого пианиста. Лучше сто раз услышать, чем один раз прочесть, in *Коммерсантъ* (161) 1996, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/240200, accessed 15 October 2022.

[7] "The term interference implies the rearrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of foreign elements into the more highly structured domains of language, such as the bulk of the phonemic system, a large part of the morphology and syntax, and some areas of the vocabulary (kinship, color, weather, etc.)" Uriel Weinreich: *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, The Hague, Paris, Mouton, 1970 [1953], 1.

early 19th century.[8] However, on the following pages are listed a few cases that could be considered interference.

As for the examples of lexico–morphological interference in the novels by A. Makine, K. Baleevskikh notices that adverbs (especially ending with “ment”) are very common in the early 1990s and become less common by 2000.[9] Suffixes, more frequent in Russian than in French, can be seen more often in early novels, according to K. Baleevskikh.[10] We found a lot of suffixes ending with “âtre” in color names in the novel *Confession d’un porte–drapeau déchu* (1992): “blanchâtre”,[11] “verdâtre”,[12] “rosâtre”,[13] “brunâtres”,[14] “bleuâtre”,[15] “grisâtre”,[16] “jaunâtre”.[17] There are nouns with diminutives in the novel *Au temps du fleuve Amour*: “courette”,[18] “maisonnette”,[19] “vaguelettes”,[20] “mallette”.[21]

It is quite difficult to find cases of lexico–morphological interference in other novels of the corpus written by other authors. In the novel *Lettres sonores* (1995) by V. Afanassiev there is the following calque from Russian: “le mari […] s’est gavé de poires” ‘the husband ate too many pears’.[22] Neither in the *French Literature Corpus*, the *Frantext* Corpus, the *HathiTrust* library, nor in *Google Books* does this expression appear.[23] But in the *National Corpus of the*

[8] For instance, “dans la fleur de l’âge”, which appears in the novel by L. Jurgenson, is used by Voltaire in the late 18th century. Cf. May Smith: *The Influence of French on Eighteenth-Century Literary Russian. Semantic and Phraseological Calques*, Oxford – Bern – Berlin – Bruxelles – Frankfurt am Main – New York – Wien, Peter Lang, 2006, 193. For more examples, see Макарова 2022.

[9] Ксения Балеевских, *Язык как экспликация культурного опыта писателя-билингва (А. Макина)* [PhD thesis], Ярославль, 2002, 164.

[10] Балеевских: *Язык как экспликация*, 164.

[11] Andreï Makine: *Confession d’un porte–drapeau déchu*, Paris, Pierre Belfond, 1992, 65, 66, 81, 110.

[12] Ibid., 72, 110.

[13] Ibid., 75, 138.

[14] Ibid., 81.

[15] Ibid., 83.

[16] Ibid., 118.

[17] Ibid., 143.

[18] Ibid., 57.

[19] Ibid., 166.

[20] Ibid., 180, 188.

[21] Ibid., 188.

[22] Valéry Afanassiev, *Lettres sonores*, Paris, José Corti, 1995, 88. In this paper, single quotation marks are used for translations.

[23] The following corpora were used: 1) *Corpus de la littérature narrative du Moyen Âge au 20e siècle*, available at Classiques Garnier: https://www.classiques-garnier.com/numerique-bases/, accessed 15 October 2022; 2) *Frantext*, https://www.frantext.fr, accessed 15 October 2022. The first consists of literary texts from the 12th to the 20th century, while the second includes both literary works and autobiographical texts, memoirs, essays, correspondence, etc. from the 10th to the 21st century; 3) The *HathiTrust* digital library, which has over 17 million books (https://www.hathitrust.org, accessed 15 October 2022.); 4) The *Google Books* library, described by its creators as the largest in the world, and its related service *Google Books N-gram Viewer*, which allows us to trace the frequency of words or groups of words (*n*–grams) throughout the

Russian Language it is frequent.[24] The Russian paremy "муж объелся груш" 'the husband ate too many pears' is built on the question "где муж?" 'where is the husband?' and the answer "объелся груш" 'ate too many pears',[25] where the key role is played by rhyming consonance, which is impossible in French. Therefore, it is a calque from Russian, according to M. Smith's classification.[26] Perhaps it was introduced intentionally by the author, since the expression is taken in quotation marks and explained. Some features of Afanassiev's style are similar to that of A. Makine, for example, the conjunction "et" 'and' at the beginning of a sentence, the use of correct but not frequent French expressions, or a large number of dashes.

In the novel *Éducation nocturne* (1994) by L. Jurgenson, there are no cases of calque from Russian and the examples of interference are also extremely rare. A large number of suffixes can be noticed in the names of flowers ("verdâtre",[27] "brunâtre", "grisâtre",[28] "blanchâtre"[29]) or in other lexemes ("gouttelettes",[30] "dansotter"[31]). The word "marâtre" may also be included in this group. It is not used in the meaning 'mother-in-law' and 'stepmother' with a pejorative connotation, but as an adjective, an epithet: "Karl a dormi, il s'est réveillé dans le froid et le brouillard d'une terre [...] qui restait dure comme de la pierre, marâtre et revêche".[32] Another case of interference is the use of the noun "ténèbre" 'darkness' in the singular instead of plural. In Russian "мрак" is always used in singular (*singularia tantum*).[33] According to *Google Books N-gram Viewer*, "ténèbre" is used much less frequently in French–language texts than "мрак" in Russian–language texts. The sentence "De ses chaussettes

Google library corpus from the 16th to the 21st century: https://books.google.com, https://books.google.com/ngrams/, accessed 15 October 2022. The *HathiTrust* and *Google Books* corpora include literary and non-literary texts, translations and, most likely, books by multilingual authors, including V. Afanassiev, V. Fédorovski, A. Makine, L. Jurgenson, I. Gran. It is also important to keep in mind that the *Google Books* bibliography contains errors, so searching in this library is suitable for getting a general idea. The Russian–language search was complicated by the fact that many texts prior to the mid-18th century are poorly recognized. The Russian civil script ('гражданский шрифт') was developed by order of Peter the Great in the 1708–1710s, and civil book printing did not become widespread until the middle of the century.

[24] See the *National Corpus of the Russian Language*: https://ruscorpora.ru/new/, accessed 15 October 2022.

[25] The answer usually follows the question, both used with irony.

[26] Smith: *The Influence of French on Eighteenth-Century Literary Russian*, 29–30.

[27] Luba Jurgenson: *Éducation nocturne*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1994, 11.

[28] Ibid.,, 16–17, 73.

[29] Ibid., 111.

[30] Ibid., 219.

[31] Ibid., 390. According to *Google Books N–gram Viewer* and *HathiTrust*, both "dansotter" and "пританцовывать" occur very rarely, but "пританцовывать" is a little more common in Russian-language texts.

[32] Jurgenson: *Éducation nocturne*, 169.

[33] Ibid., 209, 271.

mouillées, la bière dégoulinait par terre" is notable for the word-order inversion.[34] The syntax of the sentence "Au début, [...], il naissait chez lui une pitié mêlée de terreur" is identical to the impersonal Russian sentence "в нем рождалось…" 'in him was born…'[35] As for adverbs ending with "ment", no cases of interference were found. A long but frequent adverb "précautionneusement"[36] occurs more than 200 times in the *Frantext* corpus. As in the novels by A. Makine, in *Éducation nocturne* (1994) by L. Jurgenson a series of adverbs ending with "ment" neighbor in the same sentence: "précautionneusement," "discrètement," "réellement."

The language of the novel *Acné festival* (1999) by I. Gran is colloquial, it is not pretentious, bookish, as in the novels by A. Makine, V. Fédorovski, L. Jurgenson and partly by V. Afanassiev. There are repetitions, for example, "Ce n'était pas le coup de foudre, à notre âge le coup de foudre n'arrive pas ou alors c'est de la littérature, le coup de foudre préfère les jeunots".[37] However, this example cannot be considered a lexico–morphological and syntactic interference with certainty. Repetition does not necessarily indicate the influence of Russian and has similar functions in both French and Russian. In the same novel by I. Gran, there are a lot of examples of an inversive word order, which can be called syntactic interference. Here are three of them: "vers la salle de bains je me dirige",[38] "dans un four je me sens",[39] "de me réconcilier j'ai envie".[40]

Conclusion

In the literary texts between 1990 and 2000 written by contemporary Russian–French bilingual authors, several cases of interference, referring to Weinreich's meaning of this term, can be found. However, the novel *Les Deux sœurs* (1997) by V. Fédorovski seems to have no cases of interference. The novels written by A. Makine, L. Jurgenson, and I. Gran have some stylistic traits that remind one of the Russian language. It is possible to find them, but quite difficult to consider all of them to be examples of interference.[41]

[34] Ibid., 306.

[35] Ibid., 183.

[36] "Précautionneusement, il inclina la tête et tâcha de soulever discrètement les pans de son pantalon pour voir si, réellement, ses chevilles n'avaient pas changé de volume" (Jurgenson: *Éducation nocturne*, 62).

[37] Iegor Gran: *Acné festival*, Paris, P.O.L., 1999, 29.

[38] Ibid., 62.

[39] Ibid., 70.

[40] Ibid., 147.

[41] The interference can also be detected by computational stylometric methods. Baleevskikh's observations about interference in the novels by A. Makine, for instance, are made without using stylometric techniques. There is a difference in the use of definite articles and demonstratives by Russian–French bilingual writers and French monolingual contemporary writers.

Weinreich's understanding of interference is based on the term of norm. In the 21st century, however, it is becoming fluid. Writers are becoming more and more multilingual. This changes the norm. Weinreich argues that interference can be found in literary texts: "Another aspect of speech mixture that may eventually be utilized is that of bilingual folklore and the literary production of bilinguals".[42] However, the norm in his study is fixed in relation to spoken and written language, and the literary texts do not fit into this norm. Weinreich does not specify the norm for a literary text written by a bilingual. Given all these reflections, it is better to speak of the author's individual language ("идиолект" 'idiolect' in Russian[43]) than to look for cases of interference and to consider them as deviations from the norm. Bilingualism and broadly speaking multilingualism is an opportunity for a writer to create his or her own idiolect. It should not be seen as a deviation from the norm, but a sign of creativity.

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Russian–French authors use the demonstratives "ce", "cette", "ces" instead of the definite articles "le", "la", "les" by analogy with Russian where there are no articles but demonstratives. Indeed, the demonstratives occur more frequently in the novels by Russian–French writers and play a decisive role in classification of Russian–French texts as such. For more details, see Макарова 2022.

[42] Weinreich: *Languages in Contact*, 12.

[43] Виктор Виноградов: Идиолект, in В.Н. Ярцева (ред.): *Лингвистический энциклопедический словарь*, Институт языкознания АН СССР, Москва, Советская энциклопедия, 1998 [1990], 171.

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POEMS–AS–LANGUAGE–LESSONS: TRANSLINGUALISM IN NAOMI MCILWRAITH'S *kiyâm*[1]

MALOU BROUWER

Indigenous peoples in Turtle Island, North America, know an immense linguistic diversity: first, in terms of the more than 150 Indigenous languages being spoken across the continent,[2] and second, with regards to the imposition of colonial languages such as French, Spanish, and English, which are now spoken by many Indigenous people. Although this chapter and my dissertation research more broadly focus mainly on Indigenous women's poetry in Canada, I am always aware of the broader context of linguistic diversity across Turtle Island (and beyond) and the relations between these contexts, languages, and peoples.[3] To many, Canada is known for its official English–French bilingualism. However, this situation and image is part of a continued attempt at the erasure of Indigenous languages, peoples, and cultures in the settler colonial context of what is now called Canada. Through the often multilingual work of Indigenous authors (in the sense of multiple languages being present in these texts[4]), Indigenous literatures reflect this linguistic context, challenge the settler colonial effects of the imposition of colonial languages, and celebrate the revitalization of Indigenous languages in the face of but also despite colonial

[1] This chapter is adapted from my conference presentation, "Poems–as–language–lessons: Translingualism in Naomi McIlwraith's *kiyâm*," presented at LangueFlow's "Code-Switching in Arts" conference on September 29, 2022.

[2] The maps from Native–Land.ca depict many of these languages and where they are/were spoken. This useful tool continues to be updated in collaboration with Indigenous peoples and communities to reflect Indigenous territories and languages across the world.

[3] This broader awareness includes my own position as settler scholar on these lands now called Canada and as multilingual speaker of three colonial languages–Dutch, French, and English.

[4] While often this multilingualism manifests itself in the poems through words, phrases, verses in various languages–colonial and/or Indigenous–other times the multilingualism is less obvious. According to Acoose, Kovach, and Ouriou, no matter what (European) language the poetry is written in, there is always a relation to the Indigenous language and/or the epistemologies that lie behind it; even if there is no explicit use of an Indigenous language, it is still present. These authors make the language and culture felt in other ways than explicit use of Indigenous language. See Janice Acoose-Miswonigeesikokwe: *Neither Indian Princesses nor Easy Squaws*, Toronto, Canadian Scholars' Press, 2016; Margaret Kovach: *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2009; Susan Ouriou: Preface, in S. Ouriou (ed.): *Languages of Our Land: Indigenous Poems and Stories from Quebec / Langues de notre terre: Poèmes et récits autochtones du Québec*, trans. Christelle Morelli, Banff, Banff Centre Press, 2014.

attempts at erasure and assimilation.[5] While some authors write in one of the colonial languages and others publish solely in an Indigenous language, most employ a combination in their creations—combining various languages to varying degrees.[6] Naomi McIlwraith, an educator, poet, and essayist with a mixed Cree, Ojibwe, Scottish, and English ancestry, for example, writes in *nêhiyawêwin*, the Plains Cree language, and English in her collection of poetry *kiyâm* to explore the intersections of these languages and to reflect on and further her learning of *nêhiyawêwin*.[7] I argue that her collection of poetry can be read as "poetry–as–language–lesson"[8] not only in the sense that she reflects on learning "a threatened language: namely *nêhiyawêwin*"[9] but also in that the collection is presented as language lessons for the reader. Before going forward, a brief methodological note is appropriate here. Thinking and working through how to respectfully incorporate the concept of translingualism in the analysis of and approach to Indigenous literatures is leading me to build a translingual framework from *within* the poems, rather than by simply "applying" an existing, often Eurocentric, framework. This follows authors like Blaeser, Maracle, and Simpson, among others, who argue that poetry too is theory.[10] I thus build on Indigenous perspectives from within poetry and

[5] Colonial structures and events geared towards the erasure of Indigenous languages, knowledges, and peoples include the residential schools, where children were forbidden to speak their native language and forced to adopt English or French (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada), the (dis)placement of Indigenous children into non-Indigenous families during the Sixties Scoop, the policies set out in the Indian Act, etc.

[6] Translation of Indigenous literatures comes to enrich the linguistic diversity across these texts and makes them available to a wide range of readers with various linguistic backgrounds. I have addressed translation of Indigenous literatures elsewhere, see: Malou Brouwer: Surviving and Challenging the Colonized Scene of Translation: Innu in Natasha Kanapé Fontaine's Poetry, *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 33 (2021), 53–75, https://doi.org10.1353/ail.2021.0009

[7] Naomi McIlwraith: *kiyâm*, Edmonton, Athabasca University Press, 2012, 5–11. The Cree language does not use capital letters. Throughout this piece, I follow McIlwraith's spelling of Cree words without capitalization. For example, the title of her collection of poetry *kiyâm* is written in lowercase letters. Also, while in English languages are usually capitalized, they are not in Cree, which is why I write *nêhiyawêwin* in lowercase letters. Despite standard rules of capitalization in English, I do not capitalize Cree words throughout this piece to follow Cree standards of non-capitalization. For a more elaborate reflection on non-capitalization in Cree, see Chapter 3 of *How to Spell it in Cree (The Standard Roman Orthography)* by Jean Okimāsis and Arok Wolvengrey.

[8] Heid Erdrich: *Curator of Ephemera at the New Museum for Archaic Media*, Michigan, Michigan State University Press, 2017, 61.

[9] McIlwraith: *kiyâm*, 5.

[10] Kimberley Blaeser: Native Literature: Seeking A Critical Center, in D. Reder – L. M. Morra (eds.): *Learn, Teach, Challenge: Approaching Indigenous Literatures,* Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016, 231–238; Lee Maracle: Oratory: Coming to Theory, in M. Campbell – D. Jensen – J. A. Fedorick – J. Q. Smith – J. Armstrong – L. Maracle: *Give Back: First Nations Perspectives on Cultural Practice*, Gallerie Publications, 1992, 85–93; Leanne Betasamosake Simpson: *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

other genres of writing to better understand the translingual concepts and practices in Indigenous women's poetry, and here specifically McIlwraith's work, in an effort to make sure that the (often fraught) relations between the various colonial and Indigenous languages these authors write in are dealt with appropriately.

Poems–as–language–lessons

The concept of poems–as–language–lessons that I use here is addressed by Turtle Mountain Ojibwe writer and editor Heid Erdrich. Her collection of poetry *Curator of Ephemera at the New Museum for Archaic Media* contains several poems entitled "Lexiconography" and "Anishnaabemowin lesson" which "are part of a series of poem-as-language-lesson collaborations Erdrich and Noodin engaged in."[11] In the author notes section at the end of her collection, she adds "a word about translations:"

> the poems in this book that are accompanied by Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) language translations are tutorials in the form of poems from the gracious poet and language teacher Margaret Noodin. Where you see the poem in my English version, then Ojibwe by Noodin, then English by Noodin, you are seeing her teach me the literal translation in our indigenous language (which helps me understand the grammar) followed by a poetic return to English, which helps us both investigate the differences between the languages.[12]

The concept as presented here by Erdrich rests on a collaboration between a language learner (Erdrich) and teacher (Noodin). While McIlwraith's *kiyâm* is single-authored, and she provides her own "translations" for her verse, the concept applies in that she reflects the process of learning an Indigenous language. And the collaborative element persists in a different manner, namely that of the relation between McIlwraith, who through her poetry moves from being a learner of Cree to also being a teacher of the language, and her readers as learners. McIlwraith's poetry reflects both her desire to learn Cree, which she achieves partly through her poetry, and serves as language lessons for readers—Cree and non-Cree alike—as she moves between Cree and English in a similar way to Erdrich's "Lexiconography" and "Anishnaabemowin lesson" poems.

[11] Erdrich: *Curator*, 61.
[12] Ibid., 85.

nêhiyawêwin itwêwina: Loss, Listening, and Learning

In the opening poem entitled "The Road to Writer's Block (A Poem to Myself)," McIlwraith reflects precisely on her desire to learn Cree. She writes:

Turn left at desire. Take this burden
and never let go. Cling
as a burr latches onto fleece.
Be sure that your load includes
the self-imposed responsibility to learn
a threatened language: namely *nêhiyawêwin*.[13]

Opening the poem and collection with these verses, she positions language learning front and center. Moreover, these verses show the relation between a voluntary desire to learn Cree and the great responsibility that comes with it—since it is a threatened language due to colonial impacts that continue today. This responsibility is underscored by her use of the imperative mood. Furthermore, the comparison of the poem's speaker with a burr stuck on fleece highlights that once one has started to learn Cree it is hard to detach from it. Once entangled in Cree words, sentences, and knowledge systems embedded within, there is no unlearning it. Learning the language, as McIlwraith shows in her collection of poetry, goes far beyond learning words, grammar, and sentence structures and includes an immersion in the worldview and culture within; language gives us "a unique way of looking at the world around us."[14]

As McIlwraith writes further along in the same poem, the responsibility is fueled by generations of language loss among Cree people, and Indigenous people more generally, since colonization:

Bear the millstone of language loss
the way a woman drags home the last
buffalo: *paskwâwi–mostos*,
as you confront the colonial tongue.[15]

McIlwraith creates here a parallel between the almost extinction of bison, or "*paskwâwi–mostos*,"[16] and of the Cree language on the Prairies. During

[13] McIlwraith: *kiyâm*, 5.

[14] Brian Maracle: The First Words, in T. Cardinal et al.: *Our Story: Aboriginal Voices on Canada's Past*, Anchor Canada, 2005, 7. See also Jeanette Armstrong: Land Speaking, in H. MacFarlane – A. G. Ruffo (eds.): *Introduction to Indigenous Literary Criticism in Canada*, Peterborough, Broadview Press, 2016, 146–161.

[15] McIlwraith: *kiyâm*, 6.

[16] She reflects on the structure of the word in the poem "On the Prairie," writing: If the prairie is called *paskwâw*, a cow *mostos*, and a buffalo *paskwâwi-mostos*–prairie cow–which came first, the buffalo, the cow, or the prairie?" McIlwraith: *kiyâm*, 13.

colonization, bison were killed in tremendous numbers; they went from an estimated 30 to 60 million almost to extinction.[17] Linking the hunting down of bison and the invasion of the colonial English language aimed at eradicating Cree on the plains, McIlwraith demonstrates the deep simultaneous impacts of colonization and continued colonialism on Indigenous livelihoods and languages thus underlining that settler colonialism is "a structure, not an event."[18]

Although McIlwraith's poetry is conscious of and describes a colonial past and present, it also challenges colonialism and its devastating impacts as the "only" narrative. It includes many poetic depictions of a present of language revitalization that will continue into the future. In the poem "father language," honouring her non-Indigenous father's fluency in Cree, she writes:

> I read about the –*ikawi* suffix
> and the unspecified actor form,
> wonder about the curiosities
> of active or passive voice in Cree,
> but mostly I yearn to learn
> real Cree words, am eager to hear
> *nêhiyawêwin itwêwina* in the air.[19]

This poem underscores, again, the speaker's yearning for the Cree language through the lexical fields of wonder ("wonder," "curiosities") and desire ("eager," "yearn"). The contrast created between the technical aspects of *nêhiyawêwin* and the practical use of the language invites the reader to reflect on the process of language learning. The speaker starts out learning the language through grammar and lexicon ("–*ikawi* suffix," "the unspecified actor form," "active or passive voice") but quickly realizes that learning "real Cree words" is preferable. The transition from "reading" about grammar to "hear[ing] / *nêhiyawêwin itwêwina* in the air" indeed, underscores the importance of listening in learning Cree. Running throughout her poems, the theme of listening to become a fluent speaker is central to McIlwraith's work. As she explains in an interview with Ellen Kartz:

[17] See, for example, M. Scott Taylor – Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison, *American Economic Review*, 101 (2011), 3162–3195, https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.101.7.3162

[18] Patrick Wolfe: Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 2006, 387–409, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240

[19] McIlwraith: *kiyâm*, 52.

> [T]o be a fluent speaker in every sense imaginable requires of us to be fluent listeners first. We were hearing and listening even before we let the river carry us from our Mom's womb, and we've been hearing and listening ever since. It's the only way we become fluent—and that is to listen far more than we speak.[20]

Significantly, the verses quoted above are followed by multiple stanzas of word lessons detailing Cree words through various thematic word groups, including food, trees, seasons, weather, nature, kinship terms, verbs, life and death, and so on. McIlwraith smoothly switches between English and Cree not only practicing Cree in her writing, but also offering these language lessons to the reader. The reader is invited to learn Cree words and phrases from the poetry and to reflect on how language is learned (through listening and speaking rather than through reading and writing[21]). Moreover, McIlwraith creates meaning in the space between English and Cree as the continuous moving between languages asks her and the reader to reflect on differences and relations between the two—and the worldviews embedded within.

Reading *kiyâm* as Language Guide

To further support the idea of McIlwraith's poems as language lessons for the reader, let us take a closer look at the paratextual material of *kiyâm*. The translingual presentation of almost all poems is accompanied by the paratextual material that is aimed at helping the reader understand the language lessons presented in her work, on the one hand, and to preserving Cree language knowledge and revitalizing the language, on the other hand. The collection of poetry is completely structured as a language guide. Most notable are the guide to Cree pronunciation preceding the poems, the extra resources on Cree language in the bibliography, and the extensive, almost 30 pages long, glossary following the poems.[22] Building on Cree language scholarship, the pronunciation guide entitled "the sounds of plains cree: a guide to pronunciation" is aimed at the "accurate preservation of Plains Cree pronunciation" as it discusses the pronunciation of Plains Cree consonants, vowels, and stress. In this

[20] Naomi McIlwraith – Ellen Kartz: *Becoming a Fluent Listener: Ellen Kartz Interviews Naomi McIlwraith*, Read Alberta, 5 April 2022, https://readalberta.ca/interviews/becoming-a-fluent-listener-ellen-kartz-interviews-naomi-mcilwraith/, accessed 10 December 2022.

[21] In many (often Western) educational contexts, there is a focus on writing, which McIlwraith alludes to in the interview: "Perhaps because I've been schooled in the industrial sense of schooling, I'm therefore very adept with the written word but must work much harder with the spoken word." Cree, on the other hand, is much more attuned to the oral. McIlwraith–Kartz: *Becoming a Fluent Listener.*

[22] McIlwraith: *kiyâm,* xi–xiii ("the sounds of plains cree: a guide to pronunciation"), 153–155 (language resources in bibliography), 125–152 ("cree-english correspondences").

title, particularly through "sounds," is reflected once again the importance of oral traditions and of listening in learning *nêhiyawêwin.* In addition, audio readings by McIlwraith herself are openly available on the publisher's website. The audio recordings allow the reader to listen to the book, while the paperback and e–book editions allow the reader to read it. And there is a third option, to combine the two for a language lesson on pronunciation. In that respect the audio version works together with the pronunciation guide to preserve and revitalize *nêhiyawêwin*—and connects back to the necessity of being a fluent listener to become a fluent speaker.

The glossary interestingly is titled "cree-english correspondences." The absence of capital letters for the languages here follows Cree orthography and thus decenters English as the "dominant" language. Moreover, it puts both languages on equal footing, which is also exemplified by the idea of "correspondences." The words here appear not as mere translation but rather as agreement or communication between the two languages, moving from one to another and back, creating meaning in the space between. The glossary contains "translations" for each Cree word, phrase, or verse from the poems thus making it a useful tool for the reader to better understand the poetry and to learn some Cree in the process. It should, however, be noted that almost all Cree expressions are accompanied by their English counterparts in the poems themselves—whether through Cree first then English, English first then Cree, or a smooth mix of going back and forth between them. In that sense we can argue that the Cree words, phrases, verses do not, to borrow from Adejunmobi, "function as blank signals of cultural authenticity to be explicated in peripheral glossaries, but rather as components that are integral to the construction of meaning at every point in the text."[23]

Using Cree and English in *kiyâm,* Naomi McIlwraith contributes to the preservation and revitalization of *nêhiyawêwin*, reflects on the relation between the two languages and the worldviews embedded within, and exemplifies the concept and phenomenon of poems–as–language–lessons. The latter not only becomes clear through the reflection on language learning she presents, in which learning Cree entails becoming a fluent listener first, but also through the strong emphasis on providing the reader with tools in the collection of poetry itself to learn the language, which becomes particularly evident in her embrace of paratextual materials. The continuous moving between languages demands a strong effort by non-Cree speaking and imperfect speaking readers to follow along with McIlwraith's poetic reflections on language, while those fluent in *nêhiyawêwin* and English may be able to more fully appreciate and experience her work. In this way McIlwraith speaks to a broad audience

[23] Moradewun Adejunmobi: Translation and Postcolonial Identity, *The Translator* 4 (1998), 174.

reflecting not only the desire and necessity of preserving and revitalizing a threatened language, but also to enter a relationship with the reader—a relationship that often takes the form of teacher and learner, emphasizing her work as poetry–as–language–lesson. McIlwraith's positioning of *nêhiyawêwin* front and center—the Cree language being the main theme as well as the most important vehicle available for her reflections—and in relation with English demonstrates the effects of settler colonialism on the Cree language but also, even more importantly, succeeds in challenging and countering them.

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"UM MICH NEU ZU MACHEN"

Switching the Language of Poetry by Jacques Jouet

Levente Seláf

Very recently, by an act that surprised the entire French literary public interested in poetry, the well-known French author Jacques Jouet (1947), member of the Oulipo, took the drastic decision to give up publishing poetry in his French mother tongue and switch to German. After writing an important oeuvre in French, including a dozen novels and books of poetry, widely read all over the French-speaking world, and also known in English translations, his decision came very abruptly in Spring 2022, at the age of 74.

Since 1983, his entry to the Oulipo, Jouet was a prolific author. He invented several poetical constraints, and most of his poems were composed in an Oulipian spirit, following (complex) formal rules. While his elder colleague and co-member, the poet and former mathematician Jacques Roubaud is obsessed by numbers and all poetical devices based on them, the new poetic forms invented by Jouet seem to reflect a major interest in time and space: for instance the "monostiques paysagers,"[1] and the "chronopoèmes," poems whose length is calculated in advance with the time necessary to their reading out, controlled with the help of a chronometer,[2] etc. His self-constraining practice of "poèmes du jour" (daily poems) is also related to his attachment to time as a major motif, or a principle of poetical creation: 1st April 1992 Jouet decided to compose at least one poem per day, and he has continued to do so since then without interruption; a good part of these "daily poems" have been published in several volumes.[3]

Some 21 years later, 29 May 2013, Jouet launched another initiative, the "ppp"—projet poétique planétaire.[4] It consists of sending his daily poems day after day to a single person. The final goal of this radical initiative is to offer a

[1] Jacques Jouet: *Monostique paysager*, https://www.oulipo.net/fr/contraintes/monostique-paysager, accessed 27 October, 2022.

[2] Jacques Jouet: *Chronopoème*, https://www.oulipo.net/fr/contraintes/chronopoeme, accessed 27 October, 2022.

[3] Three volumes have been published so far: *Navet, linge, œil–de–vieux*, Paris, P.O.L., 1998; *Du jour*, Paris, P.O.L., 2013; *Dos, pensée (poème), revenant*, Paris, P.O.L., 2019. On this genre as a specific constraint see Jacques Jouet: *PPP, le poème adressé du jour*, https://www.oulipo.net/fr/ppp-le-poeme-adresse-du-jour, accessed 27 October, 2022.

[4] For a concise description of the project see the article "Projet poétique planétaire" in *Wikipedia*: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Projet_po%C3%A9tique_plan%C3%A9taire, accessed 27 October 2022.

poem to every person living in the world. Four authors, Patrick Biau, Jean–Paul Honoré, Natali Leduc and Cécile Riou, so far have joined Jacques Jouet in this enterprise. Instead of some platform of the social media, the poems are sent by post in an ordinary envelope. This is a very conservative avant-garde initiative: a voluntary, deeply reflected refusal of the digital technologies, and a sentimental return to an obsolescent medium, symbol of a direct, more personal relationship via and for the poetry even though most of the recipients have never met the author. The poem sent by post is a kind of present, and this present is unique for every recipient. His new career as a German writer began with changing the language of his daily poems from French to German.

Describing his switch to German, Jouet speaks about his practice of "rupture," taking radical decisions in his career, and of his will "to decenter himself." In an interview by Guillaume Lecaplain published in *Libération*, he says that he decided on this radical change close to the 30th anniversary of his practice of writing a poem every day.[5] And his first German poem was written precisely on that day. It is conceived by him to renew, to reinitiate his poetry in a totally different linguistic and literary environment. In his poem composed on 30 May, he thematizes this switch and describes his goal: "Um mich neu zu machen" ("To renew myself").

Jouet is in fact the second German-writing poet of the Oulipo after Oskar Pastior (1927–2006). Pastior was coopted as a member of the group in 1992. Born in Romania, imprisoned in a Russian detention camp, he had a—more or less—deep knowledge of English, Italian, Romanian, French and Russian, so beside writing in German he experimented with multilingualism in many of his compositions. Jouet explained that he was and is influenced by Pastior's work, and his ingenious use of the German and the other aforementioned languages.

The author made his German poems written between 1 April and 31 August in 2022 available to me: his "poèmes du jour", some 160 poems, at least one per day. This is, of course, not an organized, arranged, longtime meditated songbook in the Petrarchan tradition. It is much more a highly interesting documentation of the author's gradual discovery of the poetical possibilities offered by the German language. He also shared with me a small cycle of poems entitled *Zwei Flüße,* composed in August. In this essay, I would like to present this corpus, the process of code-switching in Jouet's German poetry, tracing its evolution and changes so far, comparing it to his prior, French works. Commenting on the poems, I will also present Jouet's poetical remarks as they appear in a recent interview published in *Libération*, and another one made

[5] Guillaume Lecaplain interview: Jacques Jouet: 'Ceux qui m'aiment apprendront l'allemand', in *Libération* https://www.liberation.fr/culture/livres/jacques-jouet-ceux-qui-maiment-apprendront-lallemand-20221001_4NR4RSLWHVCM3P5H3KWEBXYARA/, accessed 27 October 2022.

in October 2022 by myself.[6] The corpus is not available yet online, and the author does not intend to make it accessible to everyone. Of course, as every poem has been sent to a single person, in theory at least the recipient knows the poem he got. But as a whole collection of poems, it cannot be read yet without Jouet's consent.

Long before beginning to compose his daily poems in German, Jouet had already acquired a level of German. But he is aware of his limited language skills compared to his native French. After his switch he is constantly trying to improve them by consuming and writing poetry. The training necessary for the poetical composition consists mostly in reading in German and learning German poems by heart. In the interview with *Libération*, he said: "…Because I write before knowing German. My idea is to prove that one can learn a language by reading, translating, memorizing, and writing poetry. This is to reverse the values received from a language by focusing everything on the poetry."[7]

The daily poems contain several texts belonging to genres which are important for Jouet's French poetry as well. Three of them have various advantages for the poet who is still learning the language he wants to explore and practice on a long term: 1) the homonymic poems, 2) the "monostique paysager", and 3) the "elementary morality." It is important to add that the special layout of the three genres allows them to be classified also as visual poetry.[8]

The first genre consists of one, two or three words, all homonyms of French and German: lexical elements that have a meaning both in French and in German, but not the same. As a subtitle always indicates: „zweisprachiges Gedicht oder Gedicht mit nur einem Wort, aber sie sind zwei" ("bilingual poem, or a poem with only one word, which is in fact two")—in case of poems of two words.[9]

These are not loanwords in any case: the correspondence of the form is always accidental, not etymological. Precisely, the poetical effect is obtained by the great semantic distance between the two meanings. Jouet's first four German poems belong to this category: DONNER; SEIN; HAUT; PATIN. Later this practice was extended to pairs of words, even going to combine three words. For instance, the poem written on 6 October is the following:

PLAGE DES MONDES.

[6] This interview has not been published and might never be. The author answered my questions by email.

[7] English translation is mine. Cf. "… Car j'écris avant de savoir l'allemand. Mon idée, c'est de prouver qu'on peut apprendre une langue en lisant, en traduisant, en apprenant par coeur et en écrivant des poèmes. C'est inverser les valeurs reçues d'une langue en centrant tout sur la poésie." Guillaume Lecaplain, Jacques Jouet.

[8] The poems are written with a special color, and sometimes one of the meanings may explain the selection of a specific color, like in the case of MAIS (meaning "but" as a French, but "corn" as a German word).

[9] The subtitle might slightly change if the poem has more than one word in it.

The English translation of the French meaning would be "beach of the worlds," that of the German: "plague of the moon." With this text the poet tried to join the words with a syntactic junction, achieving a complexity above the simple juxtaposition of two words.

Jouet considers himself a beginner as a German poet. The forms he uses are typical to his earlier French poetical production. While the homonyms still present an attachment to the French language, the two other forms are rather "easy." The "monostique paysager" (landscape monostich) is a form invented by Jouet: its principle is to describe the view opened to the eyes of the poetic I in a single line, moving the head from left to right, and describing the sight, as the letters and words of the Latin alphabet are following each other in the languages using it. Obviously, this genre does not demand a very complicated syntax; rather elementary language skills may be enough for composing in it, and it cannot be longer than a single line.

The grammatical complexity of the third genre, "elementary morality," is even more reduced, just like a skeleton of a complex text even in the first, French specimens of the genre: most of the lines are composed of two–word groups, including a noun and an adjective.[10] This genre was invented by Raymond Queneau. Jacques Jouet excels in it; he even coedited a poetical anthology of the genre, popular in the circle of the Oulipo.[11]

Of course, not every German poem written by Jouet belongs to these genres: Some others have rhyming verses, more complicated sentences, sometimes with grammatical faults. A new level in the diversification of Jouet's German compositions is attained when he becomes capable of writing short narrative or elegiac poems with whole sentences. The highly elaborated grammatical structure of a poem, of course, is not at all parallel with or guarantee of its poetical quality. One–word poems might be as good as longer ones. Needless to say: a long novel will never be a wonderful poem. But the apparition of these longer compositions among the daily poems documents Jouet's progress in learning German.

In the published interview Jouet said that his primary constraint of composing the daily poems is observed in any case: he is not allowed to correct the poem the day after, even if it has some grammatical mistakes. That is how this collection of poems also becomes a memento and a diary of his exploration of

[10] For the definition of the genre, see Raymond Queneau, Morale élémentaire, OULIPO, ouvroir de littérature potentielle, https://oulipo.net/fr/contraintes/morale-elementaire accessed 27 October 2022; and also Jacques Roubaud's study "The birth of a form: elementary morality", *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 22 September 1997, https://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+birth+of+a+form%3A+elementary+morality-a020640716, accessed 27 October 2022

[11] Jacques Jouet – Pierre Martin – Dominique Moncond'huy (eds.): *La morale élémentaire: aventure d'une forme poétique, Queneau, Oulipo, etc.*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007.

the German language. Anyhow, the main function of poetry is to discover and enlarge the potentialities of the language, any language—but it is rare to see it in such a dimension, how a poet traces his discoveries from its earliest steps.

One of Jouet's first experiments with more complex grammatical structures is the evocation of his first meeting with the German language. He remembers, in a sequence of poems written between May 20 and 30, his first teacher of German, Monsieur Rona, a Hungarian immigrant who taught him in secondary school.[12] The first poem in the sequence says in a self-reflective manner, in its first line: "ich hatte damit anfangen sollen" ("I should have begun with that"). But certainly, this topic was delayed as the author's level of German was not good enough for that at the very beginning.

Another way of combining the poetical practice and the grammatical exercise is writing similar syntactic structures in following lines in the frames of still another genre: the "poem 'Choses qui…', à la manière de Sei Shônagon" ("Things that…" in the manner of Sei Shônagon). This genre was experimented by Jouet in French for instance in the collective poetry book *Niamey*, co-written by Idi Nouhou, Cécile Riou, and Jacques Jouet, also including a series of daily poems in chronological order, from December 27, 2017, to January 2, 2018.[13] The German poems composed on April 27, 28 and 30, May 16 and 18, June 7, 10, 12 and 20 belong to this genre. His creation of new poetical forms was not stopped with his switch to German; June 5, 2022 he invented the genre *Kriminalgedicht*, imitating in poetry the crime story; its unique constraint is thematic, it must be related to a crime. He wrote two of them, on that day and the following one, but the question is open if they will be followed by further production in the genre.

Jouet himself considers as a major step in his exploration of German his plays and experiments with previous German poems: rewritings, reflections, pastiches on texts by Heinrich Heine or Peter Handke. For instance, the poems written on May 3, June 23, and 28, July 1, and August 8 refer to different poems by Heine, published in the *Buch des lieder*. This manyfold inspiration concerns the topics, the vocabulary, and the meaning of the models, but not their form, as far as I can judge it. Another very difficult exercise he tries is the genre of "poème de métro," invented by Jouet, which is in fact an improvisation: the author has to invent every line between two underground stations. The poem of June 13, composed in Paris, becomes a comment on his existence as a German poet:

[12] It is worth noting that not every poem of the sequence deals with that topic.

[13] Idi Nouhou – Cécile Riou – Jacques Jouet: *Niamey*, Paris, Les mille univers, 2019.

ohne korrigieren! absolut nichts!
der Fehler ist der Stil
ich bin kein deutscher Dichter, kein mehr französischer Dichter
ich bin ein lernender Dichter, ein Anfanger [...]

(Without correcting! Absolutely nothing!
The fault is the style
I am not a German poet, nor a French poet anymore
I am a poet who learns, a beginner [...])[14]

Beside the continuous writing of the daily poems, at least one other cycle of 25 poems was prepared by Jouet between August 1 and 25, one for each day. This independent series entitled *Zwei Flüße* is dedicated to the inhabitants of the French village Duesme, and the German Furthwangen, where respectively the Seine and the Danube take their origin. These texts have the most difficult prosodic structure in the corpus I am aware of. Written in several quatrains, rhyming xaxa, they follow the form of Heine's world–famous *Loreley*, a romantic ballad on the river Rhine. The precise and self-confident handling of a genuine German poetic form, the exploration of the intertextual and interformal dialogue between the two texts might also be considered as a progress, a further stage of "learning how to be" a German poet. Writing in such a form in French might not be interesting for Jouet: too easy, too simple, somewhat archaic. But as he qualifies himself as a beginner in German poetry, there is no shame in experimenting also this form.

Conclusion

It is impossible to prognosticate the further evolution in Jacques Jouet's poetry. But this short presentation of the first months of his work allows us to see some tendencies and consequences of the language change. First: he has invented new poetical genres: that of the homonymous word–poem, bilingual by nature, and the Kriminalgedicht or Banditgedicht, which is language-independent. Second: he keeps some of his favorite French poetic forms also in the new language, like the "elementary morality" or the "poème de métro." Third: this overview shows the progress of the author in German, and the complexification of his texts' grammatical structure. He first acquires the words, then the skill to compose adjective phrases sufficient for writing elementary moralities, then sentences, and only after that the necessary skills to write rhyming poems. But even without knowing the future, we can certainly say this

[14] English translation is mine.

collection is an extraordinary documentation of the (re)birth of Jacques Jouet as a German poet.

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FIRST LANGUAGE ROOTS: INTRA-SENTENTIAL LITERARY CODE-SWITCHING IN ESL POETRY AND PROSE

Lisa Schantl

This chapter examines how multilingualism and migration come together in contemporary creative nonfiction and poetry by authors who compose their literary texts in English as their second language (ESL). One-word interferences, or instances of intra-sentential code-switching, in the author's first language(s) are a potent multilingual strategy in translingual writing to evoke a representation of or allusion to individual migration experiences or global movements. To add to the framework of literary code-switching proposed by Deganutti and Domokos (2021), these instances are further examined for their co-occurrence with ('weak') or without ('strong') explications in the matrix language. Various functions, such as (de-)familiarization, mimesis, or typographical imagery, show how additional layers of meaning and reference can be evoked in creative nonfiction and poetry by ESL writers through a poeticization of the author's migration background.

Translingual Writing and Migration

This paper sets out to explore literary multilingualism, in particular the literary strategy of intra-sentential code-switching, in prose and poetry by English as a Second Language (ESL) writers with a migration background. ESL writers belong to the group of translingual writers, i.e. authors who compose their texts in a language that is neither their first language nor their mother tongue, or writers who write in more than one language.[1] Although academic interest in translingual literature has increased over the past decades, precise analyses focusing on either a subcategory of translingual writing, e.g. ESL authors, or on specific strategies that these writers employ in their work are not yet close to being exhausted.

Code-switching is one the most distinctive strategies that can be observed in literature by translingual writers. Till Dembeck and Rolf Parr even discuss

[1] Steven G. Kellman (ed.): *Switching Languages: Translingual Writers Reflect on Their Craft,* Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2003, xi.

it as one of four basic processes of literary multilingualism,[2] and Marianna Deganutti and Johanna Domokos have recently analyzed a sample of Hungarian literary works with a focus on code-switching, highlighting the literary device's function as a fictional, not exclusively mimetic, tool in literature.[3] Taking these scholars' observations as a starting point, my aim is to narrow the focus down to a specific group of translingual writers to show how migration backgrounds can be aesthetically represented in ESL prose and poetry, and how their works are thus transformed into intersectional collages of movements between language environments.

While most widely read literary works remain in the sphere of monolingualism and the assumption persists that the world was organized in natural monolingual language communities,[4] migration and similar movements across political, linguistic and/or cultural borders continue to subvert the supposedly 'natural' connection between language and physical space.[5] Still, speaking with an accent or exhibiting a distinctive idiolect keeps being equated with linguistic inferiority,[6] and speaking or writing in more than one language with "impurity".[7] Terms such as "extraterritorial writer" (George Steiner)[8] or "unhousedness" (Caren Kaplan)[9] illustrate this struggle and the in-betweenness felt by writers who live in exile or face migration. However, a destabilization of one's physical and linguistic environment can serve as a catalyst for employing more than one language in one's literary writing,[10] which can cue writers to formulate an "idiosyncratic interlanguage"[11] as their defining feature. Only when translingual writers accomplish to make a home in the in-between state

[2] Till Dembeck: Sprachwechsel/Sprachmischung, in Till Dembeck – Rolf Parr (eds.): *Literatur und Mehrsprachigkeit. Ein Handbuch,* Tübingen, Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, 2020, 125–166.

[3] Marianna Deganutti – Johanna Domokos: Four major literary code-switching strategies in Hungarian literature. Decoding monolingualism, in Levente T. Szabó (ed.): *Hungarian Studies Yearbook,* Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2021, 46–47.

[4] David Gramling: Einsprachigkeit, Mehrsprachigkeit, Sprachigkeit, in T. Dembeck – R. Parr (eds.): *Literatur und Mehrsprachigkeit. Ein Handbuch*, Tübingen, Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, 2020, 36.

[5] Rainier Grutmann: Migration and Territoriality in Deleuze and Steiner: Metaphors and Mixed Messages, in K. A. Knauth – P. Liao (eds.): *Migrancy and Multilingualism in World Literature,* Zürich, Lit Verlag, 2016, 181.

[6] Magda Stroińska: The role of language in the re-construction of identity in exile, in Magda Stroińska – Vittorina Cecchetto (eds.): *Exile, language and identity*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2003, 106.

[7] Steven G. Kellman: Writer Speaks with Forked Tongue, in R. Gilmour – T. Steinitz (eds.): *Multilingual Currents in Literature, Translation and Culture*, New York, Routledge, 2017, 26.

[8] Grutman: Migration, 178.

[9] Caren Kaplan: *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement,* Durham, Duke University Press, 1996, 4.

[10] Kellman: Writer Speaks, 25.

[11] Grutman: Migration, 177.

and accept their fluctuant new self as well as their physical, emotional and verbal memories, translingualism becomes a chance rather than an obstacle. As the borders between first and foreign language(s) dissolve, translingual literary strategies such as code-switching or language mixing arise and shape the writer's voice.

English and the Non-Native Writer

English is the world's most spoken language, and furthermore the most widely spoken second or foreign[12] language: According to an *Ethnologue* estimate, out of 1.35 billion English speakers in total, only 360 million speak English as their first language.[13] This leaves about one billion people who have either learnt or acquired English after having been fluent in another language. The expansion of British colonial power and the rise of the United States of America as the leading economic power in the past century have turned the English language into the powerful global language and lingua franca it is today.[14] While American, British and Australian standard varieties prevail, English has also become a language that bends itself to the needs of its communities, as English Creole speakers and the movement from 'the English' to a multiplicity of 'Englishes' demonstrate. It serves as a tool for communication in various domains and spaces, which in consequence makes it increasingly significant for people experiencing migration.

Various writers who have faced either forced or voluntary migration have found a fruitful field in the English language—predominantly those who have migrated into an English-speaking country. Exophonic writers such as Olaudah Equiano, Joseph Brodsky, Mary Antin or Eva Hoffman have found a new home and a new self in the English language. Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, who spent most of his life in Africa and migrated to the U.S. to teach and seek health treatment in old age, has spoken most explicitly about the potential of writing in English as a second language:

> So my answer to the question *Can an African ever learn English well enough to be able to use it effectively in creative writing?* is certainly yes. If on the other hand you ask *Can he ever learn to use it like a native speaker?* I should say, I hope not.[15]

[12] The notions of "second language" and "foreign language" will be used interchangeably in this essay.

[13] Dylan Lyons: How Many People Speak English, And Where Is It Spoken?, *Babbel Magazine,* https://www.babbel.com/en/magazine/how-many-people-speak-english-and-where-is-it-spoken, accessed 8 October 2022.

[14] David Crystal: *English as a global language.* 2nd edition, Stuttgart, Klett Sprachen, 2012, 12–13, 29 and 59.

[15] Chinua Achebe: English and the African Writer, *Transition,* 1965, 29.

And further:

> The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience.[16]

In Achebe's rather normative statement lies the core to non-native English writing: By using the world's most spoken language as the matrix language for one's expression while remaining aware of one's own multiplicity and unique experiences that likely divert from those of native English speakers (or other communities), one can use this global language as a catalyst and multiplicator for one's message(s), thoughts, ideas. The goal is neither to mimic the target language nor to master it perfectly; the intention is to 'do something with' the language, to transform it in a lexical, orthographic, semantic, morphologic, and syntactic way,[17] so that it becomes renewed in a sense of becoming true to one's own literary voice.

Corpus and Method

For the scope of this paper, my analysis is limited to creative nonfiction essays and poems by ESL writers which have appeared in the online literary magazine *Tint Journal*. Since its inaugural issue in 2019, the magazine has exclusively published prose and poetry by writers who write—possibly among other languages—in English as their second language. Among these writers, a voluntary survey has been conducted via an online form with the aim of narrowing the field down to those who (1) have experienced one or more processes of migration, and (2) switch to their first language at least once in their text(s). Of those who filled in the survey, ten fulfilled the criteria to fit (1) and (2), predominantly nonfiction writers and poets.

In order to gain an insight into the authors' migration experiences, they were asked to indicate in how many countries they had lived[18] and to share more details on their migration backgrounds.[19] They were also asked whether they had left their country of birth voluntarily or involuntarily, and whether they had ever been a refugee. Concerning their language backgrounds, they were asked to give their first language(s) and their second language(s) and

[16] Achebe: English, 29.

[17] Ottmar Ette: *Writing-Between-Worlds. TransArea Studies and the Literatures-without-a-fixed-Abode*, trans. V. M. Kutzinski, Berlin–Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016, 185.

[18] Used definition for "living": resided in a country for at least one year.

[19] The survey included questions such as, "Please briefly describe your migration journey (in which countries have you lived and for how long)?" and "For which reason(s) did you leave your country of birth?"

describe their language use in writing and daily communication as well as their language educational history.

The following analysis of code-switching in ESL creative nonfiction and poetry will be based on the above-mentioned ten texts and will be informed by the authors' answers to the questions. In the form of close readings, the texts have been examined for traces of embedded languages and, subsequently, for aesthetic traces of migration. The focus will rest on the level of narrative transmission, i.e., the texts themselves.

Code-Switching in ESL Prose and Poetry

In linguistics, code-switching refers to the behavior of speakers who switch between different idioms in their utterances, depending on the pragmatical context of the situation, while the individual idioms remain clearly recognizable.[20] Deganutti and Domokos (2021) applied this basic principle and prepared it for the literary context in their framework for "literary code-switching"[21]. In this framework, they distinguish 5 degrees based on the scope of the infusion of the matrix language with one or more embedded languages.[22] My focus will rest on degree 1/CS1, i.e. "the sporadic use of foreign words and tags".[23] which has previously also been identified as "insertional code-switching"[24] or "Ein-Wort-Interferenzen [one-word interferences]"[25] and to which I will refer, in alignment with Deganutti and Domokos, as "intra-sentential code-switching".

The criteria for the framework put forth by Deganutti and Domokos are first and foremost *extent*, i.e. the number of words/phrases that are presented in an embedded language, and *visibility*, i.e. the covert or overt use of an embedded language and its distinct recognizability.[26] A degree of *explication*, i.e. whether a translation or explanation is provided of an embedded language term or phrase, is not distinctively featured in their chart.[27] However, the (non-) presence of an explication influences both effect and function of the insertion substantially, as the following close readings will demonstrate. I will thus

[20] Dembeck: Sprachwechsel, 125.

[21] Johanna Domokos: *Endangered Literature: Essays on Translingualism, Interculturality, and Vulnerability,* Budapest, L'Harmattan Károli Books, 2018, 89–97.

[22] Deganutti–Domokos: *Four major literary code-switching,* 48.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Pieter Muysken: *Bilingual Speech: A Typology of Code-Switching*, 2000, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 60 ff.

[25] Elke Sturm-Trigonakis: Neue Weltliteratur, Zeit und Raum, in S. Schahadat – A. Werberger (eds.): *Weltliteratur in der longue durée*, Leiden, Brill | Fink, 2021, 213.

[26] Deganutti–Domokos: *Four major literary code-switching,* 48.

[27] Ibid.

distinguish between a *strong* type (without explication) and a *weak* type (with explication) of code-switching, based on terminology by Brian Lennon ("strong and weak plurilingualism"),[28] to suggest the relevance of explication as a further defining criterion for literary code-switching. Another aspect worth considering when looking at texts by non-native language writers is the distinction between switches to the author's first language(s) and to another second language spoken by the author. For example, in the texts discussed in this paper, embedded words in the author's first language are shown to derive from particular semantic fields and to relate strongly to the author's upbringing. However, to develop this thought further, a direct comparison with second language insertions would be required.

Strong Intra-sentential Code-Switching

The majority of the observed instances in the sample texts features neither an explication for nor a translation of embedded terms and can thus be categorized as a strong type of intra-sentential code-switching. What stands out is that the sample texts primarily employ one-word interferences from the semantic fields of home, tradition and/or family. Elke Sturm-Trigonakis previously observed that particular cultural practices are brought into the society of the matrix language and a synecdochian function is evoked through embedded terms from these fields.[29]

For example, in Arantxa Hernandez' creative nonfiction text "The Foreigner",[30] the Spanish word *tequeño*[31] is used in-between a conversation about the meaning of home, which interlaces the concept of home with the physical activity of biting into a Venezuelan dish:

> 'Are you going home for the summer?' your best friend asks as she takes a bite of her sweet plantain. […]
>
> You shake your head, 'Doesn't feel like home anymore.'
>
> Her eyes widen and she stirs uncomfortably on her chair, 'but it's home at the end, isn't it?' She thinks she understands you because she also had to leave her home and move to Savannah, and she does in some ways — both of you feel like outsiders whenever someone doesn't understand your accent, or asks ignorant questions […].

[28] Brian Lennon: *In Babel's Shadow: Multilingual Literatures, Monolingual States*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2010, 17.

[29] Sturm-Trigonakis: Weltliteratur, 214.

[30] Arantxa Hernandez: The Foreigner, *Tint Journal*, Issue Fall '20, 2020, https://tintjournal.com/essay/the-foreigner, accessed 17 October 2022.

[31] Venezuelan cheese sticks.

> 'I guess,' you shrug, 'I got so used to Savannah's freedom that whenever I go back depression just hits me hard—I can't stay on lockdown for so long anymore.'
>
> 'So, Savannah is home,' she says, trying to cheer me up.
>
> 'I guess.' You take a bite of your *tequeño* and mutter, 'but it also doesn't feel like it.'[32]

Similarly, Anika Pavel uses the Slovak words *kolach*[33] and *strudel*[34] for the items that the narrator's mother brings on a visit to the UK: "The sweet aroma of the *kolach* hit my nose, and in a box wrapped with particular care was my favorite, the *strudel*."[35] Hernandez and Pavel left their home countries (Venezuela and Czechoslovakia, respectively) when they were 18, Hernandez for economic and Pavel for political reasons. Both now reside in the U.S. The depictions of food in their first languages (Spanish and Slovak, respectively) without providing an explanation evoke the idea that the given items are untranslatable, alluding to a particular intimacy and layers of meaning that can only be captured by the very words themselves. By pointing to the properties of the dishes—e.g. "sweet aroma of the *kolach*"[36]—and by setting the words into immediate contact with considerations about home or, as in Pavel's case, a visit from home, their personal bondings to the original words are represented on the level of discourse in addition to the content level.

In a similar fashion, the writers Nafisa A. Iqbal and Susmita Paul use their first languages to refer to types of traditional or regional clothing. Like tasting and smelling, touching or looking at clothes as well as putting them on are sensual experiences. As the authors choose their first language for the depiction of traditional clothing (*kurta* and *sari*,[37] or *salwar kameez* and *saree*[38]), they emphasize the folkloristic and other-cultural traits of these items and simultaneously evoke their personal, at times intimate, relationships with them that they had cultivated in their original language environments.

Especially the occurrences of *sari*[39] and *saree*[40] illustrate how embedded languages can function as signposts for migration histories. Bengali uses a different script than the English language, the Brahmic script. In both texts,

[32] Hernandez: Foreigner.

[33] Sweet Slovak pastry.

[34] Sweet or savory dish in Central and Eastern Europe.

[35] Anika Pavel: Freedom, *Tint Journal*, Issue Spring '21, 2021, https://tintjournal.com/essay/freedom, accessed 17 October 2022.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Nafisa A. Iqbal: Forget Him, *Tint Journal*, Issue Fall '20, 2022, https://tintjournal.com/essay/forget-him, accessed 17 October 2022.

[38] Susmita Paul: Flares, *Tint Journal*, Issue Fall '21, 2021, https://tintjournal.com/flash-nonfiction/flares, accessed 17 Oct. 2022.

[39] A. Iqbal: Forget Him.

[40] Paul: Flares.

the instances of Bengali have been transferred to the English script to make them more accessible for the intended English reading audience. While *sari* and *saree* refer to the same type of clothing, Paul, who resides in Austria, uses the British spelling standard, i.e. the more common variant in Mid-Europe, and A. Iqbal, who lives in the U.S., uses the American standard. Thus, the authors' transcriptions contain valuable information on their migration journeys and language education backgrounds.

While clothing and food items allude to traditions and memories of home, the semantic field of family is primarily represented by the use of proper names. In A. Iqbal's text, the words for mother and father are given in Bengali (*Amma*, *Abba*[41]), as is the case in Skanda Prasad's poem "It's Like a Curry Sandwich," yet in his first language Kannada (*Amma*, *Appa*[42]). The strong intra-sentential references to one's parents or family members in the languages associated with these relatives evoke the idea that it was 'natural' to use these words in an English-speaking context:

> *Amma* never made this at home,
> and Grandma—bless her heart—
> would've fainted at the touch
> […].
>
> […] *Appa's* moustache
> always smiled
> before his lips did,
> translated child-talk
> to the cashier […][43]

Clues for interpretation are provided by the stereotypical dichotomy of female and male: In the poem, *Amma* is associated with the domestic sphere, preparing something at home, while *Appa* is in a shop with his son, identified as a male also by his moustache. In addition, with the lyrical I's perspective provided by clues such as "Grandma"[44], the relationship between *Amma*, *Appa* and the lyrical I can be inferred without an explanation or translation of the foreign language terms. This example shows how stereotypes can serve as aids for interpretation across cultures, as they seem to be universally relevant. Simultaneously, however, the use of an embedded language questions this presumed universality as it emphasizes the process of decoding: the meaning

[41] A. Iqbal: Forget Him.

[42] Skanda Prasad: It's Like a Curry Sandwich, *Tint Journal*, Issue Fall '20, 2020, https://tintjournal.com/poetry/its-like-a-curry-sandwich, accessed 17 Oct 2022.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

of *Amma* and *Appa* is first defamiliarized by their linguistic 'otherness' and then (re-)constructed by the reader with the aid of known stereotypes. In this process of (re-)construction, language is "de-automatized"[45] and the meaning of the embedded term has to be freshly assessed. As a consequence, while stereotypes may serve as tools for interpretation, their representation in an embedded language can also lead to a questioning of what they represent.

Further, spelling variants, as previously discussed with A. Iqbal and Paul's texts, also allude to migration histories in this poem, yet by exhibiting various modifications of one term: A dish first appears as "pubbuhjee", and consecutively turns into *Paav Bhaji*, *Pav Bhaji* and *Paav Bhajee*.[46] "Pubbuhjee" is a special case of language mixing as described by Dembeck: It simulates foreign-language direct speech through onomatopoeia.[47] In this very case, it mimics a child's pronunciation of a dish to create a so-called reality effect.[48] The other variants evoke the dish in its original Indian setting, in an Indian setting with a focus on the Portuguese explorers, and finally, in an American setting. The first and last spelling variants are linked to a specific place and year ("Bengaluru, 1994" and "Atlanta, 2017"), relating directly to the poet's personal migration from India to the U.S. The second and third spelling variants, in contrast, thematize the dish's journey on a larger scale, showcasing its traditional recipe in India and its adoption by the Portuguese, alluding to the migration of the dish itself. As a consequence, by giving various names and spellings for the dish, its changing recipe and consumer community are illustrated on a linguistic level, foregrounding the close relationship of movements between languages, cultures and places. Globalization and migration are poeticized through a food item and one individual human being's relationship to it.

A similar strategy can be found in Gabriela Halas' poem "When we first arrived, 1983".[49] In this poem, the spellings of America and Canada are transformed: Starting out with "America", we read *Ameri-ka* and *Kanada* in the middle, and "America" and "Canada" at the end of the text.[50] The first instance of "America" can be read as referring to the American dream that immigrants hope to come true upon arrival, while the second instance, *Ameri-ka* immediately followed by *Kanada*,[51] portrays the harsh reality of finding oneself in a new country, of being perceived as the Other and of being the victim of

[45] Monika Schmitz-Emans: *Die Sprache der modernen Dichtung*, Munich, Fink, 1997, 97; Theodor W. Adorno: *Noten zur Literatur II*, Berlin, Suhrkamp, 1970, 120.

[46] Prasad: Curry Sandwich.

[47] Dembeck: Sprachwechsel, 125.

[48] Ibid., 151.

[49] Gabriela Halas: When we first arrived, 1983, *Tint Journal*, Issue Spring '21, 2021, https://tintjournal.com/poetry/when-we-first-arrived-1983, accessed 17 October 2022.

[50] Ibid.

[51] "Amerika," Czech for "American"; "Kanada," Czech for "Canada".

governmental decisions that cause ruptures in one's already unsettled life. While the dream is depicted in the English variant ("America"), the reality is given in the author's first language, Czech. Additionally, the rupture is typographically illustrated by the use of a hyphen, which literally breaks the dream into pieces (*Ameri-ka*). The third instance ("America", "Canada") completes the journey; it refers to the 'progress' one has made as an immigrant by assimilating to the country's language and culture. This final stage is also accompanied by a wink to new immigrants who will, when coming to the shores of this new country, possibly have to face the same development from "America" to *Ameri-ka*, and to "America". As such, the poem comes full circle and can be read as a perpetuum mobile of the immigrant's journey, using country names and their language-specific spellings to illustrate the concepts, ideas, feelings and personal histories attached to place and language.

Prasad and Halas have experienced the journeys laid out in their texts, or at least similar journeys, themselves. They migrated from India to Singapore and the U.S., and from the Czech Republic to the U.S. and Canada, respectively. In the discussed literary works, their personal migration backgrounds serve as a catalyst for a larger tale, while the employment of various types of spellings in their poems mimics and fictionalizes the spoken, written and cognitive realities of people and/or groups of people who face migration.

Finally, Natalie Bühler's poem "Amphibian"[52] thematizes, amongst other issues, the cognitive effort of counting in a language that is not one's first. Bühler grew up in Switzerland speaking Swiss German, and moved first to Germany, then to the U.S. for educational reasons. She now resides in Australia. In her poem, which focuses on the image of a swimming exercise, counting is presented in both Swiss German (e.g., *eis* and *zwoi* for one and two) and English. At one instance, the lyrical I explicitly asks, "Which language do I count in",[53] thus foregrounding the multilingual nature of the poem on a meta level, a phenomenon referred to as "metamultilingualism".[54] In this sense, literature becomes graspable as "both imbricated in and critically engaged with [...] the operations of language in the world".[55] This particular instance of metamultilingualism draws attention to the linguistic in-between state of the lyrical I. Verbal numerical knowledge is organized in long-term memory, starting at the age of three,[56] which ties it closely to our personality, alike terms

[52] Natalie Bühler: Amphibian, *Tint Journal*, Issue Spring '22, 2022, https://tintjournal.com/poetry/amphibian, accessed 17 October 2022.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Sturm-Trigonakis: Weltliteratur, 214.

[55] Rachael Gilmour – Tamar Steinitz (eds.): Introduction, in *Multilingual Currents in Literature, Translation and Culture,* Taylor & Francis Group, 2017, 5.

[56] Amandine Van Rinsveld – Christine Schiltz – Steve Majerus – Michel Fayol: When one-two-three beats two-one-three: Tracking the acquisition of the verbal number sequence, *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review,* 27 (2020), 127.

we use to refer to our parents (see *Amma* and *Appa* in Prasad's poem, p. 78). As such, by using her first as well as her second language for counting and by having the lyrical I openly reflect on this practice, the often-presumed superiority of the mother tongue, or first language, in contrast to the inferiority of second languages is contested—a function of literary multilingualism previously discussed by Yasemin Yildiz.[57] The lyrical I becomes a prototype of a translingual being, building a home in various languages, expanding their linguistic belonging.

Weak Intra-sentential Code-Switching

Weak one-word interferences, i.e. instances using a foreign language term along with an explanation or a translation in the matrix language, are fewer among the analyzed sample texts. Still, the semantic fields of home, tradition and/or family are well represented also among these interferences. In Johanna Montilla's nonfiction essay "The List Maker",[58] for example, the Spanish word *arepas* alludes to the narrator's grief for the Venezuelan culture, a culture the author left behind when migrating to Canada. The meaning of *arepas* is explicated in parenthesis: "The next day, after the first cultural shock—breakfast without arepas (similar to a round bread, handmade with corn meal)—I wrote down a new list with things we needed to do first."[59] The use of *arepas* evokes nostalgia and serves the purpose of characterizing the narrator—her dreams, desires, losses. However, the plain explanation of the foreign dish without semantic nuances or culturally informed connotations strikingly asserts the translatability of the entirety of meaning from one language to another.[60] Similarly, Catherine C. Con employs the phrase "Furoshiki wrapping cloth"[61] in her nonfiction text. In this case, the explication of the embedded term is included in the noun phrase itself. In Mandarin Chinese, however, *furoshiki* already implies the function of a wrapping cloth, thus the provided additional cultural or personal insights are very limited. Both instances rather cater to the monolingual paradigm, while culturally and personally significant nuances that would define the item for the narrator, the author, or a community remain obscure.

[57] Yasemin Yildiz: *Beyond the Mother Tongue. The Postmonolingual Condition,* New York, Fordham University Press, 2012, 115.

[58] Johanna Montilla: The List Maker, *Tint Journal*, Issue Fall '21, 2021, https://tintjournal.com/essay/the-list-maker, accessed 17 October 2022.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Yaseen Noorani: Hard and Soft Multilingualism, *Critical Multilingualism Studies,* 2013, Vol. 1, No. 2, 9.

[61] Catherine C. Con: Mandarin Suits, *Tint Journal*, Issue Spring '20, 2020, https://tintjournal.com/essay/mandarin-suits, accessed 17 October 2022.

A prominent counter-example would be Eva Hoffman's informative use of Polish insertions in her language memoir *Lost in Translation*.[62] For example, Hoffman employs the Polish word *polot* in her text in a scene relating back to her piano lessons as a child. The word is presented as having no equivalent in the English language, as a "translated untranslatable word".[63] Hoffman describes it as carrying the meanings of "dash, inspiration, and flying" as well as "flair", "melancholy" and "wilderness".[64] By elaborating on the uniqueness and untranslatability of the term, Hoffman highlights the difference between languages and invites the presumed monolingual English reader into the Polish world by adding a further layer of meaning to the given scene. While Montilla's descriptive translation and Con's arguably redundant explication can be an aid to the English-only reader, both are essentially limited to information from dictionaries, whereas Hoffman's given explanation goes beyond literal translation, rendering the 'exact' translation of *polot* irrelevant to the account of the narrator and emphasizing the narrator's individual experiences instead.

A more nuanced explication is presented in Pavel's aforementioned nonfiction text "Freedom".[65] In this text, a Russian broadsheet newspaper is referenced, which was the official public medium of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The embedded word's literal meaning is given in parenthesis: "My father joked that he had never had anything so good that came out of a newspaper, referencing newspapers like *Pravda* (which ironically means 'truth')".[66] The scene including this sentence takes place on the English coast, when the protagonist and her father are having fish and chips, wrapped in a paper. As the narrator provides the literal meaning of the paper's name and adds the qualifier "ironically" to this explication, Soviet history and culture as well as the narrator's perception thereof are thematized. The modifier "ironically" takes on the role of a signpost in Pavel's text. Without explicitly mentioning the Soviet Union, the English reader is made aware of the potential unreliability of broadsheet papers in the family's home culture. In fact, Pavel left Communist Czechoslovakia in 1967 at the age of 18 to escape persecution or war. As this example shows, a minute aspect in the act of literary code-switching can, alike a personalized translation as presented in Hoffman's memoir,[67] have a substantial impact on the interpretation. If done successfully, an instance of weak intra-sentential code-switching can outline the

[62] Eva Hoffman: *Lost in Translation. A Life in a New Language*, 1989, London, Vintage Books, 1998.

[63] Lennon: *In Babel's Shadow*, 152.

[64] Hoffman: *Lost in Translation*, 71.

[65] Pavel: Freedom.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Hoffman: *Lost in Translation*.

protagonist's perception of a specific cultural environment. As such, it functions as a multiplicator of meaning and source of additional information.[68]

Closing Remarks

As this case study of selected literary texts by non-native English writers has shown, intra-sentential code-switching can be used to trace or even represent individual and larger-scale migration in prose and poetry. In the case of second-language writers, switches to their first language(s) appear to be predominantly linked to their connection to concepts, ideas, feelings and personal histories attached to the place and language of their upbringing.[69] Through strong intra-sentential code-switching, i.e. foreign language insertions without explication, in the realms of food, family, and clothing, the authors allude in the narration to the home cultures they left or had to leave by emphasizing the 'untranslatability' of signature items. What appears to be a process of familiarization and (re-)rooting for the authors, however, is defamiliarization for the reader who is—presumably—not a speaker of the embedded language(s). An aid for retrieving the hidden meaning of embedded language terms can be given through explications (weak intra-sentential code-switching), which enrich the understanding of a text especially when they are provided in the form of cultural and/or personal nuances rather than literal translations. Further strategies to allude to migration histories and other-language backgrounds are, without being limited to, the transformation of the spelling of one-word interferences depending on the content of the literary text, or the referral to denotations from early cognitive stages, such as parental names or numbers. In addition, the strategy of metamultilingualism has been shown as an apt device to represent the linguistic in-betweenness that writers who move to other language environments undoubtedly experience.

Much remains to be explored in this field of translingual studies, and this case study of first language interferences in ESL writers' texts was hopefully only one step of many into a more detailed and fruitful exploration of literary multilingualism in literature by translingual authors.

[68] Deganutti–Domokos: *Four major literary code-switching*, 47.

[69] See also works by Julia Alvarez, Akwaeke Emezi, Eva Hoffman, Luc Sante or Esmeralda Santiago.

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CODE-SWITCHING IN PERFORMATIVE ARTS

MULTILINGUALITY IN THE WORK OF ROBERT WILSON (*OEDIPUS* 2021, BUDAPEST)

Enikő Sepsi

I have only one language and it is not mine.
Jacques Derrida[1]

A Note on Robert Wilson

Robert Wilson is not only a director and choreographer, but also an actor, video artist, sculptor and painter. He is an extremely versatile creator. With his opera directing, he renewed the genre: he raised the visual element to the level of the music, which had dominated the opera genre, and the Robert Wilson – Philip Glass author duo became guarantors of the equality of the two elements. Think of the staging of *Madama Butterfly*, for example, and the great myth of *Persephone*, with music, composed by Philip Glass, which is also as much a multilingual work of art as Wilson's *Oedipus* or *1914*, premiered at the Vígszínház (Comedy Theater), Budapest, in 2014. Wilson's text, including the text of Sophocles, is just a starting point, on a par with sight and sound. He worked with Philip Glass to create *Einstein on the Beach*, too, but he has also collaborated with writers and composers such as Heiner Müller, Tom Waits, Susan Sontag, Laurie Anderson, William Burroughs, Lou Reed and Jessye Norman.

The Theatrical Universe of Robert Wilson and *Oedipus*

Not a psychologizing, realist theater, as Grotowski put it in relation to Far Eastern theaters with a long tradition, Wilson's theater also focuses on working out the formal world with craftsmanship. From the iconic "silent" performances of the 1960s–70s, *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud*, *Joseph Stalin*, etc., to the literary text *Une femme douce*, *Hamlet*, etc., or to the playful *Jungle Book*, Wilson gets to the great questions of human existence not through the analysis of the characters but at the formal level of questioning. His

[1] Jacques Derrida: *Monolingualism of the Other or, The Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998, 25.

magnificent visual theater, with elaborate and costly lighting technology, explores formal perfection, precision, and visuals. At the same time, we traverse deep inner paths throughout the performance. *Oedipus* is also about darkness, light, the 'plague,' which is extremely topical today, and the ability to face the truth. He vows to shed light on the murder of Laius in order to free the city of Thebes from the plague. But is he able to bear the light when it shines on him at last? Is he able to confront his own past, his origins? As Tiresias, the blind seer, puts it: as long as Oedipus has eyesight, he is blind. When he starts to see the truth, he blinds himself. Can we bear to look at the truth today?

The ending recalls the beginning: Oedipus meets the light again, his face almost touching the floodlight, the light of which slowly goes out. The similar setting of the two images suggests that the performance is a persistent moment after blindness, in which the narrative crumbs of a wayward human life are rolled out: not as a coherent, round story, but according to the irregular nature of remembrance. *Oedipus Rex*, based on the tragedy by Sophocles, is directed by Robert Wilson, produced by Change Performing Arts in 2018, commissioned by "Conversazioni"—the festival of the Palladian Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza—and coproduced by "Pompeii Theatrum Mundi". It was premiered in 2018 at the Ancient Open Air Theater in Pompeii, in Vicenza at the Baroque theater, in 2019 in Naples, and then produced at the beautiful ancient open-air theater in Epidaurus and also in St. Petersburg.

While the backbone of the performance is the famous text by Sophocles (430 BC) with the classical Italian translation in verses by Ettore Romagnoli (1926), inserts of the ancient translation by Orsatto Giustiniano (1585) and also in various different contemporary languages (Italian, English, French, German and Greek with Hungarian subtitles) are intertwined to allude to a myth that travels freely across time and geographical and cultural borders, creating a new vision of the story for a contemporary audience.[2]

At the same time, the series of images also reveals the stances of the search for truth. These standalone images seem to be independent of each other, bound together only by narration, the polyphonic narrative of the Oedipus mythology. They could even be interchangeable. The performance is dramaturgically structured as a Homeric recitation by an aoidos, and the staging concept is highly characteristic of the works by the American artist and director: Wilson crosses boundaries between theater, dance, music and visual art, and also creates scenes that are not in the original tragedy by Sophocles, such as Pitia announcing the oracle of Delphi and the marriage of Oedipus to Jocasta (see the relevant passages from the script of the Budapest performance with English and Hungarian subtitles).[3]

[2] Cf. Susanne Klinger: *Translation and linguistic hybridity*, London – New York, Routledge, 2015.

[3] Robert Wilson: "Oedipus," unpublished manuscript, 17 September 2021, MITEM.

King Laius once received an oracle. / Laiosz király egyszer egy jóslatot kapott.

I won’t say it came straight from Apollo, / Nem állítom, hogy egyenesen
but it was from those who do assist the god. / Apollótól, de az isten szolgáitól.

It said Laius was fated to be killed / Sorsa eszerint az volt, hogy a gyermek,

by a child of mine and of his. / aki tőlem és tőle fogan, legyen a gyilkosa.

Before the child was three days old, / A gyermek életének harmadik napja előtt,

Laius pinned his ankles tight together / Laiosz szorosan gúzsba kötötte a fiú bokáit,

and ordered other men to throw him out / és másoknak adta parancsba, hogy vessék
on a mountain rock where no one ever goes. / ki őt a hegyen egy sziklára ott, ahol
senki se jár.

Isn’t that what happened – what I just said? / Úgy volt-e minden, ahogy mondom?

No human being has skills in prophecy. / Halandók között nincs senki jós.

Among all living mortals / Nincsen tenálad senki se halandók közt,
Nobody will be destroyed more wretchedly than you. / ki hitványabbként pusztul el.

Among all living mortals / Nincsen tenálad senki se halandók közt,
Nobody will be destroyed more wretchedly than you. / ki hitványabbként pusztul el.

He will be blind although he now can See. / Ki jól látott, vakon tapogat majd.
He will be Poor although he now is rich. / Ki gazdag volt, koldulva jár majd.

No human being has skills in prophecy. / Halandók között nincs senki jós.

Among all living mortals / Nincsen tenálad senki se halandók közt,
Nobody will be destroyed more wretchedly than you. / ki hitványabbként pusztul el.

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He will be blind although he now can See. / Ki jól látott, vakon tapogat majd.
He will be Poor although he now is rich. / Ki gazdag volt, koldulva jár majd.

This is not linear storytelling but a system of associations between scenes, in which it is necessary to find connections and rebuild the story between the text being spoken—and thus epic—and the images and sounds that present to us as sensual experiences.

Structure and Characters

According to the Director's note "The performance is structured in a classical way: five parts and a prologue, the first part being echoed in the fifth part, the second in the fourth. The third part, a wild pagan wedding ceremony, is the centerpiece. Each part is defined by the materials of scenic elements used onstage: wooden planks, leafless branches, steel paper and sheets of galvanized metal, green branches, contemporary folding chairs, tar paper and vegetable woven fabrics with silk. Music plays a central role, originally composed and performed by Dickie Landry, a saxophonist from New Orleans, who exchanges musical dialogues with Syrian clarinetist Kinan Azmeh."[4]

Characters of the Budapest performance:

Witness 1: Lydia Koniordou
Witness 2: Angela Winkler
Oedipus: Scott Jennings
Iocasta: Casilda Madrazo
A Woman: Laetitia Lalle Bi Benie
A Boy: Alexios Fousekis
Tiresias / A Shepherd: Meg Harper
Men at Crossing: Alessandro Anglani, Marcello di Giacomo, Gaetano Migliaccio, Francesco Roccasecca
Three Dancing Women: Laila Gozzi, Casilda Madrazo, Annabella Marotta
A man with a saxophone: Dickie Landry
Black shadows / wedding dancers: Meg Harper, Alexis Fousekis, Laila Gozzi, Alessandro Anglani, Marcello di Giacomo, Francesca Gabucci, Annabella Marotta, Gaetano Migliaccio, Francesco Roccasecca

Storytelling-repetition and Code-Switching

The story is told by two messengers, and organized like a movie shoot: we get headlines, scenes, etudes; characters play and say the same thing several times, just a little differently each time, from a different perspective. The same sentences echo, with increasing force. The repetition is enhanced almost to the extreme in order to create a mythical surrounding. In the textbook, the passages repeated in the variants are specifically indicated, which emphasizes the main turning points of the myth.

[4] Mitem, https://mitem.hu/en/programme/performances/oedipus-1, accessed 11 November 2022.

Laius was murdered / Laioszt megölték
at a place where three roads meet. / egy hármas keresztúton.

Did Laius have a small escort with him / Kevesen kísérték Laioszt,
or a troop of soldiers, like a royal king? / vagy egy sereg katona, királyhoz illőn?

Five men, including a herald, went with him. / Öten voltak. Köztük, aki hírt hozott.
A carriage carried Laius. / Egyetlen szekér vitte Laioszt.

As I listen to you, my soul is shaken. / Amit mondtál az imént, megrendíti lelkemet.

Oh, Zeus! / Ó, Zeusz!
What do you have in store for me next? / Mit tartogatsz még számomra?

Laius was murdered / Laioszt megölték
at a place where three roads meet. / egy hármas keresztúton.

Few people went with him. / Kevesen kísérték.
Only a total of five men. / Mindössze öten.

Oh, Zeus! / Ó, Zeusz!
What do you have in store for me next? / Mit tartogatsz még számomra?

Where three roads meet – / Egy hármas keresztúton –
Few people – Only five men – / Kevesen – Mindössze öten –

Oedipus, Oedipus, my name / Oidipusz, Oidipusz – nevemet
is known to anyone. / mindenki ismeri,

who can be confident that I will help / akik bízhatnak a segítségemben.

Creon my old trusted family friend / Kreón, régi bizalmasom, rokoni barátom,

I would ask you to stand by the very words. / kérlek, állj ki a szavak mellett.

It wasn't you who found me. / Nem te találtál engem.

who was my father, tell me / Mondd meg, ki volt az apám,

who was my mother / ki volt az anyám?

Tiresias, as I listen to these words of yours / Teiresziasz, ahogy hallgatom szavaid…

You have your eyesight / Te látsz…
Creon - Pythian Apollo's shrine / Kreón – Püthia Apolló szentélye…

The two messengers, Lydia Koniordou and Angela Winkler, are respectively Greek- and German-speaking actors. The Greek language provides the basis of the myth in Lydia's telling.

Lydia (recorded voice):
(old Greek soft voice)

No human being has skill in prophecy. / Halandók között nincs senki jós. I'll show you why with this example. / Megmutatom e példán, miért.
King Laius once received an oracle. / Laiosz király egyszer egy jóslatot kapott.
I won't say it came straight from Apollo, / Nem állítom, hogy egyenesen Apollótól, but it was from those who do assist the god. / de az isten szolgáitól.
It said Laius was fated to be killed / Sorsa eszerint az volt, hogy a gyermek, by a child of mine and of his. / aki tőlem és tőle fogan, legyen a gyilkosa.
Now, at least according to the story, one day / Lám, pedig a hír szerint egy nap Laius was killed by foreigners, by robbers, / ismeretlen rablók ölték őt meg,
at a place where three roads meet. / egy hármas keresztúton.
Besides, before our child was three days old, / Ezen kívül a gyermek életének harmadik napja előtt, Laius pinned his ankles tight together / Laiosz szorosan gúzsba kötötte a fiú bokáit,
and ordered other men to throw him out / és másoknak adta parancsba, hogy vessék ki őt on a mountain rock where no one ever goes. / a hegyen egy sziklára ott, ahol senki se jár.
And so Apollo's plan that he'd become / Így tehát Apolló terve, miszerint ő fogja the one who killed his father didn't work, / megölni apját, nem teljesült,
and Laius never suffered what he feared. / és Laiosz soha nem szenvedte el azt, amitől tartott.
Although that's what the oracle had claimed / Pedig hát ezt határozták a jóslatok.

The black actress who plays the Woman, Laetitia Lalle Bi Benie, speaks French. Languages either coincide with lighting changes or form distinct dramaturgical units separated from each other by sound effects and noises, e.g. dropped planks. The spoken languages are sometimes distinguished in character and function: the French are flirtatious (see below), playful, sarcastic; the text of the messenger spoken in the Greek language has serious impact. Moreover, the severity of French sentences about human destiny is contradicted by the way the actress speaks slowly and laughs.

Why should a man whose life / Que peut crainre l'homme quand la destinée seems ruled by chance, live in fear / mène toutes les choses humaines
a man who has no certain vision of his future? / et que toute prévision est incertaine
It's best to live haphazardly, / Le mieux est de vivre au hasard as best one can. / si on peut.
Do not worry you will wed your mother. / Ne crains pas de t'unir à ta mère

It’s true that in their dreams / car dans leurs songes
a lot of men have slept with their own mothers, / beaucoup d’hommes rêvaient qu’ils s’unissaient à leurs mères.

but someone who ignores all this / Mais celui qui sait que ces songes ne sont rien,
bears life more easily. / mènent une vie tranquille.

In the name of the gods, no! / Ah, les Dieux!

If you have some concern for your own life, / Si tu as quelques soucis de ta vie,
then stop! Do not keep on investigating this. / ne recherche pas ceci!

I will suffer – that will be enough. / C’est assez que je sois affligée.

Listen to me, I beg you. / Écoute-moi, je t’en supplie!
Do not do this. / Ne fais pas cela!

But I care about your own well-being, / C’est dans un esprit bienveillant
what I tell you is for your benefit. / que je te conseille pour le mieux.

O you unhappy man! / Oh, malheureux!

May you never find out / Plaise aux Dieux
who you really are! / que tu ne sache jamais qui tu es.

I’ll never speak another word again. / Tu n’entendras plus rien de moi désormais.

In the most tragic parts, “Oedipus marries Iocasta, King Laius’ widow. They had four children,” information is told in all the languages followed by a motionless scene highlighted by accelerated music and dancing with green branches (see photo).

Figure 1. Photograph of the stage by Lucie Jansch[5]

[5] Source: Mitem, https://mitem.hu/en/programme/performances/oedipus-1, accessed 11 November 2022.

In comparison, the death of Iocasta and the self-blinding of Oedipus are only voiced offstage once in English, which is the main language of the performance:

Jocasta is dead. / Iokaszté halott.

When Oedipus rushed into the room, the poor / Amikor Oidipusz berontott a szobába,
woman was hanging by a thick, platted rope. / ott függött szegény egy vastag, fonott kötélen.

When he saw her, / Ahogy őt észrevette,

he took out the golden brooches / letépve az aranyból vert kapcsokat,
that held her dress, / melyek fölfogták a királynő köntösét,

raised them high up and plunged them / a magasba emelte őket,
deep into the sockets of his own eyes / és mélyen a szeme golyójába szúrta,

so that they'll never again see / így többé nem láthatja,
what evil things he's done. / mily rémségeket tett.

The recorded voices are those of Kristopher Knowles and Robert Wilson in English. Most of the time, the flood of sentences emanating from the loudspeakers denotes an inner sound, a shred of memory, the effect of simulating the spread through oral tradition. Wilson's voice often conjures up scenes. Kristopher Knowles is voiced by autistic phrases that sound like free verses from Wilson performances in the 1970s-1980s ("Who was my father, tell me. Who was my father, tell me", etc.).

Who was my father, tell me? / Mondd meg, ki volt az apám?
Who was my mother… / Ki volt az anyám…

You got me from someone else? / Más adott neked?
It wasn't you who found me? / Hát nem magad találtál?

Who was he? / Ki volt az?
Can you indicate this man to me? / Meg tudod mutatni őt?

Who was my father, tell me. / Mondd meg, ki volt az apám.
Who was my mother. / Ki volt az anyám.

Why should a man... / Miért féljen az ember…

Meg Harper speaks the language of the dance. Their stylized appearance gives a mythical feeling. Oedipus and Jocasta do not even speak at all. Oedipus's round shell, symbolizing blindness, is removed when he blinds himself. That is, when he sees reality.

Code-Switching and Outer Aspects

In the performances of Robert Wilson, dance and choreography always play an important role. For the model chosen for *Oedipus*, certain principles have been defined that are worth taking into account. Almost all the actors are over the age of seventy, but the dancers, unlike them, are young, full of form-making energies. Angela Winkler (Templin, Germany, 1944) is the figure of the observer and questioner; Meg Harper (Evanston, Illinois, US, 1944) as Teiresias is a disciplined mystic. Casilda Madrazo (Mexico City, Mexico, 1980) is an experimental flamenco dancer, embodying a priestess-like Iocasta.

As in myth in general, there are no psychologically developed characters, so their inner world is not reflected in their speech either. Their speech serves to show the nature and creation of myth, that is, a word spread after the oral tradition of *mythos* (plural *mythoi* or *mythoses*), as in fairy tales, especially poetic fairy tales, legends, narratives, stories. A story that is relevant or significant, a story of significant truth for a particular culture, religion, society, or other group. In this sense, this is opposed to the *Logos*, the rational principle that governs the cosmos, which is also expressed in matter.

As suggested by Grutman, "texts can either give equal prominence to two or more languages or add a liberal sprinkling of other languages to a dominant language clearly identified as their central axis."[6] Within the same multilingual category we could differentiate Robert Wilson's works, which include wider multilingual insertions taking up entire paragraphs/monologues. English is the matrix, i.e. the first language in which larger texts or simple questions are embodied. The overall artistic impression and mythological knowledge of the story counterbalance the semantic difficulties of reception of his very often multilingual works. These code-switchings do not originate in the original text but from narrative and outer structures: language choice depends on the native language and profession of the actor (dancer). This originally external aspect is later also used for internal dramaturgical purposes. The dancers, main characters of the original play and the myth itself, do not speak a word during the whole performance. This is not a geographical necessity for the director, as it is the case for a Serbo–Hungarian or Hungaro–Romanian public: this is an artistic choice of an American (a Texan) director so that he can work with actors of different cultures and to be able to stage the work in different countries.

[6] Rainier Grutman: Refraction and recognition: Literary multilingualism in translation, *Target* 18 (2006), 19. See also Rainier Grutman: "Besos para golpes": l'ambiguïté d'un titre hugolien", in Gauvin Lise (ed.): *Les langues du roman. Du plurilinguisme comme stratégie textuelle*, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1999, 37–51.; and Rainier Grutman: Traduire l'heterolingualisme: Questions conceptuelles et (con) Textuelles, in Marie–Annick Motout (ed.): *Autour d'Olive Senior: hétérolinguisme et traduction*, Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 2012, 49–81.

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MULTIMODAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Switching Verbal Codes into Audiovisual Codes for Dubbing Shakespeare into Hungarian

Judit Mudriczki

In a volume on code-switching, the discussion of Shakespearean drama may not be surprising. Not only because, as a Renaissance playwright, Shakespeare was interested in displaying "the interaction between the native tongue and its dialectal variants, or with 'foreign' languages"[1] including French or Latin, which permeate his dramatic discourses in plays like *Henry V*, but also because the translations and adaptations of his plays on stage or screen imply constant and very complex transfers between verbal, visual and audiovisual codes. This chapter intends to raise and hopefully answer the question of what happens to Shakespeare's legacy when his plays are translated into Hungarian and why translation conventions in Hungarian theaters differ considerably from the conventions of audiovisual translation in the dubbing industry.[2] As a particular case study, it is based on the text of Shakespeare's play[3] as it was modified for the 1999 film adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Michael Hoffman[4] as well as the Hungarian dubbing script written by László Upor in 1999 based on the 1994 Hungarian translation by Ádám Nádasdy.[5] I take primary interest in exploring the transfer strategies that dubbing script writer László Upor used while turning an existing Hungarian translation of the play into a dubbing script.

This interest does not conceive of code-switching in its general sense as the change of different linguistic codes, e.g. dialects or foreign languages, within

[1] Dirk Delabastita – Ton Hoenselaars: 'If but as well I other accents borrow, that can my speech diffuse.' Multilingual Perspectives on English Renaissance drama, in D. Delabastita – T. Hoenselaars (eds.): *Multilingualism in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2015, 1.

[2] I am grateful to Ádám Nádasdy for reviewing this chapter and giving me professional advice about refining its earlier version.

[3] All citations from the play come from the following edition: William Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, B. Mowat – P. Werstine – M. Poston – R. Niles (eds.): Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, 2016, https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/a-midsummer-nights-dream, accessed 22 September 2022. In accordance with traditional Shakespeare philology, I am referencing act, scene and line numbers instead of page numbers.

[4] *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Michael Hoffman (Regency Enterprises, 1999), 1 hr., 56 min.

[5] William Shakespeare: *Szentivánéji álom*, trans. Ádám Nádasdy, *Színház* 28 (1995), 1–36.

the same conversation.[6] If it did, it would discuss the significance of the directorial choice that places the story in a 19th century Italian setting, which results in the infiltration of Italian utterances into English dramatic discourses. Perhaps the most often cited example of this innovative use of Italian in Hoffmann 1999 is Mrs. Bottom, who speaks only Italian throughout the film, but in order to highlight their unhappy marriage while she is looking for her husband, her words are subtitled in English as "Where's my husband? Where's that worthless dreamer?"[7] With a firm stance in adaptation studies, code-switching may also be studied from an intersemiotic point of view that would focus on the audiovisual transposition of a written text, an approach that has been recently taken by scholars including Irene Ranzato, Katerina Perdikaki, or Anna De Vito.[8] Undoubtedly, the 1999 film adaptation by Michael Hoffman would also offer examples of this type of switches from verbal to visual codes. When Oberon describes to Robin Goodfellow, also known as Puck, which flower he should bring to him, in his last line the flower itself is named in Shakespeare as "Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell. / It fell upon a little sister flower, / Before, milk–white, now purple with love's wound, / And maidens call it 'love–in–idleness.'" (2.1.165–168) However, in the film adaptation the last line with its reference to *viola tricolor* is completely deleted and a poppy field is displayed on screen with its bright red colors that visually matches the reference in the penultimate line to a flower that is "purple with love's wound."

Although similar examples would surely deserve a study on their own, this chapter is much more interested in the multimodal transfer of meaning when the English written text translated into Hungarian for stage performances is turned into audiovisual utterances determined by the complexity of both verbal and nonverbal signifying codes that define cinematographic language.[9] This particular type of code-switching in the Jakobsonian classification qualifies as both intersemiotic and intralingual translation.[10] In its broader

[6] Penelope Gardner-Chloros: *Code-switching*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2009, 4.

[7] Stephen M. Buhler: Textual and Sexual Anxieties in Michael Hoffman's Film of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Vol. 22, No. 3, Fall 2004, 57.

[8] See Irene Ranzato: E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View*: cultural and linguistic elements in the novel's afterlives, in M. Canepari – G. Mansfield – F. Poppi (eds.): *Remediating, Rescripting, Remaking–Language and Translation in the New Media*, Roma, Carocci, 58–69. Katerina Perdikaki: Towards a model for the study of film adaptation as intersemiotic translation, *inTRAlinea* Special Issue: J. J. Martinez Sierra – B. Cerezo Merchan (eds.): *Building Bridges between Film Studies and Translation Studies,* 2017, https://www.intralinea.org/specials/article/2246, accessed 22 September 2022. Anna De Vito: The New Adventures of Peter and Wendy: Translating a Web Series Based on a Classic, in A. Amendola – L. Barone – N. Troianiello (eds.): *Seriality Across Narrations, Languages and Mass Consumption: To Be Continued…*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars, 2019, 77–91.

[9] Frederic Chaume: Film Studies and Translation Studies: Two Disciplines at Stake in Audiovisual Translation, *Meta* 49 (2014), 16, https://doi.org/10.7202/009016ar.

[10] Roman Jakobson: On Linguistic Aspects of Translation, in L. Venuti (ed.): *The Translation Studies Reader*, London – New York, Routledge, 2000, 139.

academic context, this approach also conforms to a recent shift in academic interest that crosses media borders and has been described as a "transmedial turn"[11] or a "performative turn"[12] in translation studies, and concerns the transfer of meaning in translation through different artistic forms and ways of expression.

In what follows, first I will explain the significance of this play in Hungary today, then I will turn to the 1999 lip–sync dubbing of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and focus on the transfer strategies that resulted in the Hungarian dubbing script. My interest in this particular form of audiovisual translation results from the sociocultural context because Hungary has been a dubbing country for more than 80 years. Due to the high rate of illiteracy in the 1930s, and the strong political control over cultural products during the Cold War, Hungarian people have been accustomed to enjoying foreign films in their mother tongue, and even today strongly prefer dubbing over subtitling in case of feature films.

The Hungarian dubbed version of Michael Hoffman's adaptation is a unique production for a number of reasons. First of all, it must be remembered that in Hungary *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has a unique position as it is the most popular Shakespeare play.[13] Although the popularity of film adaptations is more difficult to measure, out of the 77 film adaptations that the International Movie Database lists, only 7 titles are available in Hungarian. Among these 7 titles, the film directed by Michael Hoffman with its lavish cast of Hollywood stars including Kevin Klein, Rupert Everett, Christian Bale, Stanley Tucci, Michelle Pfeiffer and Sophie Marceau, has proved to be the most successful film not only in artistic but also in commercial terms.[14] Undoubtedly, the Hungarian dubbed version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has also managed to reach a wider Hungarian audience than any other dubbed adaptations as it was screened not only in cinemas but has also been broadcast on HBO and its affiliate TV channels, and today it is still available on one of the most popular video sharing platforms.

Secondly, László Upor, who had long been widely known as a dramaturge and literary translator, was commissioned to write the Hungarian dubbing script in 1999. With all his experience in both theater and translation, he would

[11] Francis Mus: Translation and Plurisemiotic Practices: A Brief History, *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 35 (2021), 2–14, https://jostrans.org/issue35/art_mus.php, accessed 22 September 2022.

[12] Michaela Wolf: A "Performative Turn" in Translation Studies? Reflections from a Sociological Perspective, *TranscUlturAl* 9 (2017), 27–44.

[13] Attila Szabó: Klasszikus drámák a modern színpadon. Shakespeare és a kortárs dráma színpadi aktualitása a 20. század második felében és napjainkban, in *A valós színterei*, Budapest, PRAE.HU, 2019, 57.

[14] International Movie Database, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0140379/?ref_=fn_al_tt_3, accessed 22 September 2022.

have had all the skills needed to write the Hungarian dubbing script based only on the English film script but, instead, he modified an existing translation of the play. From a professional point of view, this choice may seem surprising but there is an idea historically inherent in the Hungarian film industry that the dubbing of any adaptation of what Kirsten Malmkjær calls "key cultural texts"[15] is expected to be based on the canonical Hungarian version. In the case of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the most canonical Hungarian translation is, undoubtedly, the 1864 one by János Arany, who was not only a renowned poet, translator, critic, and editor, but he also chaired the first Shakespeare committee in 1860.[16] His translation enjoys a distinguished position as shown by the fact that it was included even in the 1955 Hungarian edition of the Complete Works of Shakespeare, and consequently it was the version that circulated in print until 1989 and thus determined Hungarian understanding of the play for more than 130 years.

Nevertheless, in 1999**,** instead of using this canonical translation by Arany, László Upor decided to turn to a 1994 translation of the play. This recent version was translated by Ádám Nádasdy, a poet and professor of English linguistics, to meet the needs of contemporary stage productions. Nádasdy was in fact commissioned by Péter Gothár, director at Katona József Theater, Budapest, to retranslate the play because Gothár believed that in the 20th century it was impossible to understand "the extremely complicated emotional and sexual relations that permeate the whole play" if one relies on the 19th century translation by Arany.[17] This claim was reasonable since, unlike Nádasdy, Arany translated the play between 1858 and 1863 to be included in the first complete works of Shakespeare in Hungarian.[18] Thus, it is no wonder that the 19th century Hungarian audience needed the text of the play to be read as outstanding work of poetry**,** whereas in the 20th century there was a paradigm shift that became much more interested in Shakespeare's dramatic force. As Ádám Nádasdy explains, instead of preserving the poetic quality of the text, modern literary translations prefer prioritizing its performative elements and have stage performances in mind.[19]

[15] Kirsten Malmkjær – Adriana Şerban – Fransiska Louwagie: Introduction: Key Cultural Texts in translation, in Malmkjær–Şerban–Louwagie (eds.): *Key Cultural Texts in Translation*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2018, 1–8.

[16] Márta Minier: Shakespeare Translation and Taboo: A Case Study in Retranslation, *Gramma: Journal of Theory and Criticism* 12 (2004), 74.

[17] Színház és/vagy irodalom, *Színház* 31, (1998), 16. The English translation is mine.

[18] Krisztina Kaló: Az újrafordítás reneszánsza. Shakespeare *Szentivánéji álom* című drámájának magyar fordítástörténete és a fordítások összehasonlító elemezése, in A. Vermes (ed.): *A fordítás arcai 2019*, Eger, Eszterházy Károly Egyetem, Líceum Kiadó, 2019, 38, http://publikacio.uni-eszterhazy.hu/6962/1/35_43_Kaló.pdf, accessed 22 September 2022.

[19] Ádám Nádasdy: *A csökkenő költőiség. Tanulmányok, beszélgetések Shakespeare és Dante fordításáról*, Budapest, Magvető, 2021, 51.

As a dramaturge and translator, László Upor was familiar with this 20th century expectation and also knew that the translation by Nádasdy worked out very well on stage. Although his work as a dubbing script writer hardly competes with his achievements in stage productions, while commenting on the difference between translating for stage and screen, Upor highlights the gains of his standing on both of these performative grounds:

> Facing the difficulties of dubbing script writing, we realize the real dynamics of dialogues on stage. We understand that the sentences that characters utter do not simply accompany gestures, but also strengthen and provoke them. Films are final products in which acting is already done and cannot be changed at all, which occasionally forces the translator to arrive at severe compromises. But when the translator works on a text to be used for an upcoming stage production, he is voicing his own language deeply embedded in his own culture and thus theatrical/artistic gestures will result from the text of the play.[20]

In order to understand the severe compromises that Upor as the audiovisual translator had to make in 1999, I will sum up the changes he made to Ádám Nádasdy's translation to fit the needs of the Hungarian dubbing team. My statistical estimates based on a color coded textual analysis of the 1994 translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* compared with the recorded Hungarian dubbed dialogues suggest that about 40% of the lines from the Hungarian translation were deleted simply because they were missing even from the English film script. If we disregard this deleted portion and focus only on those parts in which Upor had to make dramaturgical or editorial decisions, we conclude that, in order to stay in line with the audiovisual narrative in the film adaptation, 20% of the text was moved to a different part of the film script without any modification in wording and about 40% of the text remained completely unchanged by Upor. From an academic point of view, the most fascinating part of the script is the remaining 40% in which Upor had to revise Nádasdy 1994 because of the audiovisual constraints inherent in the signifying codes of the film adaptation. These constraints typically include the length of utterances, lip movements and body language.

Since in audiovisual narratives the length of sentences is given, it is reasonable if some words had to be deleted or added to the literary translation. To cite one example, at his nuptial banquet Duke Theseus asks Philostrate, his Master of Revels, about the entertainments, saying "Come now, what masques, what dances shall we have / To wear away this long age of three hours / Between our after–supper and bed time?" (5.1. 34–37) The same sentence in Nádasdy 1994 reads as "No, lássuk, mely színes előadással tölthetjük el e három hosszú

[20] László Upor: Nyelv és gesztus, *Színház* 31 (1998), 22. The English translation is mine.

órát a vacsora s a lefekvés között?" while Upor 1999 sounds as "No, lássuk, mely színes előadással tölthetjük el e három órát a vacsora s a lefekvés között?" Thus, Upor deleted the word "hosszú" (long), and the Duke refers only to three hours instead of "három hosszú órát" (three long hours) as in Nádasdy 1994. To cite also an example of necessary additions, it is worth recalling Helena desperately crying in the forest in Hoffmann 1999 as "No. No, no. No. I am as ugly as a bear" that Nádasdy 1994 worded as "Nem, nem; én ronda vagyok, mint a medve" (No, no. I am as ugly as a bear), which was extended with repeating "nem" (no) and "ronda" (ugly) to stay in line with the length of the English sequence in Upor 1999: "Nem, nem, nem, nem, én ronda, ronda vagyok, mint a medve" (No, no, no, no. I am ugly, as ugly as a bear).[21]

As for understanding the significance of lip movements, it is worth remembering that the linguistic units of dubbing are not the same as the syntactic units of a dramatic text. Sentences on screen are often broken by pauses and in case of close-ups, when the camera focuses on the face of the actor speaking, lip movements become visual constraints. In the scene when Lysander and Demetrius argue over Hermia's love, the influence of such segmentations with pauses, indicated with double slashes below, become quite evident. In the film, Lysander voices his claim over Hermia with only one pause in the following three sentences: "You have her father's love, Demetrius. Let me have Hermia's. // Do you marry him." Nádasdy had no constraints of any pauses other than full stops, which he eventually decided to ignore, and changed the order of the last two sentences in his Hungarian version: "Az apja úgy szeret, Demetrius: vedd hát el azt, s add nekem Hermiát."(Her father loves you so much, Demetrius: Marry him and give me Hermia.) Upor, however, had to respect the pause before the last clause because of the lip movements of the actor on screen, so he restored the order of the last two syntactic units, and Lysander sounds in Upor 1999 as "Az apja úgy imád téged, hadd vegyem el én a lányt! // Te vidd az apját!" (Her father loves you so much, let me marry her. // And you can take her father.)

To illustrate the way in which body language and gestures set constraints to the audiovisual translator, let me recall the scene in which the mechanicals discuss the scenery necessary for their performance and assign the role of the wall to Sam, whom Bottom instructs to form a circle with his right thumb and index finger so that it resembles a "cranny" in the wall through which Pyramus and Thisbe can talk. In Nádasdy 1994, this "cranny" is called a "hasadék" (cleft) but Upor modified it to "rés" (crack), which is not only a more proper choice to describe the roundish shape of the fingers but its one-syllable length also helps him to maintain audiovisual synchronicity. There is another example of the importance of body language that exemplifies a more complex

[21] All English translations of citations from the Hungarian dubbing added in brackets are mine.

dramaturgical decision in the scene when the mechanicals decide on the cast for the wedding of Duke Theseus, and Bottom volunteers even for the role of the lion, crying out "Let me play the lion too." At this point, the screen displays the actor with arms wide open to invite the role to himself. Besides his gestures, even the length of the sentence demanded a Hungarian version different to the one translated by Nádasdy, which reads as "Hadd játsszam az Oroszlánt is én!" (Let me play even the Lion). Upor decided to replace this version with the quasi proverbial sentence from the canonical translation by Arany, which includes the word "ide" (here) to match the gestures of the actor on screen, who, in the Hungarian dubbed version, says "Ide nekem az oroszlánt is!"

This is not the only detail that Upor borrows from the 19th century canonical translation. Although he keeps the telling names of the mechanicals and fairies in Nádasdy's translation, there is a fairy whose Nádasy translated literally as "Borsóvirág," (Peaseblossom) but it was replaced by Upor with "Babvirág" (Beanblossom), which Arany used. This change might have been made because *Babvirág* has the same number of syllables as *Peaseblossom* while *Borsóvirág* is one syllable longer, which would have spoilt the synchronization with the English.

The last example of transfer strategies intends to illustrate László Upor's own creativity when the complexity of audiovisual constraints made it impossible to adapt either Nádasdy's or Arany's translation. Awakening from his enchanted vision, Bottom is planning to ask his friend Peter Quince to write a song of his recollections of the night, and thinking about its title in Hoffmann 1999 he adds "It shall be called Bottom's // Dream // because it hath no bottom." This line, based on the pun inherent in the character's name, was translated by Nádasdy in a rather long sentence as "Az lesz a címe, hogy 'Tompor Álma', és olyan magasröptű lesz, hogy nem lesz semmi teteje" (It will be called *Bottom's Dream* and it will be so lofty that it will have no roof). This translation relies on a pun that comes from the idiomatic meaning of the Hungarian phrase "to have no roof" (to have no sense at all).[22] The same sentence in Arany's translation reads as "Legyen a címe: *Zuboly Álma*, mert még most is zubog a fülem belé" (Let it be called *Rumbler's Dream* because my ears still ring with its rumbling sound). His wording also sounds entertaining in Hungarian although Arany uses a different kind of pun. Zuboly, the Hungarian name of the craftsman in his translation, means the beams of the loom onto which woven cloths are rolled and thus it recalls the fact that Bottom is actually a weaver. Ignoring both previous translations, Upor has the following witty and concise wording "Az lesz a címe Tompor álma–tomporíthat benne" (It will be called Bottom's Dream in which he can bottom). This translation

[22] Vilmos Bárdosi: *Magyar szólások, közmondások adatbázisa, 14000 szólás, közmondás, helyzetmondat magyarázata stilisztikai jelzéssel, a típus feltüntetésével, fogalomköri szómutatóval*, Budapest, Tinta Könyvkiadó, 2012, 703.

also benefits from a very complex wordplay in Hungarian because the verb "tomporít" does not exist, which signals to the audience the presence of paronomasia. Actually, this sound sequence resonating with the voiced counterparts of its consonants alludes to the idiomatic use of "domborít," an expression widely used in performing arts to describe actors both on stage and screen who showing off their own dramatic skills overdo their roles.

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CULTURAL CODE-SWITCHING: VARIATIONS ON A CHEKHOVIAN THEME

László Cseresnyési

Chekhov: his Critics, Sacrilegists and Parodists

Well before the publication of *Uncle Vanya* (1898), Chekhov had been recognized as a towering figure of fin de siècle Russian literature, riding on the wave of contemporary critical acclaim. However, when *Uncle Vanya* was performed on stage by Konstantin Stanislavski's Moscow Art Theater troupe on October 26, 1899, there were some dissenting voices. Chekhov wrote in his diary that he was barely able to sleep, since the congratulatory telegrams kept flowing in until very late on the night on the 27th. Nevertheless, many contemporary critics and even some of Chekhov's admirers found the play somewhat annoying. Earlier, in November, 1898, Maxim Gorky wrote to Chekhov that *Uncle Vanya* filled him with fear and sadness, and made him cry like an old woman (плакал, как баба): "You know, it seems to me that in this play you are colder than the devil towards people. You are as indifferent to them as the snow and the blizzard."[1] Why did Gorky, Chekhov's close friend and admirer, make such a blunt statement? Undoubtedly, Chekhov sometimes viewed his characters with some measure of irony, but he always treated them with deep empathy.

So, why? The reason might be that Russian literary tastes had started to change at the time, i.e. Russian audience and literary men were getting a bit tired of the traditional representation of those invariably desperate and hopeless men and women, and the iconic "superfluous men" (лишний человек) of Russian novels, cf. Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* (1840), Turgenev's *Rudin* (1856), and above all Goncharov's *Oblomov* (1859).[2] In an article extolling the magnificence of Chekhov's theater, even Kosztolányi Dezső,[3] a prominent Hungarian author, included one sarcastic paragraph on the Chekhovian "Lebensgefühl":

[1] Translation is mine. In Russian: *Мне, знаете, кажется, что в этой пьесе Вы к людям — холоднее черта. Вы равнодушны к ним, как снег, как вьюга.* Cf. M. P. Gromov / Громов (ed.): *Переписка А.П. Чехова* [The Correspondence of A.P. Chekhov], Художественная литература, Москва, 1984. http://az.lib.ru/g/gorxkij_m/text_0410.shtml, accessed 30 December 2022.

[2] Cf. Ellen Chances: The Superfluous Man in Russian Literature, in N. Cornwell (ed.): *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature,* 2001, 111; Добролюбов / Dobrolyubov, Что такое обломовщина? [What is Oblomovism?] *Современник* 5 (1859), 59–98.

[3] In Hungarian and in Japanese personal names, the family name is followed by the given name.

> What is going on in here? Everyone is unhappy, everyone is desirous of something, everyone loves someone, but he or she is loved by a different someone. They come together in a country estate by the lake … Life is marvelous. But they keep on taking deep sighs, and lamenting about how sorrowful and boring life is. They are crying and yawning. The audience would also be crying, but never yawning.[4]

In *Uncle Vanya*, the arrival of a couple in a country mansion upsets the blessed monotony of rural life. The characters realize that their life has gone wrong somewhere. When the couple leaves, and tranquility returns, those left behind remain painfully aware of their utter failure of life. *Uncle Vanya* is a drama of inertia and ennui: the characters are unable to change the narrow–gauge track of their lives. Apparently, Chekhov himself often felt that life is but a series of lost chances, frustrations and grief. In a letter to A. S. Suvorin (November 25, 1892), he had expressed this awareness of life. He wrote that he could not believe in revolution, or in the existence of God: he desired nothing, feared nothing, and hoped for nothing. Then he added: "I will not throw myself down a flight of stairs … but I will not delude myself with hopes for a better future either."[5]

Life Sucks. This is the subtitle of Aaron Posner's memorable (and, as he put it, "irreverent") stage adaptation of Chekhov's play (Theater J, Washington, DC; February 2015). Whether or not life sucks most of the time, indeed, Chekhov made quite an effort to make us feel the pain and desperation he shared with his characters. However, life goes on, so it does not leave us much room for lamenting: we have no other choice but moving on. Sonia puts this simple piece of wisdom into humble words at the end of the play:

> What can we do? We must live our lives. Yes, we shall live, Uncle Vanya. We shall live through the long procession of days before us, and through the long evenings; we shall patiently bear the trials that fate imposes on us; we shall work for others without rest, both now and when we are old; and when our last hour comes we shall meet it humbly, and there, beyond the grave, we shall say that we have suffered and wept, that our life was bitter, and God will have pity on us. … We shall rest. … We shall rest.[6]

[4] Translation is mine. In Hungarian: *Mi történik itten? Mindenki boldogtalan, mindenki vágyakozik, mindenki szeret és mást szeret, mint aki őt szereti. Nyáron, egy vidéki birtokon a tó mellett … találkoznak egymással. Az élet gyönyörű. De ők folyton sóhajtoznak, hogy milyen szomorú, milyen unalmas. Sírnak és ásítoznak. A nézők sírnak, de nem ásítoznak.* Kosztolányi Dezső: Csehov, in Illyés Gy. (ed.): *Lángelmék,* Budapest, Nyugat [1930] 1941, 302–303.

[5] Translation is mine. In Russian*: Я не брошусь, …, в пролет лестницы, но и не стану обольщать себя надеждами на лучшее будущее.* Chekhov / Чехов, Антон Павлович: *Письма и переписка* [A. P. Chekhov: *Letters and Correspondence*], 2019, https://poesias.ru/letters/chehov-anton-p-perepiska/pismo-10095.shtml, accessed 30 December 2022.

[6] Traditionally quoted in Marian Fell's translation of 1916. Anton Chekhov: *Uncle Vanya, Scenes from Country Life in Four Acts*, trans. Marian Fell, ibiblio, https://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/ac/

Chekhov's plays have probably been parodied more often than any other work written by Russian classical authors.[7] His masterpieces, however, certainly resonate with the audience, while, of course, nobody would deny that, for example, Uncle Vanya's famous monologue in Act IV is a rather unusual piece of miniature monodrama:

> Oh, my God! I am forty-seven years old. I may live to sixty; I still have thirteen years before me; an eternity! How shall I be able to endure life for thirteen years? What shall I do? How can I fill them? ... If I could only wake some still, bright morning and feel that life had begun again; that the past was forgotten and had vanished like smoke. [He weeps][8]

Variations on a Chekhovian Theme

Yoshida Kenkō, a 14th–century Japanese monk and essayist, wrote that if we did not disappear like dew or vanish like smoke in a graveyard in the end, but would remain in this world all the time, we could *hardly be moved by things* (mono–no–aware mo nakaran): "It is precisely impermanence that makes life so precious".[9] The mystery of the objects that surround us lies in their ability to evoke memories of people and times long past, and we cling to those objects which could be an old photo, a fountain pen or even a red Saab 900, for that matter. Remember Aeneas moved to tears when in a temple he was looking at a mural depicting a battle of the Trojan war and saying that there are tears for things.[10]

If we have a closer look at Murakami Haruki's works, we find that his heroes, who get hurt and have to cope with losses, fight with their own memories. Remembering sometimes helps, since with the passage of time, our memory eases the pain, and may even change everything into a bittersweet mélange. Murakami frequently reverts to the importance of memory: "Memories give us power" (Kioku wa nanika chikara ni naru) and "Memories inevitably reconstitute themselves" (Kioku wa sakegataku tsukuri–kaerarete iku mono da), etc.

vanya.htm, accessed 30 December 2022. The printed book *Plays by Anton Tchekoff*, Scribner's Sons, New York, 1916 is practically unavailable.

[7] Cf. Laurence Senelick – Stuffed Seagulls: Parody and Reception of Chekhov's Plays. *Poetics Today* 8 (1987), 285–298. Starting with Viktor P. Burenin's 1901 parody of Chekhov's *Three Sisters,* I have found about sixty parodies in more than a dozen languages.

[8] Chekhov: *Uncle Vanya.* In Russian: *О, боже мой... Мне сорок семь лет; если, положим, я проживу до шестидесяти, то мне остается еще тринадцать. Долго! Как я проживу эти тринадцать лет? Что буду делать, чем наполню их? ... Проснуться бы в ясное, тихое утро и почувствовать, что жить ты начал снова, что все прошлое забыто, рассеялось, как дым.* (Плачет.)

[9] Yoshida Kenkō: *Essays in Idleness. The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkō*, Tuttle, Tokyo, 1981, 7–8.

[10] *Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.* (Virgil, *Aeneid,* I: 462).

Published in a collection of short stories and named after the Beatles' song "Drive my car", Murakami Haruki's short story *Doraibu mai ka* is about fifty pages long in Japanese.[11] The complete collection was translated into English.[12] The story focuses on a husband's grappling with grieving for his deceased wife. The wife had contracted uterine cancer, and the husband had to watch her waste away in a Tokyo hospice hospital. Kafuku, an actor and theater director, loved his wife, and was so afraid of losing her that he even put up with her occasional infidelities. After her departure he was also suffering from the feeling that he knew so little about her, although they had spent twenty years together as husband and wife, sharing all those happy and painful memories.

Kafuku wanted to understand what Oto, the love of his life, had been looking for in the other men, and what she found lacking in him. He hoped that by befriending his wife's former lover, he could solve this mystery. He pretended that he got to like his wife's last lover, while, in fact, he despised and looked down on the man. After half a year of acting "someone like a friend" (tomodachi–rashiki mono) to him, and listening to the man's talk while binge drinking in bars, he was no longer able to hate him. He stopped meeting the man, and did not return his calls.

The language code and the register–choices of their Japanese dialogues reveal that these two men could not have been real "drinking buddies." Both of them maintained maximum alertness and kept a certain ceremonious distance. The lover suspected that the husband might know about his relationship with Oto, while Kafuku was carefully observing even the minutest details of the other man's body and movement. In the end, Kafuku realized that he had been trying the impossible. What we know about the irreplaceable other is always full of blind spots.

Kafuku's driver's license was revoked for drunken driving, and then he was diagnosed with glaucoma. He had to hire someone as a chauffeur to drive him around Tokyo. A young woman, Watari Misaki, was recommended, a plain–featured, brusque girl, a heavy smoker, yet an excellent driver. The car had an old cassette player, so while Watari drove him to a theater in Ginza, Kafuku could rehearse his lines of a Meiji-era adaptation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya.*

Watari's mother died when she was driving drunk: her car went into a spin, flew off the road and crashed into a tree. Kafuku soon realized that Watari, this down to earth woman is a perfect listener. He confided her wife's story to the girl who explained to him that Oto had probably chosen that "insignificant guy" (taishita yatsu ja nai) for a casual affair precisely because she never loved him.

[11] Murakami Haruki 村上春樹, Doraibu mai kā ドライブ・マイ・カー, in *Onna no inai otokotachi* 女のない男たち, Tōkyō 東京, Bungei Shunjū 文藝春秋, 2014, 19–70.

[12] Haruki Murakami: Drive my car, in *Men without women,* transl. Philip Gabriel – Ted Goossen, London, Vintage, 2018, 3–40.

Hamaguchi Ryūsuke's *Drive my car* movie is different from the short story.[13] The film won in three categories, including best screenplay, at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival, also received the Oscar for best international feature film in 2022. The three-hour long film branched off in several directions. The director did not simply develop certain elements of the original story but created a complete *sequel* to it. He told an interviewer that he had found the story's ending abrupt, and felt like taking the story somewhere beyond where it ends on the page. He added two new venues: several scenes in Hiroshima and one in Hokkaidō. Hamaguchi abandoned the flashback technique of Murakami's narrative and arranged the events into chronological order.

In the movie, Kafuku's wife, Oto, a beautiful actress turned screenwriter, conceived her stories while she and her husband were making love. This material was taken from the Scheherezade story of the *Men without women* collection: a girl fallen in love with a classmate sneaks into his home to steal souvenirs. Oto helped Kafuku's work by recording Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* on a cassette, in which Vanya's lines were left out, so that Kafuku could supply those lines and prepare for his role while driving the red Saab convertible.

The car became the main protagonist of both the short story and the movie, and much of the action took place in it. Kafuku and Oto had gone on many drives and road trips in that car, and so it reminded him of his wife and the decades they spent together.

Oto introduced him a young actor, Takatsuki Kōshi. One day, when Kafuku's flight got canceled, he returned home from the airport, and found his wife and Takatsuki in the midst of passionate lovemaking. They did not notice Kafuku, who quietly walked back to his car and drove off. He spent the night in a hotel, and when Oto called him, Kafuku told her that he had arrived safely at his destination. A few days later, Oto told Kafuku that she would like to have a serious talk with him in the evening. Kafuku was afraid of talking, as he probably believed that resolving their problem means confronting and losing Oto. Instead of going home, he kept driving around the town until late in the night. When Kafuku got home, he found his wife lying on the floor. She had died of cerebral hemorrhage, and Kafuku blamed himself for her death.

Two years after Oto's death, Kafuku received and accepted an invitation to Hiroshima to direct a multilingual production of *Uncle Vanya* performed by actors speaking their respective native languages. Beyond rehearsing and directing, taking care of the casting auditions, too, became his responsibility. Watari Misaki is assigned to chauffeur Kafuku around and back to his temporary residence.

[13] The cast: ***Nishijima Hidetoshi*** *– Kafuku Yūsuke / Uncle Vanya;* ***Kirishima Reika*** *– Kafuku Oto;* ***Miura Tōko*** *– Watari Misaki;* ***Okada Masaki*** *– Takatsuki Kōshi / Uncle Vanya;* **Park Yurim** (Yoo-Rim) *– Lee Yoon-a (Lee Yu-na) / Sonia;* **Jin Daeyeon** *– Kon Yoon-su;* **Sonia Yuan** *– Janice Chan.*

To shield himself from memories, and also because he feels that uncle Vanya's role would exert a traumatic pressure on him, Kafuku decides on casting Takatsuki over himself in uncle Vanya's role. "Chekhov is terrifying. When you say his lines, it drags out the real you." The character of Takatsuki in the movie is an impulsive young man who is eager to challenge people. He had just lost his permanent job because he was accused of having had a sexual relationship with a minor. What annoyed Takatsuki most was passers-by taking photos of him without even asking for permission. The rehearsals had been almost over, when the police appeared in the theater, and arrested Takatsuki for assaulting and killing a man who had taken photos of him. Now Kafuku had to face the hard choice between taking up Vanya's role or canceling the performance altogether. He asked for a few days to make up his mind. He got into the car with Misaki, and they were heading for Hokkaidō, to the place Misaki was born.

After they reached Misaki's old home, she told Kafuku that she failed to save her mother when the house collapsed in a landslide. Misaki and Kafuku both had carried the burden of guilt (the man blamed himself for Oto's death), and by confessing it they felt a sense of relief.

When they returned to Hiroshima, Kafuku took up the role of Uncle Vanya, and the first night of *Uncle Vanya* was a tremendous success. As expected, Sonia's soft words at the end of the play won the ovation and thunderous applause of the audience.

This might have been the scene, i.e. the grand finale, where a mediocre director would end this movie. Hamaguchi, however, decided that a film should not end "at a perfect place". As he said in one of the several interviews he gave, in order to make it imperfect (kampeki ja nai suru tame ni) he added one more scene which would create a nice confusion in the viewers' mind. The last scene is set in Korea. Misaki does some shopping at a supermarket. She is driving Kafuku's car, but Kafuku is not there. He probably gave the car to Misaki as a present. The scar Misaki had on her face since the day of the landslide disappeared. Maybe, this was already Misaki's new life.

Intertextuality, Coding and Multilingualism

The main themes of both the film and the story are coping with grief and acting. Kafuku expressed a familiar idea one can already find in the works of classic authors starting from Shakespeare to Pedro Calderón: "And so we all act" *(Soshite bokura wa minna engi o suru).* The situations and roles are, of course, repetitive and so are the sentences people use. This is one reason why Chekhov's words may serve as an *intertext* to the dialogues of the film. They make perfect sense as parts of communicative acts which are far removed in

time and space from Chekhov's world. The border between stage reality and life reality gets blurred when, for example, Kafuku declares while driving through a tunnel: "I can't take this. I'm forty-seven years old. If I live to be sixty, that's thirteen years I have before me. That's so long. How am I supposed to live out those thirteen years?" This is, of course, a variation on Uncle Vanya's monologue I quoted at the beginning of this paper. Also, Kafuku wants to erase the memory of Oto's infidelity, but when he starts to rehearse Vanya's lines, he cannot escape remembering: "For twenty-five years he's been pretending to be someone he's not. Look at that swagger, acting like he's some kind of lord. … I envy him a lot. Such good luck with women. Don Juan himself couldn't have had more experience." A third example: During table reading, Takatsuki reading Vanya's lines had to answer the questions whether he was in love with the professor's wife by saying "She's a good friend of mine." Astrov's response was: "There's a proper order for a woman to become a man's friend. First she's an acquaintance, then she's a lover, and, finally, she becomes a good friend."

Above, I proposed to apply a term introduced by Bakhtin, namely *intertextuality.* However, Hamaguchi has a rather special conception of the "textuality" of language. At the beginning of the film, Kafuku appeared on stage in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot.* He spoke his lines in Japanese, while his partner responded in Indonesian. Kafuku's experimental production of plays involved actors speaking in several languages. Such productions have had a fairly long tradition in various theaters in the world, including Japan. In most cases, the audience could follow the dialogs on a screen displaying the translation into the local language. Kafuku's production of *Uncle Vanya* included Japanese, Korean, English, Mandarin Chinese, Tagalog, German, Indonesian and Malaysian, and also Korean Sign Language.

Quite interestingly, people who were involved in such productions have repeatedly claimed that the audience would usually stop following the play with eyes glued to the screen. Instead, people use their fantasy, rely on the tone and movement and gestures of the actors, and they can enjoy the performance.

We tend to think that communication relies on the precise understanding of verbal messages, but even without sharing a common language, we can interpret facial expressions, gestures and movements. We are quite familiar with such cases. Let me take an example from the movie. The relationship between Kafuku and Misaki was obviously that of a boss and his employee, but when they both stick their hand through the roof of the car holding lit cigarettes, we interpret this symbolic gesture as shift in their relationship.

One of the best-known multilingual performances was *Oedipus Rex* directed by Robert Wilson (1941–). While working on his production of *King Lear,* Robert Wilson made use of noise and silence, and explained his stance in the following way: "The way actors are trained here is wrong. All they think about is interpreting a text. They worry about how to speak words and know

nothing about their bodies. You see that by the way they walk. They don't understand the weight of a gesture in space. A good actor can command an audience by moving one finger."[14]

It must be emphasized, however, the argument for the *rehabilitation of non-verbality* does not imply that the significance of verbality is denied. Kafuku adopts a method of table reading Hamaguchi attributes to Jean Renoir. Hamaguchi considers this great director of the classical French cinema his most important source of inspiration. Renoir's main idea was that if the text is strong enough, actors will be able to develop an emotionally valid interpretation of the role purely by the perfect assimilation, i.e. acquisition, of their lines. Kafuku (or rather Hamaguchi) claims that there is no need for the actor to supply his or her emotions and preconceptions, and nothing can be more harmful than the so-called voice–over instruction by the director, i.e. reading aloud the scripted line with a specific tone, energy, and emotion as an example of how the line should be said. This is why Kafuku has made the actors sit at the table for weeks and read the drama over and over again, with the only instruction being "read it more slowly". Takatsuki and Janice Chang attempt to revolt, but the director remains adamant. Kafuku says: "Try focusing on your text. All you have to do is read it." Janice responds under her breath: "We're not robots … and I think we'll do better if we know what your intent is."

But Kafuku insists, and, indeed, during the rehearsal in the park the miracle happens.

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PERFORMATIVE GERMAN IN SÁNDOR VÁLY'S *DIE TOTENINSEL*

Attila Molnár

When discussing opera, the language skills of the singers might not have been historically a fundamental issue. The question regarding the proficiency in Italian or French of Maria Callas for instance never really registered as a particularly relevant topic in the realm of opera studies. Had there been anyone to ponder upon this conundrum while the artist was performing Norma or Carmen? The unquantifiable criteria of common decency would stipulate that as long as the audience believes the performance, equating believability to catharsis in this very hypothesis, the audience should be leaving the operatic experience with a sense of contentment.

But what if the artist admits from the outset that they do not know the language in which the work will be performed? And how to engage with a work of art when the lack of knowledge of the particular language itself represents the essence of the act? Erika Fischer-Lichte examines this phenomenon in her introduction to *Theatrical Speech Acts: Performing Language*, commenting that "words in performance, i.e. theatrical speech acts, entail some important political and philosophical issues—the two often being closely intertwined". As it will be revealed, "the very act of choosing the language of the performance already poses problems regarding these issues. In multilingual societies, it is by no means self–evident which language—or languages—will be spoken on stage."[1]

Hungarian multimedia artist Sándor Vály (b. 1968) finds himself in a similar situation with *Die Toteninsel*, a project billed by the author as a lyrical opera, which he developed together with Hungarian pianist Éva Polgár. In 2015, it was released in CD format by the Finnish record label Ektro Records. In the same year, *Die Toteninsel karaoke*, a filmed version of the opera, made also by Sándor Vály, was shown at the Mänttä Art Festival in Finland.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how code-switching is represented in Sándor Vály's *Die Toteninsel* opera project. Code-switching with the construct of the unknown proves to be an abundant field in Sándor Vály's art, thanks to his interest in ambiguity, in hybridity, in experimental. In *Die Toteninsel* the code-switching actions take place not only on a technical level, as in

[1] Erika Fischer-Lichte: Introduction: Reflections on the politics and philosophy of language in performance, in E. Fischer-Lichte – T. Jost – S. I. Jain (eds.): *Theatrical Speech Acts: Performing Language*, Abingdon – New York, Routledge, 2020, 1.

code-switching with an unknown language (German language in this case), but on a conceptual level as well, specifically the reconstruction, and implicitly the reenactment of the original text. In addition, I will be asserting that *Die Toteninsel* makes use of, inadvertently at least, the method of ventriloquism based on the assessment of scholar Steven Connor, who indicates that "ventriloquism is one of the most pervasive metaphors by which issues of identity, ownership and power have been articulated within a culture of performance. It could be said that all performance is broadly ventriloquial, in a double movement whereby the performer gives his or her voice to another, and, in the process, takes the voice of that other into him- or herself."[2]

I also argue that the piece should be included in the category of novel operatic experiences called *postopera*, a term theorized by scholar Jelena Novak in her study *Postopera, Reinventing the Voice–Body*. Coining the term *postopera*, Novak was inspired by the title of a Jeremy Tambling study, namely *Post–Opera? After Brecht*. She notes that the solution for the notion of postopera: "designated unconventional contemporary operatic pieces in which the relationship between music and drama is reinvented, and the impact of new media to the opera world is significant."[3] Furthermore, the term reflects two sets of oppositions at the same time: between 'dramatic' opera and postdramatic opera, and between modern opera and postmodern opera",[4] since the comparison with the theoretical field of postdramatic theater defined by Hans–Thies Lehmann becomes more and more relevant as the similitude between the two historically separated art forms comes to be customary.

For Sándor Vály, *Die Toteninsel* began as a reconstruction[5] project. In an antique shop in Budapest, he found a libretto by Karl Georg Zwerenz (1874–1933), which presents the story of Arnold Böcklin's (1827–1901) painting *The Isle of the Dead*. The original title of the libretto was *Die Insel der Toten*, but Sándor Vály decided to use the original name of the painting. However, Vály's connection to Böcklin's work stretches even farther back in time, and first inspired a series of paintings shown in Helsinki and Tallinn in 2003 and 2004, as part of the exhibition titled *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, or *The Birth of Tragedy* in English. Scholar Johanna Domokos notes that "from then on Vály was drawn to projects with two-dimensional focal points that combined musical work and performance,"[6] having indeed ventured in the following years into projects

[2] Steven Connor: Violence, ventriloquism, and the vocalic body, in P. Campbell – A. Kear (eds.): *Psychoanalysis and Performance*, London – New York, Routledge, 2001, 75.

[3] Jelena Novak: *Postopera: Reinventing the Voice–Body*, Farnham–Burlington, Ashgate, 2015, 5.

[4] Novak: *Postopera*, 27.

[5] Sándor Vály: *The Story of "Reconstruction" of a Lost Work*, http://sandorvaly.com/die-toteninsel/, accessed 19 August 2022.

[6] Johanna Domokos: *On the aesthetics of intermedial translanguaging in Toteninsel*, http://sandorvaly.com/die-toteninsel/, accessed 19 August 2022.

that created a dialogue between different artistic mediums, notably the works of well-known painters serving as sources, such as the *Bruegel variations* (2006) in collaboration with pianist Nikoletta Máté, and the *Mondrian variations* (2012) with Éva Polgár.

In addition, Vály's research revealed that the Hungarian composer Jenő Zádor (1894–1977) also wrote music for the libretto, which, however, disappeared after the opera's only performance in 1928 at the Hungarian State Opera House. Vály's hypothesis regarding the libretto was that, since it was written a year after the end of World War One, there was a high probability that it had to represent an anti–war message, a Dadaist critique that hinted at the collapse of the human spirit in connection with tragic events.

Taking into focus Zwerenz' libretto, scholar Johanna Domokos remarks that "the basic themes of Zwerenz's libretto *Die Insel der Toten* coincide with the grand themes of romanticism: emotion, passion, individuality and individual experience, and the soul—especially the tortured soul."[7] Maintaining its ties with the operatic traditions of the 19th century, the plot is defined by a love triangle involving Phyllis, the daughter of the poor fisherman Simon, Timaeos, a young fisherman, and Arnold Böcklin, the fictional figure of the renowned painter. Unbeknownst to Arnold, Phyllis has fallen in love with him, and unwillingly his interactions with her fueled her infatuation with him. Meanwhile Timaeos' jealousy towards him was also amplifying, believing that his and Phyllis' one–sided love story was getting vanquished by the mysterious painter. The opera ends with Phyllis' tragic death during a storm at sea, while trying to impede Arnold from reaching the island of misfortune.

For Vály, the reconstruction was interesting primarily from a musical point of view, he said that he was "interested in the idea of a musical reconstruction to be sung in the original language".[8] Before *Die Toteninsel*, he and Éva Polgár had already experimented together working on projects such as the *Mondrian Variations* (2012) and *Gilgamesh* (2013), instrumental electroacoustic compositions based on the works of the Dutch painter and the themes of the epic poem. In this attempt, vocal reconstruction also had to take place. Nonetheless, the lack of knowledge of the German language proved to be not only a problem but also a challenge. Vály remarked that the lack of knowledge of the language itself was the ultimate motivating force in the implementation of the project. The unfamiliarity with the German language remained the vector even in the creation of the cast. As a result, no cast member was acquainted with the German language. In spite of not being familiar with the world of traditional opera, all members of the cast had artistic backgrounds: the poet J. K. Ihalainen, visual artist Nea Lindgrén, actor and sound artist Juha Valkeapää,

[7] Domokos: *On the aesthetics.*
[8] Vály: *The Story of "Reconstruction."*

composer Mikael Jurmu, dancer Pia Karaspuro, musician Nouk Vály, and Sándor Vály himself.

Returning to Jelena Novak's postoperatic framework, *Die Toteninsel* already parades itself as a radical work of art taking into account its genesis and the composition of its cast. But before venturing into a study of how Vály and the cast engaged with the linguistic dimension of the opera, an inquiry into the musical side of the project equally deserves attention.

The entire project was based on improvisation. The music was composed via email and webcam, as Éva Polgár was based in the United States of America, and Sándor Vály was living in Finland. Éva Polgár made recordings of her improvisations, and Sándor Vály responded to these with new improvised pieces of music. The final "sheet music" was only completed during the official recording. Moreover, the singers worked on the material in isolation, separated from each other, not even once meeting up to rehearse, and they were not even together during the recording, with the purpose of not having any influence between the actors. According to Sándor Vály, this separation was beneficial in the realization of the characters, since the artists only focused on their own performance, their individual interpretation of the libretto and the music, in this manner achieving fully realized characters.

Examining the singing itself, it's instantly detectable that no member of the cast is a trained opera singer. The vocal range of the artists does not stretch to more than four or five notes, therefore the style of singing in *Die Toteninsel* is closer to *recitativo*, in which pitches are being sung, but the articulation is loose, same as in spoken text. Jelena Novak comments that "theorizing the materiality of the voice explores a discursive potential of the body–voice construct." The ideological implications of the singing should be taken into account when analyzing opera, as well as the "effective conditions, signification strategies, and political effects"[9] of the singing body, the performer in the last instance. Needless to say, this style of opera delivery is not part of the traditional division of the art form. Although the *recitativo* style was an instrumental component of the late 16th century proto–operas and the 17th century baroque operas, its popularity diminished afterwards, having just a small resurgence in Wagner's works. But Vály's postoperatic innovation lies in the fact that the entire piece is based on recitatives. It almost works as a succession of declarations, of small operatic essays based, naturally, on the Zwerenz libretto, decidedly breaking with the conventions of traditional opera. Emphasizing the urgency of severing ties with the conformist style of theater–making (and implicitly opera), the co–founders of the *Post–Operative Productions Company*, Nicholas Till and Kandis Cook, having a rather postmodernist vision about the scenic arts, explain in an interview that the conventional

[9] Novak: *Postopera*, 13.

dramatic narrative is based on redundancy and "everything is sucked into that wretched narrative explanation—everything has to be working to convey the story—each moment has to confirm the previous—there's no space for exploring new perceptions or sensations, different relationships between things; there no space for layering, for reflection, for changing tack, for multiplicity. For things just to float."[10] Even so, not only did Vály disinvest from the narrative, removing it from its pedestal, but he even shattered the confines of opera interpretation as well, centering the performance on a delivery close to spoken word. The reconceptualization of these elements, rendering *Die Toteninsel* to an almost antiopera format, represents the most approachable connection to what Jelena Novak calls postopera.

And then a short report on the problem of language. Vály gave his singers[11] free rein. Everyone could prepare as they thought fit. Having to acquire the language individually, getting acquainted with a principally unknown territory, the singers virtually had to construct their own idiolect for this performance. Erika Fischer-Lichte in her introductory study to *Theatrical Speech Acts: Performing Language* remarks that "language is versatile and each individual speaker contributes to its ongoing transformation. This applies in particular to multilingual speakers, who use all of their languages in a highly subjective and individual way, utilizing their versatility to their own needs and ends."[12] Correlating this thought to the fact that all participants were non-German speakers, with little or no knowledge of the language they were to perform, it is arguable that they had to perform while commuting between the codes of the unknown German and the performative German of the operatic experience.

Additionally, Vály so much as refused to include the libretto's instructions in the scripts handed out to the cast. Juha Valkeapää, for example, did not even read the text before recording. Mikael Jurmu and Sándor Vály phoneticized the words into Hungarian and Finnish with the help of Google Translate. Thus, they actually got to know the text with the help of an artificial voice, alienating the language acquisition process from a more natural framework. More so doubling down on the artificiality of the language, propelling it into a second degree of linguistic obscurity, not only did they not speak German beforehand, but now, the only authority on it was a computer. Vály notes that "phoneticization led to a surprising revelation. After the first hearing, Mikael taking notes in Finnish and me in Hungarian, our verbalizing the text sounded dissimilar

[10] Kandis Cook – Nicholas Till: *The Why … What … How … ? Of Post-Operative Productions, Kandis Cook and Nick Till talk about their work, post-operative productions*, https://www.post-operative.org/INTERVIEW-2.html, accessed 24 August 2022.

[11] Sándor Vály uses the term "singer" to describe his cast members, Vály: *The Story of "Reconstruction."*

[12] Fischer-Lichte: Introduction, 8.

depending on our own distinct grammar rules."[13] Erika Fischer-Lichte notes that "language is always investigated as an embodied medium, whereby the processes of embodiment depend on specific performance aesthetics. This applies not only to the gestures and movements of the body but also to the particular use of the voice."[14] Listening to the recording, it is immediately noticeable that the performers are not native German speakers, and the Finnish and Hungarian pronunciations are also easily recognizable. All the singers, except Vály are Finnish native speakers, and accordingly their pronunciation of the German text was compelled by the phonemic orthography of the Finnish language, that has a high grapheme–to–phoneme and phoneme–to–grapheme correspondence, thus reading (and singing) the German text as it were Finnish. For instance, the word *sehen* (to see) pronounced /zeːən /, is being pronounced /sehen/ following the Finnish phonology.

Adhering to Wilhelm von Humboldt's philosophy of language, Fischer-Lichte implies that "since language is not a work, an *ergon*, but an activity, *energeia*, it is always in flux. [...] However, when a language is introduced to or taken up by a group of people who understand and use it as an *energeia* and not as an *ergon*, it becomes their language."[15] For the cast of *Die Toteninsel*, German became a language of a specific activity, of a performance, or in an Austinian perspective, doing things with words. As insufficient or incorrect it might be if it were to be judged on societal standards, *Die Toteninsel*'s performative German is sufficient and correct for the sake of the performance, existing in its own time and space. Furthermore, Fischer-Lichte dedicates a segment of her study to the Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, particularly to the issue of language in his postcolonial theater work by calling attention to a declaration of the author: "Language is mediating in my very being."[16] What does language do, especially the performative German the cast of *Die Toteninsel* engages with? To find a satisfactory answer, it would be helpful to return to the libretto and its objectives. Depicting characters in an eternal state of unease, I would argue that performing the text in an ostensible broken German, conveys the stylistic and metaphorical ambition fittingly.

However, it is precisely in this individually acquired German language that the interpretive key of the artwork lies. Steven Connor signals in his study *Violence, ventriloquism and the vocalic body* that "ventriloquism has become the master trope for articulating the contemporary concern with the ethics of the voice."[17] Here lies the ventriloquist's work in Sándor Vály's operatic gamble. Everyone aims to speak in their own way in this foreign environment. The

[13] Vály: *The Story of "Reconstruction."*
[14] Fischer-Lichte: Introduction, 2.
[15] Ibid., 8–9.
[16] Ibid., 2.
[17] Connor: Violence, 75.

main themes of the libretto include misunderstanding, disagreement, isolation, suffering, and the desire for freedom. The strive to be heard in any way necessary equates with the sense of freedom on the island of the dead. Moreover, taking into consideration the last element of Steven Connor's thesis, the vocalic body is pertinently present in the projection of *Die Toteninsel*. Connor explains that "the principle of the vocalic body is simple. Voices are produced by bodies, but can also themselves produce bodies. The vocalic body is the idea—which can take the form of dream, fantasy, ideal, theological doctrine or hallucination—of a surrogate or secondary body, a projection of a new way of having or being a body, formed and sustained out of the autonomous operations of the voice."[18] Giving these long-forgotten figures a voice again is the ultimate objective of the operatic project. These forgotten voices might even be called lost figures, considering that the original Jenő Zádor score is no longer accessible. It's nearly impossible to know precisely how they were supposed to sound, but reembodying these characters gives them a sense of absolution. Jelena Novak writes that "the singing body is of opera and in opera at the same time. When we see a singing body on the operatic stage, we should be aware that we see the two bodies in one: the body of the singer and the body of the character that the singer plays. They share the same voice: the singer lends it to the character."[19] Whereas Connor connotes that "the voice confers shape upon the body, and is thereby involved in the process whereby the body itself accomplishes, or shapes its world."[20]

The body, the singers' body, is the one that articulates the code-switching in this particular operatic dimension. "The body is real," writes Richard Leppert in his book *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body*, "but its reality is produced, by cognition, as a representation. It is a product of multiple discourses constructed via the body's sensory capacities. We 'know' our bodies through the 'Languages' about and of the body."[21] This perception of corporeality is formulated by Connor also through the lens of the vocalic body, so integral to the operatic experience, suggesting that "the leading characteristic of the vocalic body is to be a body–in–invention, an impossible, imaginary body in the course of being found and formed,"[22] and calling in this manner into perspective the transformational nature of the operatic endeavor. Even the singers, not only the characters they portray, end up rearticulated at the end of the undertaking. Jelena Novak analyzes this circumstance focusing on the mutual influences between body and voice, and

[18] Ibid., 80.

[19] Novak: *Postopera*, 20.

[20] Connor: Violence, 80.

[21] Richard Leppert: *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body*, Berkeley–London, University of California Press, 1993, xx.

[22] Connor: Violence, 80.

inherently singing or performing. She writes: "I perceive the voice–body as a kind of mirror mechanism—the voice is projected by, but also on, the body and that projection, in this case vocal performance, immediately affects the identity and the presence of the body that produced it, by reflecting itself back to it."[23]

To sum up, no matter how Dadaistic the work's origins may have been, testing the limits of conventional opera productions, the main feature of the final product is humanism. Reenacting scenes from the (fictional) lives of these forgotten small figures, perpetually adrift, Vály and company offer up their bodies and voices in a (post)operatic dimension, articulating an almost magical text, previously untouched and exaggeratedly even incomprehensible script, not just for the sake of the performance, but in a holistic manner, for an overarching notion of freedom. Setting them free corresponds to freeing the limits of what art can do.

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[23] Novak: *Postopera*, 6.

NATIONAL LEGACY IN TRANSNATIONAL AND TRANSMEDIAL TRANSPOSITION

Accented Hungarian Cinema (Roland Vranik: *The Citizen*, 2016)

Mónika Dánél

Nodes in the Hungarian and Romanian Accented Cinema

In his fundamental book *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (2001), Hamid Naficy introduces and conceptualizes an important new term in cinema studies, which is related to the contemporary mobility (migration, diaspora, exile) processes. Through creating and characterizing the "accented cinema" and "accented style", Naficy places the phenomena in transnational context. His terms and theoretical frame could be adapted to the contemporary Eastern European film (co)production and could nuance specially localized phenomena in Eastern Europe.[1] In this paper, my focus will be on a contemporary Hungarian movie, but first I outline some general lines regarding a possible classification and characterization of Hungarian and Romanian cinema as accented.

In historical context, the accent could be a medium for interrelated multilingual and/or conflicting cultural transnational memories. In the (inter)war period for example, because of the cartographic rearrangements ("the movement of borders over people"[2]) in both—Romanian and Hungarian—literature the ethnic relations are thematized. Novels like Liviu Rebreanu's *Ion* (1920) and *Forest of the Hanged* (*Pădurea spânzuraților,* 1922), Áron Tamási's *Ábel Alone* (*Ábel a rengetegben*, 1932), and Károly Molter's *Márton Tibold* (1937) create (conflicting) figures of/for ethnic coexistence.[3] The Romanian novel *Forest of the Hanged* was adapted by Liviu Ciulei in 1964 and awarded for the Best

[1] See Hajnal Király: Places of Encounter: Thematising Cultural Exchange in Contemporary Hungarian-Romanian Co–Productions, *Contact Zones. Studies in Central and Eastern European Film and Literature* 1 (2016), 6–19. Király's article adapting Naficy's concept for Eastern European co-productions creates convincing theoretical and interpretative framework for more broad contemporary phenomena.

[2] See Rogers Brubaker: *Grounds for Difference*, Cambridge–London, Harvard University Press, 2015, 136.

[3] Áron Tamási (1897–1966) is a Hungarian writer who transposed the Secler (székely) language and its special accents into a Hungarian literary language. Liviu Rebreanu (1885–1944) the creator of the modern Romanian novel was a code-switching writer, he firstly started to write in Hungarian in Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. Károly Molter (1890–1981) has Swabian origins, who turned into a Hungarian writer, was born in Voivodina and died in Transylvania.

Director at the Cannes Film Festival in 1965. In Ciulei's famous adaptation, the accent appears as mutual: on the one hand, the Hungarian characters are played by Hungarian actors from Transylvania, whose accent in Romanian is audible, on the other hand, the Hungarian names are spoken in accented way by Romanian characters. Even though the novel and the adaptation translate the depicted multilingual world into Romanian language, e.g. the members of the Austro–Hungarian army speak in Romanian regardless of ethnicity and nationality, through the characters and by their accents, the film re-creates the coexistence of languages and nationalities as vernacular *audible*.

Regarding more contemporary Romanian and Hungarian accented cinemas, without creating a very strict classification, here I will outline some possible nodes.

Firstly, the historical event of the 1989 revolution and the transition period as "the co-temporality of the non-opposing diverse temporalities"[4] is created by mingling languages and a wide range of post-socialist accents in Ibolya Fekete's *Bolshe Vita* (*Bolse vita*, 1995).[5]

Secondly, ethnic coexistence and multiple identities are depicted through the accents in Ádám Bodor's literary imaginary worlds, and in their adaptations such as Gábor Ferenczi's *The Possibilities of Making Friends* (*A barátkozás lehetőségei,* 2007) and Péter Gothár's *The Outpost* (*A részleg,* 1995), which by Romanian and Hungarian languages localize the short stories' worlds in an interethnic Romanian region. Furthermore, the Hungarian and Romanian coexistence are portrayed through the accents, for example, in Szabolcs Hajdu's *Bibliotheque Pascal* (2010),[6] Marian Crişan: *Berliner* (*The Campaign*, 2020) or in a recent film of Radu Muntean: *Întregalde* (2021). Marian Crişan's film is set in Salonta (Nagyszalonta) in a multiethnic city close to the Romanian–Hungarian border. The local atmosphere is created by interethnic neighborhoods and crossed by Western orientation—a politician from Bucharest hopes to win a place in local elections to the European Parliament. The authentic

[4] Mónika Dánél: Lost in Transition? Understanding Hungarian and Romanian 1989 Regime Change through Metalepsis and Collage, in K. Robbe (ed.): *Remembering Transitions: Local Revisions and Global Crossings in Culture and Media*, De Gruyter, 2023, 85–113.

[5] "The multilingual title of the film (*bolshe* in Russian means 'more' or 'bigger'; *vita* in Latin means 'life') recalls Federico Fellini's film *La dolce vita*, and it can be seen as an 'Eastern' re-conceptualization of Fellini's metropolis as an artistic, non-linear, living representation of the city shaped by accidental interactions, but in very different social and mental circumstances. In this title, the word *bolshevik* can be heard as a subtext/subsound, referencing the Russian equivalent of the Soviet communist person. Metaphorically, we can say that the film positions the characters in this sounding collage zone between *bolshe vita* and *bolshevik*. *Bolshe Vita* differs from *bolshevik*, but it incorporates the word as an audible allusion and legacy." For a detailed analysis of the film see my forthcoming chapter: Mónika Dánél: Lost in Transition?, 95–96.

[6] For an in-depth analysis, see Katalin Sándor: Corporeality and Otherness in the Cinematic Heterotopias of Szabolcs Hajdu's Bibliothèque Pascal, *Ekphrasis. Images, Cinema, Theory, Media* 12 (2014), 79–92.

multilingual localization, on the one hand, is created by mixed accents, not just the Hungarian habitants speaking accented Romanian but also the Romanian locals using Hungarian intonations. On the other hand, the film is exceptional on the diegetic level because it features a short untranslated Hungarian dialog between Hungarian locals in a barbershop in front of the Romanian politician, who consequently does not understand the conversation. Giving such a linguistic and consequently social autonomy to minority speakers in a Romanian film is very unusual even in the contemporary context. Even if the scene is framed by the goal of winning a place in the European Parliament, the act of incomprehension (of a Hungarian dialog) left without any comment, furthermore tolerated by a Romanian politician (acted by Ion Sapdaru), makes this film very exceptional. The language(s) used form a crossroad and cross references of the social, political, economic, and identity markers.

Thirdly, post-socialist East–West/West–East mobilities, gendered spaces by female border crossing characters are embodied, for example, in Melissa de Raaf's and Razvan Radulescu's *First of all, Felicia* (*Felicia, înainte de toate,* 2009)[7] and in Maren Ade's *Toni Erdmann* (2016).

Finally, because of global migration processes we can witness an intensified presence of the accents in contemporary Romanian and Hungarian film, in which transnational perspectives performed by inclusion–exclusion dynamics make the inner social, ethnic, cultural stratification and diversity of the societies more visible. Ethnic coexistence of Romanian society is combined with inclusion–exclusion processes regarding emigrant workers in Cristian Mungiu's new film *R.M.N* (2022) and the emigrant perspectives are shown conflicting with Hungarian institutional bureaucracy and everyday racism in Roland Vranik's *The Citizen* (*Az állampolgár,* 2016).

National as a Shared Accented Legacy

In a world structure dominated by nation–states, the transnational perspective indicates the porosity of these geopolitical boundaries by retaining a national conceptual framework, contrary to the generality of the phenomenon and terminology of globalism. By retaining it, it turns it into an open stage, opened up by multiple reflections. The transnational perspective opens up the spatially based nation–state container thinking between national and global poles, crossing national borders and shifting the focus to multi-directional connections, multiple intersections, stratifications and dynamic differences. As Paul Jay summarizes:

[7] For an in-depth analysis see Katalin Sándor: Uncrossed Borders and Border Events in *First of All, Felicia* (2009) and *Oli's Wedding* (2009), in H. Király – Zs. Győri (eds.): *Postsocialist Mobilities. Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021. 166–179.

> In general, the term means 'extending or having interests extending beyond national bounds or frontiers.' It is important to underscore the fact that 'transnational' is an adjective. That is, it is a modifying term. There is no such thing as transnational. (…) transnational perspectives are often transgressive in the sense that they either challenge or contest altogether notions of purity and exclusivity often associated with nationalism. A transnational perspective shifts primary attention from the universal to the particular. Its concern is less with what is central than with what is thought of or treated as marginal. It is as interested in what makes people different as it is in what seems to make them the same.[8]

The transnational as the dominant perspective of the late twentieth century can also be seen as a consequence of accelerated global mobility, synthesized by the prefix "trans" itself.[9] Furthermore, "Since (...), 'trans' always implies mobility or movement across or between places, and 'national' refers both to cultural communities and to legally constituted nation–states, it would seem that transnational literature is simply literature that, through its production, circulation, and reception, moves across national boundaries."[10] In this perspective, literature and the other transnational arts—generating porosity in national monolithic traditions—direct the attention to the understanding of difference and otherness, and could create dynamic patterns for multiple subjectivity and multiple affiliations.

Although the terms *transnational* and *transcultural* are often used synonymously, it is worth emphasizing the distinction between them. In particular, memory studies as a subject of research crossing the national (state) borders has reflected on the nuances of the ways in which transcultural and transnational memory can be distinguished. Eneken Laanes (after Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney) clarifies the point in the following way:

> While 'transcultural' sets the perspective for the travel and flows of memory, 'transnational' firstly stresses the entanglement of cultural practices with social formations and institutions, and secondly makes a case for the continuing importance of national borders in the movement of memory and 'frictions' between different scales of public remembering, whether local, national or global.[11]

[8] Paul Jay: *Transnational Literature: The Basics*, Routledge, 2021, 9.

[9] See: "Transnational gets its main meaning from the prefix 'trans', which means 'across, through, over, to or on the other side of, beyond, outside of, from one place, person, thing, or state to another.' The prefix 'trans' also implies the action of being 'beyond, surpassing', and 'transcending'." Jay: *Transnational Literature: The Basics*, 9.

[10] Jay: *Transnational Literature: The Basics*, 45.

[11] After De Cesari – Rigney Eneken Laanes: Born translated memories: Transcultural memorial forms, domestication and foreignization, *Memory Studies* 14 (2021), 52.

These distinctions become essential in the interpretation of Roland Vranik's *The Citizen* (2016). As a movie that creates an intersection of the different emigrant storylines, it simultaneously asserts a transcultural narrative form and a transnational perspective. The emigration as a transcultural form is nuanced and localized by the differences between the African immigrant and the Iranian refugee confronting the specific Hungarian social and institutional national systems. The film offers a unique pattern of how the memory and heritage of a national culture can have an impact and effect through transmedial transposition and through accented transnational re-appropriation.[12]

The film, set in the mid-2010s in Budapest, follows the attempts and failures of African Wilson (Dr. Cake-Baly Marcelo) and Iranian Shirin (Arghavan Shekari) to immigrate to Hungary. Both actors were amateurs, and according to an interview, they considered playing the roles through their own experiences as immigrants, thus opening the interplay between fiction and documentary.[13]

An African immigrant in his sixties and a young pregnant Iranian refugee woman meet in Budapest, in a contemporary Hungarian social and, above all, institutional framework. Their common language is Hungarian. Their formal, personal and interpersonal relations are institutionalized and become intimate mainly through this language. The third thread in the film story is developed through Mari (Ágnes Máhr), a Hungarian married teacher also in her sixties, who not only prepares Wilson for the Hungarian citizenship exam, but also falls in love with the African man, harshly breaking the Hungarian conservative social norms.

Breaking out of the Hungarian patriarchal family model (she serves her husband and two adult sons as a servant), she moves in with Wilson, who already has accepted in his flat Shirin, who escaped from the Bicske official camp

[12] Stefan Arsenijević's *Strahinja Banovic* (*As Far as I Can Walk*, 2021) takes a similar approach, "re-enacting" the Serbian medieval epic poem of the same name through the contemporary drama of an African refugee couple. Through the medium of the heroic poetic tradition the interpersonal human drama of the refugees is placed in Serbian tradition, and through this transnational interaction the film draws attention to the extraordinary nature of the Serbian folk poem, which survived in Vuk Karadžić's 13th century collection. The hero of the epic, who sets out to seek and recover his wife, breaks the laws of the time and, by listening to his own feelings, forgives his abducted wife. On the one hand, the national tradition projected onto the contemporary refugee story and re-enacted by it, is renewed in this transnational interaction and placed in the circulation of global cinema. On the other hand, through the individualized national legacy by the personal story of the couple who left Ghana, the globalized and stigmatized vision of the refugees is nuanced. Ababuo and her husband, adopted in Serbia as "Strahinja", rewrite the medieval epic as individuals with the right to choose freely in love. I am indebted to Beáta Thomka for bringing this film and its context to my attention.

[13] The Hungarian interview with the two actors, including their personal stories, can be watched here: Alinda: *Arghavan Shekari és Cake-Baly Marcelo*, Hír TV, 19 January 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6mWD8jf3A0, accessed 18 September 2022.

for refugees. Mari, leaving her family, gradually becomes homeless in her own town, caught in the crossfire of Hungarian social norms and stigmas. The drama of the three of them—their extraordinary intersubjective attempts at understanding and rapprochement that override social stigmas, and ultimately their failure—shows how their personal choices are determined by institutional systems, despite their best efforts.

The film confronts the laws and rights of intimacy (love) with solidarity towards refugees and asylum seekers. Wilson, who has been through similar experiences, puts his feelings of love for Mari on the back burner, and remains in solidarity with the fleeing Shirin, while Mari, despite her extraordinary outburst and attempt at understanding, fails in this process. Although she gradually confronts the institutional bureaucracy and everyday racism of her own country through her internal pursuit and solidarity of the two refugees', it is ultimately her non-awareness of this institutional structure that lies behind her tragic sin. She calls the Bicske Refugee Camp and reports Shirin's location, who consequently is deported back to Iran together with her new–born child. The film shows the unhuman process of the capturing in the flat, which scene confronts Mari with her previous naivety regarding Hungarian institutions implicated in immigration processes. The film captures the nature of this tragic misdemeanor/error in the radical difference between the two incomparable and incommensurable ways of being, one a citizen of a country and the other a non-citizen. Roland Vranik's film brings to life the harrowing watershed experience of how the human and institutional vulnerability of the asylum seeker, despite the nuances of solidarity, remains inaccessible to a country's citizenry. Whoever has the institutional safety of the citizenship of a country hardly can imagine the human vulnerability of not having it. At the same time, the film as a mediating transcultural medium makes this human experience perceptible and understandable from the inside by representing and embodying the refugee experience.[14]

The Citizen, while bringing us closer to the understanding of vulnerable human fates, does not become didactic but creates a dynamic, intersecting, colliding transnational, multi-directional layered world by shifting and layering different perspectives and camera positions. Interaction characterizes all levels of the film, organized by displacements and dislocations. Due to the nature of a "travelling" transcultural narrative, the interactive (sometimes painfully confrontational) situations of the constant transpositions and translations make the storytelling dynamic.

[14] See the concepts "travelling memory" developed by Astrid Erll and "prosthetic memory" developed by Alison Landsberg. Astrid Erll: Travelling Memory, *Parallax* 17 (2011), 4–18. Alison Landsberg: *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004.

Both Shirin and Wilson speak Hungarian with complete confidence. Although Wilson is in a subordinate position in the official institutional structures, his linguistic competence in many cases displaces institutional hierarchical positions, sometimes also helped, contributed to by the intersubjective human displacement of officials. By the very nature of the interaction, the film shows not only the continuous displacements of the immigrants as they experience a new world, but also the displacements of Mari, the Hungarian citizen, through her radical departure from her previous social roles as serving wife and mother. Even her teaching method is not limited to the frontal instruction and direct transfer of the knowledge. She transforms the acquisition of the knowledge required for the Hungarian citizenship ("constitutional basics") exam into a personal appropriating experience for Wilson by presenting the national heritage as transposed and trans-mediated into contemporary spaces and practices.

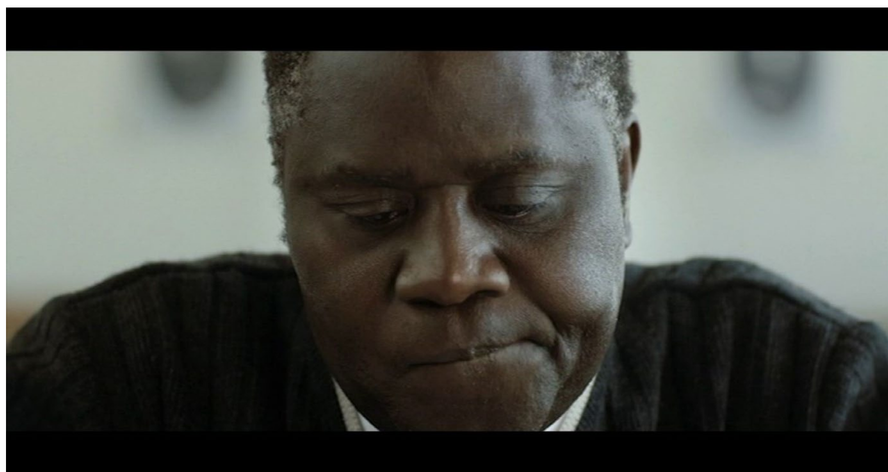
In this process, the prominent sites of national cultural memory, e.g. Heroes' Square, its media: paintings, sculptures, its cultural products, e.g. Béla Bartók's music, its material relics, e.g. the Holy Right Hand of St. Stephen in St. Stephen's Basilica, and its factual knowledge, Hungaricums in textbook,[15] are all used. National and cultural legacy trans-mediated into spatial and other cultural practices, e.g. listening to music, interpreting paintings, turns into an embodied intersubjective legacy through bodily practices and experiences.

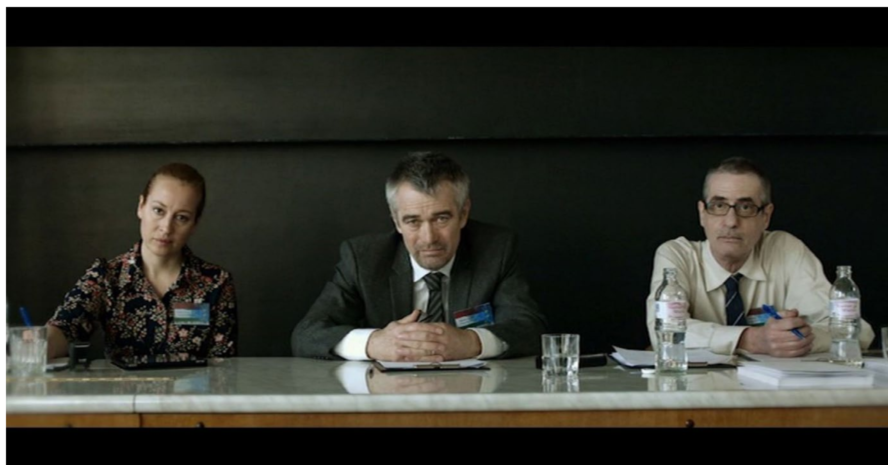
Mari's teaching method transforms the required factual knowledge of the citizenship exam into a living national heritage in this transnational process of appropriation. In this process, the attitudes of admiration, irony, e.g. "swallow" as a Hungaricum, questioning and rejection are all present, and through them Hungarian cultural heritage becomes an open and living tradition. Yet the most deeply moving transnational and interpersonal scene in the film is not created in the course of a learning that results in a successful examination.

In the film's opening scene, Wilson is framed by the hierarchical spatial structure[16] of the citizenship examination room and is hopelessly questioned by the three–member examination board about the *Hungarian Bulletin* (*Magyar Közlöny*) and the origin of the word 'bulletin.'

[15] In the textbook, the swallow appears among the Hungaricums. As a migratory bird, it creates an ironic level for the definition of Hungaricums: unique Hungarian products, specialties, works of art, and animals, e.g. Racka sheep, specific to Hungary.

[16] A similar, though less hierarchical spatial structure, opens Dorottya Zurbo's documentary *Easy Lessons* (2018). In the opening scene, Kafiya, who fled Somalia at the age of fourteen, is structured by a Hungarian language classroom situation, where the teacher is present only through her voice. Both films, through the exam setting and the more relaxed structure of the language class, immediately place the personal story of immigration in an institutional context. Their stories are told through a grid of institutional structures. The previously mentioned film *Strahinja Banovic* (2021) by Stefan Arsenijević is also framed by the institutional space structure of the settlement application.





Figures 1 and 2. Wilson and the examination board in frontal, hierarchical spatial structure

In between the above first two (close–up, shot–countershot) and second two images (close–up, side shots),[17] Wilson recites the first two sections of Mihály Vörösmarty's national poem *Appeal* (*Szózat*) from the Romantic era, trying to prove that he knows something about/from Hungarian culture.[18] After the

[17] I am grateful to Roland Vranik, the director of the film, for giving his consent to the reproduction of the images in this chapter.

[18] See "To your homeland without fail / Be faithful, O Hungarian! / It is your cradle and will your grave be / which nurses, and will bury you. // In the great world outside of here / there is no place for you / May fortune's hand bless or beat you / Here you must live and die!" Mihály Vörösmarty: *Appeal* (1836), trans. Kirkconnell, Watson, *Hungarians in the Tower of Babel*, https://www.magyarulbabelben.net/works/hu/V%C3%B6r%C3%B6smarty_Mih%C3%A1ly/Sz%C3%B3zat/en/2135-Appeal?interfaceLang=en, accessed 18 September 2022.

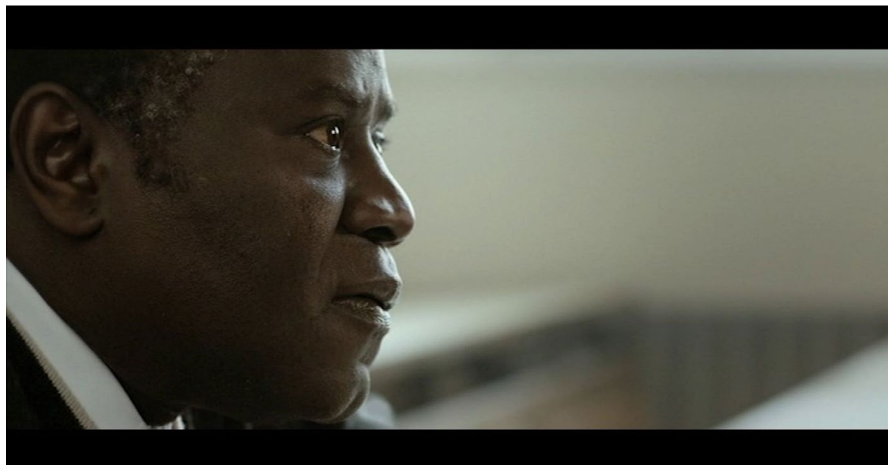
recited verse, the following dialogue takes place between the examiner and Wilson:

Very good. And what do you think of it?
Very beautiful.
Why is it that?
Because it's true.
And why is it true?
Because it says you must not run away, you must not give up.
Yet you still ran away from your homeland.
You would run too from there.
"Let fortune's hand bless or beat you..." That means you should stay even if things get tough, not only when things are all okay.
You think if they cut the baby from the mother's belly and bet if it's a boy or girl, then "things are tough"?
...
I'm sorry...
No problem.[19]

During the conversation, the camera constantly shifts viewpoints creating multifocality, and the spatial and hierarchical optical distance is replaced by haptic images on both sides, the camera "touches" the faces with haptic proximity.[20] Because of close–up and slow camera we can see how the examiner swallows before apologizing.

[19] The Hungarian dialog sounds as follows: "Nagyon jó. És gondol is valamit erről a versről? / Igen szép. / Miért szép? / Mert igaz. / És miért igaz? / Mert azt mondja nem szabad elmenni, meg feladni. / Maga mégis eljött a hazájából. / Onnan maga is eljött volna. / 'Áldjon vagy verjen sors keze...' Ez azt jelenti, hogy akkor is maradni kell, ha nehezebben mennek a dolgok, nemcsak akkor, amikor minden jó. / Maga szerint, ha terhes nő hasából kivágnak a gyereket, és arra fogadnak, hogy fiú-e vagy lány, akkor nehezen mennek a dolgok? / ... / Ne haragudjon... / Nem haragszom."

[20] For the conceptualization of the haptic visuality as embodied perception and embodied spectatorship, see "In haptic *visuality*, the eyes themselves function like organs of touch. (...) Haptic visuality is distinguished from the optical visuality, which sees things from enough distance to perceive them as distinct forms in deep space: in other words, how we usually conceive of vision. Optical visuality depends on a separation between the viewing subject and the object. Haptic looking tends to move over the surface of its object rather than to plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture. It is more inclined to move than to focus, more inclined to graze than to gaze. (...) Touch is a sense located on the surface of the body: thinking of cinema as haptic is only a step toward considering the ways cinema appeals to the body as a whole." Laura U. Marks: *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, London, Duke University Press, 2000, 162–163.



Figures 3 and 4. Haptic images: Side shots on Wilson and the examination board after the recitation of the poem

During the dialogue, the formal exam structure is displaced, roles are repositioned. Wilson is not only fluent in Hungarian (he uses the Hungarian word *igen* ['yes'] in the rarer sense 'very', which usually is expressed with *nagyon* in Hungarian), but he also can argue in a shocking way. In this process of declaring his own point, he displaces the argument of his interlocutor, and in doing so draws the viewer's attention to the text of the poem itself. Through their dialog, for example, the poem's empty deixises of "here" and "outside of here" allow the statements of the text to be applied elsewhere (the examiner refers to this). However, Wilson's argument opens up and questions precisely this prescriptive imperative ("Here you must live and die!"), which can easily be generalized/universalized (as happened by the examiner's interpretation).

Wilson does not consider the aesthetic truth of the work to be concretely referential, precisely because of the temporality and local differences of referential worlds. His knowledge is not derived from his literary education but from his own life experience, thus indirectly demonstrating the potential impact of artworks based on more than aesthetic qualifications. Through other social experiences, an eminent Hungarian national canonical text opens up, becoming fleshly/harshly alive in this dialogue. It becomes re-interpreted and re-understood through this transcultural and transnational conversation. At the same time, because of the medium of film, the Hungarian canonical literary text is trans–mediated into a visible and audible embodied live text by Wilson's recitation.

As Naficy states, "depending on their accents, some speakers may be considered regional, local yokel, vulgar, ugly, or comic, whereas others may be thought of as educated, upper–class, sophisticated, beautiful, and proper. As a result, accent is one of the most intimate and powerful markers of group identity and solidarity, as well as of individual difference and personality."[21] On the other hand, the accent preserves the contact between the languages, indirectly preserving the uniqueness of the other language, which is why we hear the accent. The accent preserves the other language, the interaction of languages as audible present. As a non-hierarchical oral medium, through its simultaneous dissonance, its inseparable resonance, the accent is an emotional trigger, an emotional plus, in a good or bad sense, an interpersonal surplus and an aesthetic possibility. From the essentialist point of view, accent is a stigma, a synonym of linguistic inappropriateness, incompetence, while by our contemporary accelerated mobility it is turned into a fundamentally global sounding experience. In my view, the accent should be understood *as an audible transnational medium of the coexistence*, an oral medium of the stratified social, cultural, personal, etc. coexisting differences and nuances. Accent as a medium of post–monolingual condition, as an audible corporeal medium of multilingual cultural memory, should get a specific role in transnational perspectives and contexts.[22]

In Wilson's accented recitation, the effortful bodily appropriation of the Hungarian language is also revealed, and the physiological conditions of Hungarian sounds become visible in/through his speaking face, through the efforts made to pronounce them. The accent also indicates the physiological effort of

[21] Hamid, Naficy: *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking,* Princeton–Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2001, 23.

[22] In another article, I outlined the role of the accents in literary texts, through which the multilingual transnational cultural memory could turn into a sounding contemporary reading experience. See Mónika Dánél: Accents and Locality: Hungarian Literature as a Medium of Multilingual Cultural Memory, *Studi Finno–Ugrici* 1 (2021), 1–38, https://doi.org/10.6093/1826-753X/8280

language learning, which therefore, as an embodied sound, is transnational. In Wilson's accented transnationalizing embodied recitation, the Hungarian national poem *Szózat* can once again be brought from the ritual meaninglessness of mumbling as prayer to the centre of attention and emotion. Through the accent, we are drawn to the meaning of the words, similarly as in the silent reading of foreign words, when we also stop. Wilson's transnational recitation breaks the tradition of the national(ist) appropriation of the text: through his accented embodiment and interpretation the Hungarian text is opened up for non-appropriating, non-essentializing readings and interpretations.

In accented language, Hungarian national culture and history turn into an "accented national", in which the foreign (accent) remains equally and permanently audibly present; consequently, *the foreign becomes the medium for the national*. In Roland Vranik's accented film, an eminent Hungarian national literary text is trans-mediated into a film scene, transnationally embodied through accented recitation. In the fractures of accents the Hungarian sounds are saturated with other foreign sounds. Because of oral simultaneity it is impossible to divide the national from transnational, the accented speech is the medium itself for national heritage. For Hungarian viewers, through Wilson's accents, the national text could be re-appropriated emotionally in non-national(istic) way; indeed, through the filmic trans-mediation it turns into a performative live medium of/for solidarity.

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MULTIMODAL CODES OF THE "VOICE" OF THE PLACE IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ARTWORK OF DIASPORA KOREANS IN CANADA

Judit Nagy

Environmental art is an umbrella term encompassing various and diverse art forms such as nature art, land art, site specific performance, crop art, social sculpture, bio-art, ecoart-tech, ecological art, earthworks or acoustic ecology. By definition, the term "environmental art" may denote (i) art dealing with ecological issues, and/or (ii) art that deals with nature in its political, historical and social contexts.[1] The current chapter will use the term in the latter sense, allowing for its contextual extension to include culture.

According to Beardsley, one of the most important features of environmental art is the organic interconnection between the work itself, its immediate environment, and the artist. As Carruthers puts it, "all Ecoart works are about and in places, and human relations within these places. Hence, the 'voice' of the place is in the work, whether foregrounded or not."[2] The analysis presented here will be an attempt to uncover this 'voice' in a number of environmental artworks by Korean diaspora artists Khan Lee and Hyung–Min Yoon.

As for the environmental critical lens which will guide us in the analysis of Lee and Yoon's artwork, Erőss stresses that "[w]hen observing an environmental artist's creative behaviour, one should explore the way the artist leaves behind a harmonious trace possessing an abstract sense."[3] Through this "harmonious trace", one accesses the "voice" of the place. Importantly, the analysis will also demonstrate that both artists use multimodal code-switching[4] in their artwork combining written text and nature as medium.

In order to fully understand why environmental art as an art form is popular with Korean diaspora artists, I will refer to Min–sun Kim's communication theory, which she detailed in *Non-Western Perspectives on Human*

[1] John Beardsley: *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*, New York, Abbeville Press, 2006.

[2] Beth Carruthers: Ecoart in Canada: A Conversation and a Brief Survey of the Terrain, *Women in Environmental Art Dialogue* 6 (2010).

[3] Erőss, István: *Természetművészet*, Szeged, Tiszatáj, 2011, 11. Translation is mine.

[4] Johanna Domokos: The Tibetologist Csoma and the minimalist Szemző creating along the linguistic unknown, in Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: *Literary Code-Switching and Beyond*, Budapest, L'Harmattan – Károli Books, 2023 , in print.

Communication,[5] and which has the concept of "self-construals" at its core. As she observes, "a principal component of one's self is its relationships to others,"[6] and, accordingly, she defines self–construals as "how people define themselves and their relationships with other people."[7] In her view, the main difference between Eastern (interdependent) and Western (independent) self–construal is how the self is related to others.[8] In this respect, the self–other distinction is minimized in the case of the Eastern (interdependent) self–construal, there are no fixed boundaries between the self and its environment, "a person is like a plant."[9] Going back to Beardsley for a moment, one can see how the work, its immediate environment and the artist form a similar organic unit in environmental art, which may furnish an explanation why Korean diaspora artists find it an attractive art form. Furthermore, the Eastern (interdependent) self–construal is characterized by the "desire to maintain harmony […] in [all] relationships."[10] Again, the "harmonious trace" the environmental artist leaves behind resonates well with the artist's desire to maintain harmony with the natural world.

In accordance with the theoretical framework presented above, the analysis of Lee and Yoon's works will extend to three aspects of the artwork: its environment, the materials the artist used, and the philosophy behind the artwork. Khan Lee is a Seoul-born diaspora artist living in Canada, who holds a degree from Hong–Ik University and from the Emily Carr University of Art and Design. He is also the founder of Intermission, an artist collective based in Vancouver. As an artist, his focus of interest is the connection between material and immaterial content.[11]

Cultivated fields constitute the environment for Khan's work entitled "Spring Dream" with two distant mountain peaks in the background, contrasting man-made and natural. The fields come in four different colors: light green symbolizes spring, dark green stands for summer, brown and yellow for fall, and sand color for winter. The perpetual seasonal cycle implied by these colors lends the artwork a kinetic touch. The three Chinese characters of the artwork itself are made of cropped light green shrub placed in the bare, sand-colored patch. Characteristic of post-modernism, content and form go in tandem.[12]

[5] Kim, Min–sun: *Non-Western Perspectives on Human Communication*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 2002.

[6] Ibid., 73.

[7] Ibid., 26.

[8] Ibid., 170.

[9] Ibid., 103.

[10] Ibid., 73.

[11] askART: "Artist Biography and Facts: Khan Lee," askART, https://www.askart.com/artist/Khan_Lee/11342984/Khan_Lee.aspx, accessed 2 November 2022.

[12] See Jean–Francois Lyotard: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington – Brian Massumi, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

In order to reveal how this is realized through the work, one must look into the meaning of the characters first, which spell out 一場春夢 (Yi chang chun meng) meaning "Spring Dream", an expression invented by Lu Yanrang, a poet from the Tang period. Upon the death of a friend, Li Ying, Lu composed "Crying for Li Ying Duan Gong", the last two lines of which read "The poet and the drunkards have dissipated, and a spring dream has bypassed the city."[13] That is, the happy times of writing poetry and drinking together are all of the past as the poet's friend is dead. Thus "spring dream" is a metaphor for the changing world, of things of an 'ephemeral' nature, 'empty and illusory'.[14] Similarly, the light green Chinese characters representing "spring dream" lose their shape as the shrub grows. So the form into which the message is cast reflects truthfully the very content of the message, also connecting material and immaterial, Lee's main concern as an artist.

It follows from the above that "Spring Dream" is an intriguing example of multimodal code-switching, where the Chinese characters bringing Tang period poetry into play form part of an environmental artwork drawing on the post-modern ephemeral. The visual (the bright green color of the text literally representing spring), spatial (the characters placed in the bare, sand colored "winter" patch referencing, through the shrub, what is yet to come only to be gone) and kinetic (reading changes as the shrub grows) dimensions of the text and its environment feature prominently, as the above analysis reveals. It is also worth mentioning that the employment of Chinese (Hanja) characters is typical of Korean poetry, which adds an extra twist to Lee's work.

The second Korean–Canadian artist, Hyung–Min Yoon, whose work the current chapter discusses received her BFA at the Korea National University and her MFA at Chelsea College of Art and Design in London, Great Britain.[15] She has held exhibitions both in Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada, and in Arario Museum, Wumin Art Centre, Gyeonggi Creation Centre, Korea. She is known for her text-based artwork inspired by literature and early art history.[16] Translation through re-contextualization is central to her art.[17] Discussing Yoon as an artist, Low stresses the spiritual character of her oeuvre and how the belief that spirituality is inherently present in language affects her works:

> Yoon's works are meditations. She accesses ancient time and spiritual depth […], juxtaposing ancient and contemporary materials to awaken language's aesthetic and

[13] "一場春夢yī cháng chūn mèng," *Dictionary of Chinese Idioms*, National Academy for Educational Research, New Taipei City, 2020, https://dict.idioms.moe.edu.tw/idiomView.jsp?ID=6369&webMd=2&la=1 accessed 30 December 2022.

[14] "一場春夢yī cháng chūn mèng," *Dictionary of Chinese Idioms*.

[15] Hyung-Min Yoon, https://www.yoonhyungmin.com/, accessed 18 September 2022.

[16] Young Sook Park: *The Doors*, https://neolook.com/archives/20160602e, accessed 2 August 2022.

[17] Park: *The Doors*.

> symbolic power. Her works unfold an awareness of the complexities of language and interpretation [...]. Having grown up in Seoul, she recalls how that city's saturation of images and text prompted a strong desire to restore sanctity in language: to reconnect with a time when writing was revered as mythical, a communing with supernatural forces greater than humankind.[18]

Yoon is most well-known for her "The Doors Series" (2016), a number of outdoor installations. These art works are placed in rural and/or industrial landscapes near Vancouver, BC. In *Art at Home Live*, Yoon provides a detailed explanation of her choice of environment for the works in the series: "One of the qualities I was looking at when I was looking for the locations [was] a natural environment [with] a trace of culture. I believe the nature that we experience [...] is a [kind of] staged nature, [...] there is no absolute nature."[19] Indeed, to set the environment for the Chinese characters meaning 'door,' the pieces of the series discussed in this chapter include (1) a field with a drainage ditch in the foreground and Vancouver airport in the background, (2) a beach at low tide littered with deposits of seaweed scoops in the foreground and distant hills in the background, (3) a disk full of water as one of the four basic elements representing nature in the foreground and a black wall with an inverted "door" character lit in the background.

The inflatable, larger–than–human size white plastic installation pieces (1) – (2) and the light object hanging on the black wall (3) all feature the ancient Chinese character 門, which means 'door' or 'gate' according to Shirakawa Shizuka, whom Yoon quotes as an authority on the subject. Shirakawa observes that the shape of the character resembles temple doors, and the meaning of the character also reflects this idea denoting not just an ordinary door or gate but also "a shrine gate built in a place where the gods live," "a metaphor for a portal, a border or a space 'in-between' worlds."[20] In *Art At Home Live*, Yoon mentions that the character belongs to the oldest known Chinese character set, found on the oracle bone script, dating back to 3000 years ago.[21] Quoting Shirakawa, she proffers that "the word must have been a symbolic door as an in-between space linking the world of humans and the spirits because the words usually developed to be used in the oracles."[22] A parallel can be drawn between the meaning of the character and the symbolic in-betweenness of

[18] Joni Low: Hyung–Min Yoon, *Vie Des Arts*, No. 258, Spring 2020, 31, https://viedesarts.com/revues/numero-258/, accessed 2 August 2022.

[19] Vancouver Art Gallery: *Art At Home Live – Hyung-Min Yoon.* Asian Heritage Month, 26 May 2021, https://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/events/art-at-home-live-hyung-min-yoon, accessed 2 August 2022.

[20] Hyung–Min Yoon: *The Doors*, https://www.yoonhyungmin.com/project/the-doors, accessed 18 September 2022.

[21] Vancouver Art Gallery: *Art At Home Live.*

[22] Ibid.

Yoon's selected locations. Moreover, Park states that the metaphoric portal "forms the basis for compound meanings produced by inserting other characters between 'the doors' such as (門, 閃, 閒, 間). 'The Door Series' echoes this ancient production of meaning by bringing the metaphor into a relation with specific sites […] [thereby] broaden[ing] the possible associated narratives."[23] Furthermore, the airport (1) and the beach (2) themselves can be conceived of as doors through which passengers enter the land by air or by boat, respectively.

In all the three pieces of "The Door Series" discussed in this chapter, water plays an important role, which Yoon perceives as "a medium linking the past, present and the future."[24] The inverted inflatable plastic installation pieces reflect in the water of the ditch, the sea and the disk, respectively, to restore the character 門 in its correct form. Yoon explains, "through the tension maintained by the visual confrontation between reality and reflection, […] a harmony of meanings [is created]."[25] In the case of the character reflecting in the water–filled disk, falling drops disturb the reflection intermittently. As they make the water ripple, the character constituting the reflection keeps altering. Then, left undisturbed, it returns back to its original shape.[26] As for the symbolic interpretation of the changing reflection, the artist refers to Lippard suggesting that throughout human history, the meaning attached to the character kept changing, and to see it in its purity, one has to resort to the 3000-year-old original, which is symbolic of finding our ancient spiritual roots: "[i]f one distrusts the value systems of society, where does one look for alternatives? Back to beginnings."[27]

The above implies that "The Door Series" is also a fine example of multimodal code-switching through the various applications of "doors" in the meta–narrative. In addition to the spiritual, philosophical and art historical implications of her subject, the artist exploits visual (the characters themselves look like a door), kinetic (the reflection will give the right reading of the character; drops falling "distort" the character as they make the water ripple) and spatial (the character is placed in "in-between" environments while it itself has the capacity of "flanking" other characters to form compound meanings) properties of the ancient Chinese character to create an overflowing fullness of meaning.

As has been demonstrated, Korean Canadian artists Khan Lee and Hyung–Min Yoon have both used multimodal code-switching in their respective works,

23 Hyung–Min Yoon: *The Doors.*

24 Vancouver Art Gallery: *Art At Home Live.*

25 Hyung–Min Yoon: *The Doors*

26 See Hyung–Min Yoon: *The Doors.*

27 Lucy Lippard: *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*, New York, The New Press, 1983, 90.

"Spring Dream" and "The Doors Series", in an attempt to establish a multiplicity of connections between ancient Chinese characters and the landscape/environment in which these characters are placed. Moreover, the visual, kinetic and spatial properties of the Chinese characters explored by the artists have enriched the respective meta–narratives of these works and have substantially contributed to the artists' achievement of intricate complexity coded in a harmonious "web of relations."

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CODE-SWITCHING IN THE DRAMA CLASSROOM

Ádám Bethlenfalvy

Different forms of theater and drama[1] have been applied in educational contexts since the seventeenth century[2] and continue to be used today, as they benefit students in a variety of ways as the extensive Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education (DICE) research proves.[3] While there are various forms of engaging in dramatic practices in the classroom, I will not offer a general overview of the field, but only focus on one specific aspect of this rich methodological terrain that connects most to the subject of code-switching. As classroom drama has evolved out of different theater practices, I will first make connections between the practice of linguistic code-switching (CS) in literary genres of art and the "dramatic" code-switching in the plays and theory of a contemporary playwright, Edward Bond (1934–). I will continue by exploring how the application of Teacher in Role can enhance code-switching in a classroom context and what sorts of educational benefits this might have.

As previous chapters in this book have offered deeper insight into the theory of code-switching, I shall only briefly visit the concept in this writing. Gardner–Chloros points out that code-switching is primarily a linguistic practice that plays a useful role in questioning concepts of language, but it often might not happen due to a conscious decision of the speaker.[4] Research of CS in classroom contexts is usually related to studies of bilingual students and challenges related to integration.[5] In this paper, I would like to focus on how the teacher can consciously use it to create productive moments of meaning–making opportunities for learners.

Domokos and Deganutti define literary code-switching "as an aesthetic play with multiple formal elements and/or semantic interpretations, not limited to mimetic function" occurring when two or more languages are used within the

[1] I will be referring to "drama" not as a genre of literature in this writing, but as a practice related to engaging in dramatic situations in classroom contexts.

[2] Norbert Medgyesy S.: *Iskoladrámák*, Budapest, MMA Kiadó, 2019, 10.

[3] Cziboly Adam: *The DICE Has Been Cast; Research Findings and Recommendations on Educational Theatre and Drama*, Budapest, DICE Consortium, 2010, 8.

[4] Penelope Gardner-Chloros: *Code-switching*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, 165.

[5] Penelope Gardner-Chloros: Sociolinguistic Factors in Code-Switching, in B. E. Bullock – A. J. Toribio (eds.): *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Code-Switching*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, 106.

same conversation. They also point out that it is a "fictional tool used by writers to achieve their narratorial goals."[6] They also differentiate between six different degrees of code-switching based on how explicit the multilingualism of the text is. They define Zero–degree code-switching (ZCS) as a strategy of monolingualization used by authors to make multilingual backgrounds accessible for targeted audiences, in essence by hiding multilingualism for the sake of uninterrupted flow of the storyline.[7] In the section below, I will be analyzing the work of a dramatist who aims to keep the uninterrupted flow of the storyline, but at the same time creates gaps of meaning within the linearity with the help of dramaturgical structures that can be analyzed as moments relying on code-switching.

Edward Bond and Opening Gaps from Within

Alongside writing plays in different genres, Edward Bond has also created a body of theoretical writing that offers a political and social critique of the contemporary world and outlines the role of drama in it. Bond refers to his own writing as drama rather than theater, because "theatre may help you find yourself in society, [but] drama requires you to find society in you."[8] This purpose of drama to facilitate finding society within yourself is important according to Bond, because he sees growing up in society as a process of accepting its culture, accepting the explanations, narratives offered by a society for individuals to accept their place in it. Bond describes culture as a collection of narratives that relate to human needs and questions in different ways. He explains that "a culture's story is a plot which binds its people to their place and means of existence. It gives life meaning and so it is the source of judgement."[9] He argues that when we are socialized into a culture, we accept its interpretation of the social and material world as reality itself and the Self integrates the culture into itself. According to Bond, language plays an extremely important role in conveying and internalizing the existing socio–cultural narratives.[10] This offers a strong connection with the concept of code-switching, which can play an important part in pushing people to reflect on the nature of language.

Bond offers a host of concepts to help the staging of his plays and putting his theory into practice. One of the central concepts that aims to create the

[6] Domokos Johanna – Marianna Deganutti: Four major literary code-switching strategies in Hungarian literature. Decoding monolingualism, *Hungarian Studies Yearbook*, 3 (2021), 46.

[7] Domokos–Deganutti: Four major, 49.

[8] Edward Bond: Foreword, in H. Nicholson: *Theatre & Education*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, xii.

[9] Edward Bond: *The Hidden Plot*, London, Methuen, 2000, 3.

[10] Ibid., 6.

possibility for the audience to "find society in themselves" is the Drama Event (DE). Bond claims in an interview that "we should be dramatizing the conflicts within the self and what art and drama should be doing is increasing human self–consciousness."[11] The DEs should be "extreme situations which impose choice,"[12] and the choices are created by enacting "the articulation of the paradox, the way the self's need for justice is misused in society."[13] By dramatizing a paradox, an irresolvable human dilemma is placed in front of the audience, a gap is created, because while the extremeness of the situation demands some answer, there is no good response and the audience needs to fill the void with meaning they create themselves. Connecting Bond's theory with that of CS, the intentional creation of a gap to enhance the reader's meaning–making could also be one of the reasons why authors use literary code-switching in texts.

Drama Events need to be created in performance, but I would argue that possible DEs can be identified in the play text as well. I would like to share one such example here, from Edward Bond's *The Children*,[14] a play written for a group of young people and two professional actors. The drama explores the relationship between the adult world and young people. I will only share as much of the play's plot as is necessary to understand the example below. A mother asks her child, Joe, to burn down the house with a mauve door on the "new estate." Joe finally does the deed, but finds out that the house was not empty, and a child died in the fire. The group of friends he meets on an abandoned lot by the rail track decide to set off and leave their homes, because they knew about the incident and are afraid of repercussions. As they are about to leave a man arrives and falls among them. He is unconscious. They decide to take him along, because they do not know if he has heard what they talked about before. The children take turns at carrying the seemingly unconscious man, a task that becomes more and more difficult because each night some of the children disappear. The man comes round but keeps asking for the children's help. The audience see him killing some of the children at night with a brick that he has previously used as his pillow. Only five of the children are left when the following happens:

He [Man] walks among the sleepers—the brick in one hand, the towel trailing from the other—searching as if he were lost. He sits down in the middle of the sleepers.

[11] Peter Billingham: Drama and the Human: Reflections at the Start of a Millennium. Edward Bond in conversation with Peter Billingham, *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 29 (2007), 3.

[12] Edward Bond: Freedom and Drama, in *Plays: 8,* London, Methuen Drama, 2006, 213.

[13] Edward Bond: The Cap, in *Plays: 7,* London, Methuen, 2003, xxxiii.

[14] Edward Bond: *The Children & Have I None*, London, Methuen, 2000, 2–52.

Man When I was a sailor one day I said I'll take my son to sea. Show him the world. The good. The bad. The violence that destroys it. (*Looks at the sleepers.*) If it was different we'd be friends. Take care of you. Treat you as mine. So much to learn before we know ourselves. (*He has begun to cradle the brick and stroke it.*) Lately my sickness has been worse. I shan't survive. A few more days then dead. (*Hums a few notes.*) My son my son… (*Stops.*) Time!

Suddenly he twists to the side—flaring the towel—falls on ***Donna****—smothers her—kills her with a blow of the brick.*

Man Hgn.[15]

This moment becomes powerful because the audience get a glimpse of the Man's humanity. He was seen brutally murdering children so far, but now we can see that he is doing it to take revenge for his son, who died in the fire. He is sick, but vengeance is keeping him alive. The viciousness of his killing is in contrast with the softness of his humming and his explanation. His sentence "so much to learn before we know ourselves" suggests that he understands himself as the murderer he has become, and this situation has enhanced his understanding of himself as a father. It is quite extreme to see the human side of a monster.

The Man does two contrasting actions with the brick, and this offers the possibility of a DE: he first cradles it as a child, and hums a few notes. The brick–child receives the value of the Man's son, when he says "my son my son." A few moments later he is using the same brick to crack the skull of someone else's child. The sudden change in the use of the object makes the contradiction underlying the Man's understanding of fatherhood as vengeance tangible not only on an intellectual level, but also as a felt impact. It is possible to understand why he is doing what he is doing, but it is also possible to see its atrociousness. Bond calls this change in the value of an everyday object Cathexis.[16] This term was borrowed by Bond from Freudian theory, but he does not use it in the context of psychosexual drives,[17] simply as a concept referring to the emotional or imaginative investment of energy in an object, the value given to an object in a dramatic situation. According to Bond, the sudden change in the value, the cathexis and decathexis of an object can create gaps that offer space for the audience to decide the value of the object, and in essence reevaluate their own value system. This change in value can be compared to the shift in a text when an author uses literary code-switching.

[15] Bond: *The Children*, 48.

[16] Bond: *The Hidden Plot*, 45.

[17] Brian Johnson – Daniela Flores Mosri: The neuropsychoanalytic approach: Using neuroscience as the basic science of psychoanalysis, *Frontiers in Psychology* 7 (2016), 7.

This excerpt from the play also offers examples of some of the seven different dramaturgical structures identified in different Bond plays.[18] Besides the extreme action, it also presents a sudden shift between two different understandings of fatherhood, this is not only there in the lines "(*Looks at the sleepers.*) If it was different we'd be friends. Take care of you. Treat you as mine," but is also presented in the two uses of the brick: the cradling and killing. Another example of creating a gap is the "hgn" sound after killing. The sound, depending on how the actor performs it, will invite the audience to make meaning. It is immediately after a shocking action and the way the audience interprets it will be part of making sense of the paradox of being a parent, which has just been presented. The use of gibberish language, or ideologically uncaptured sounds is a device used by Bond in other plays as well; this is an explicit—and in some ways extreme—instance of code-switching. As these examples show, opening the gaps for the audience's imagination for meaning-making happens from within the narrative. I argue that alongside the speech-based notion of code-switching these strategies can be implemented by the Teacher in Role in the drama classroom to create a complex system as an educational tool.

Teacher in Role and Code-Switching

Dramatic activity in the classroom can take a variety of forms and methodologies that have been labeled with various names, but all rely on some aspect of theater. Here I will be discussing a form called *process drama*, which is defined by David Davis as

> drama that takes the subject matter explored in world drama, uses key components of theatre as an art form, and involves a teacher working with a class of young people to 'make' drama together. (…) It is drama not in preparation for performance but entailing building an engagement with role through improvisations that may be presented to each other but which centrally will involve a 'being' in role event or events, in immediate time and space.[19]

This form of complex dramatic activity focuses on the students' experience of creating and being in a fictional context, engaging in creative processes and working hard at making meaning of situations produced simultaneously. In her seminal writing, Dorothy Heathcote, one of the most well-known pioneers of the field, argues that stepping into role is the quickest way a teacher can create a fictional world for the participants of the drama to step into, and the

[18] Ádám Bethlenfalvy: *Living through extremes in process drama,* Budapest, Károli Könyvek, 2020, 105-120.

[19] David Davis: *Imagining the Real*, Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books, 2014, 54.

role played by the teacher can also immediately offer them space to react and exercise their fictional roles in relation to that offered by the facilitator.[20]

I will continue discussing the possibilities created by the teacher stepping into a fictional role, but before that I would like to reflect on the question of creating the fictional context within the real classroom context as this offers one of the most important opportunities for learning, and creates a safe space for exploration of language, behavior and real–world problems. The participants of the process drama, i.e. the students, need to actively acknowledge the fictional word by behaving "as if" it was real. Evidently, they are themselves and the roles they play in the drama at the same time, a dual state of mind that is conceptualized as *metaxis* by Bolton.[21] He claims that this position opens space for reflection without the experiential nature of the dramatic activity being taken away.

The teacher taking on a fictional role offers a safe space to bring in such use of language into the school environment that would usually not be seen as compatible with expected teacher talk. The switch in code from the anticipated "teacher" mode of communication to language and behavior allowed by the fictional role opens fertile space for meaning–making for students, and the drama context offers them the possibility to explore reactions in the improvised situations within the safety of the fiction.[22] In general terms, the code-switching between teacher–talk and role–allowed language offers participants the possibilities to explore their reactions and their own use of language in a variety of situations. An important element of the shift is the movement between expected and fiction-allowed: the contrast between the two makes us aware of the situational, context-relying element of code-switching in language use.

Judith Ackroyd's book *Role Reconsidered* offers a wide range of examples of linguistic code-switching in the case studies of leading drama practitioners' use of Teacher in Role. These exemplify how these drama practitioners shift between registers of language, validate the use of jargon or specific dialects and unusual modes of speaking in the classroom context.[23] An awareness of the six degrees of code-switching registered by Domokos and Deganutti[24] would allow teachers a more complex awareness of the possibilities in the shift in the language they use. The extent of the alteration could reflect the teacher's educational aims: for example, the type and extent of gap for meaning-making they create should be appropriate for the group they are working with.

[20] Dorothy Heathcote: Signs and Portents, in C. O'Neill – L. Johnson (eds.): *Collected Writings on Education and Drama*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1984, 162.

[21] Gavin Bolton: *New perspectives on classroom drama*, Herts, Simon and Schuster, 1992, 32.

[22] Cecily O'Neill: *Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama*, Portsmouth, Heinemann, 1995, 60.

[23] Judith Ackroyd: *Role Reconsidered,* Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books, 2004, 89–156.

[24] Domokos–Deganutti: Four major, 49.

However, building on the understanding of dramatic structures employed by the playwright Edward Bond explored in the example from his play, teachers can also rely more on situational awareness and open the code-switching from language towards other elements of the situation as well. In situations, both fictional and real, language becomes one element of a complex sign system that includes bodily, physical expressions, but also temporal and spatial elements; the latter could also include the use of objects. The different elements within the system are read in relation to each other by the students, and this offers the possibility of creating educationally productive ambiguities that enhance meaning–making and reflection. The inclusion of gibberish or the use of everyday objects that come to carry meaning can also be included in the role-play of the teacher. The combination of these elements and, foremost, producing them in a safe context that is explicitly created for exploration and meaning–making, i.e. the drama classroom, can be seen as an additional type of code-switching, one that could be conceptualized as the dramatic or situational mode of code-switching.

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ARTISTIC REFLECTIONS

SOME WORDS ABOUT WORDS

Cia Rinne

To this day, literature is divided into two camps. One holds that words reflect the world, the other that words reflect other words.[1]

Stefan Ripplinger

Language is the basic material. I do however use languages not as a form of expression, but rather as instruments that you simultaneously use and examine, looking at the tool itself so to say. Most of my pieces are composed in English, German, and French. There may be some words in Italian, Spanish, Russian, and other languages, too, but the choice of language is not a conscious one, rather already given, since the idea is intrinsic to the language used, and the pieces would simply not work in another language. The texts operate with minimal semantic shifts via sound or sense, across language borders or within one language realm. Most of them cannot be translated, or, translation is possible, but not necessarily meaningful. Michaël Batalla, who edited the French edition of *notes pour solistes*, took it a step further: he said translation of my pieces was forbidden.

Many of the pieces are inspired by philosophy, the arts or music, or are developed from quotes the language of which I do not want to alter. Possibly, the larger European languages suit the rather abstract works better than Swedish for instance, which to me is connected to completely different spheres of life. Language is what we use to communicate, but often, heavily relying on that, our set of language and grammar is infallible, intelligible, and logical. Which it, of course, is not. William Kentridge puts it quite perfectly when he talks about the *Ursonate*: "So what the *Ursonate* does—it makes you consciously aware that language is not necessarily always tied directly to the world, and hopefully makes one more conscious of those divisions, of those separations—of what is said and what is not said, of what is said but means something different, of what the biography is inside someone saying the sentence that they think is an objective sentence."[2] So I like to play with this. Language is the result of arbitrary processes, a bearer of subtle or heavy connotations (in pluricentric

[1] "Bis heute teilt sich die Literatur in zwei Lager. Das eine glaubt, dass Wörter die Welt, das andere, dass Wörter Wörter spiegeln." Stefan Ripplinger: *Schiefe Bahn Künstler, die schreiben, how to write*, ed. Barbara Wien and Wilma Lukatsch, Berlin, Wiens Verlag, 2013, 46.

[2] William Kentridge, in *South Africa, Revolution, and Art*, dir. Nikola Graef, arte 2021.

languages, those may even differ within the same language, depending on where you read/write/speak from geographically, and, as such, it is not very reliable at all. I like to look at this with a certain sense of humor, switching language via sound or meaning, via misunderstandings, and mistranslations.

It is not intended to be a political statement to use different languages, but of course, if you use them equilibristically, it can be understood as such, and in a way, it is. According to Édouard Glissant, contemporary writers, whether they speak/write/understand one or several languages, cannot but be conscious of the languages around them, or what he calls *l'imaginaire des langues*.[3] You cannot—contrary to 19th or 20th century writers—avoid information on the languages, and thus you cannot write monolingually any longer.

My own multilingualism affects my work only indirectly: I do not use my mother tongue (which in a strict sense, would be Swedish, nor my father tongue, which would be Finnish, or half my family language, which would be Danish), but rather languages that are suitable for the pieces. Maybe one could compare it to colors you use, or instruments; it is not as much a question of expression, but rather of precision. The Lebanese-born poet Etel Adnan, in her essay "Écrire dans une langue étrangère," described how she fell in love with the American language, in which she felt completely free of the restrictions the French language had imposed on her. She could finally write in English, and "paint in Arabic", a language she had never learnt to master very well.[4] I can recognize these limitations—I have always felt uncomfortable speaking Finnish, a language my parents used as a secret language. As a child, I was not supposed to understand it; a doctor actually advised my parents not to confuse us children with more than two languages. Later though, I was expected to somehow mysteriously be able to master Finnish due to my family background. So I guess I had what I have understood is rather common for 'migrant'/second generation children, a certain language complex. That really only changed after I moved away from Finland again, and could distance or abstract myself from my background. It is possible that I, just as Etel Adnan fell in love with American English, have sort of a crush on the French language. There is something irresistible in the discrepancy between the written and the pronounced language, and due to its countless homophonic twins, it is perfectly fit for a number of interesting misunderstandings that are frequently used in French writing, too. Anne Carson, reflecting on the pun, writes:

[3] Lise Gauvin: L'imaginaire des langues: entretien avec Édouard Glissant, *Études françaises*, Vol. 28 No. 2–3 (1992–1993), 12.

[4] "Parler en Amérique, c'était comme remonter le cours de l'Amazone, c'était plein de dangers, de prodiges." Etel Adnan: *Écrire dans une langue étrangère*, Paris, L'Échoppe, 2014, 19. For an English version, see Etel Adnan: *To Write in a Foreign language*, in B. Potter-Fasting – M. Schipper (eds.): *Unheard Words*, London, Allison & Busby, 1985.

> Within the pun you see a possibility of grasping a better truth or a truer meaning, than is available from the separate senses of either word… The pun matches two sounds that fit perfectly together as aural shapes yet stand insistently, provocatively apart in sense. You perceive homophony and at the same time see the semantic space that separates the two words. Sameness is projected onto difference in a kind of stereoscopy.[5]

Writing translingually is no goal in itself to me. Longer texts may be monolingual, too, at least to a certain extent as the *Dualogue*[6] for instance, philosophical dialogues on dualism, or *Trial and Eros*,[7] an opera libretto, in which the main language is English while all quotes are left in their original language, be it Greek, Latin, German, or French.

In the documentary-style texts, the reason for using several languages becomes more apparent, as for instance in *Blue tide,*[8] which deals with a disappearing fishing community in Portugal. Here the text is bilingual (Portuguese/English). Similarly, in *The Roma Journeys*[9]—a book on the Roma from seven different countries—fragments of different languages are used either to give an immediate sense of the aural atmosphere or because it is essential to the information. During the course of documentary projects, I stayed and lived with communities in South Africa, India, and with different Roma communities in Europe. There are so many aspects to the use of language when it comes to vulnerable groups, be it the language used to describe a people, be it language politics, or simply the choice of language. It is a powerful tool that can change the way we think, and it is good to keep in mind that, being a common good, language is the outcome of logical and arbitrary processes that are sensitive to political agendas and destructive intentions, too. We should be cautious not to use language indifferently.

In my minimalist writing published in the "trilogy," *zaroum*, *notes for soloists*, and *l'usage du mot*,[10] there is no main language. Languages appear next to each other, switch into each other via sound or meaning.

A language tends to be accompanied by a set of historical and cultural references and it is said that each language reveals different aspects of the speaker's personality. The artist duo, Slavs and Tatars, even holds that "speaking,

[5] Anne Carson: *Eros the Bittersweet*: *An Essay*, London, Dalkey Archive Press, 1998, 34.

[6] Cia Rinne: *Dualogue*, script for The Night of Philosophy, curated by Mériam Korichi, Institut français, Berlin, 2015, translated from English by Andreas Vermehren Holm and published in Danish as *Skal vi blinde os selv og forlade Theben*, Copenhagen, Forlaget Virkelig, 2016.

[7] Cia Rinne: *Trial and Eros*, *A Symposium*, Copenhagen, Forlaget Virkelig, 2019.

[8] Cia Rinne: *Bluetide*, Helsinki 1997.

[9] Cia Rinne: *The Roma Journeys*, with Joakim Eskildsen, Göttingen, Steidl, 2007.

[10] Cia Rinne: *zaroum*, Helsinki, 2001. Cia Rinne: *notes for soloists*, Stockholm, OEI Editör, 2008; Berlin, kookbooks, 2017. Cia Rinne: *l'usage du mot*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 2017; Berlin, kookbooks, 2017; Geneva, L'Ours blanc, Éditions Héros-limite, 2017.

breathing, reading, dreaming in different languages is a productive schizophrenia of sorts."[11] Using a serious condition as a metaphor and the supposed productivity might be up for debate, but indeed, each language is connected to a certain set of connotations and cultural references that, to varying extents, form an underlying background for its speakers. Not adhering to merely one specific linguistic system could be understood as a political statement, as opposed to the suggested homolinguistic construct that is negligent of the heterolinguistic reality. The simultaneity of languages might correspond better with the reality of several, coexisting lingual realms, each opening up different worlds, values and reference systems.

It is precisely this coexistence of different language realms that has triggered a deep mistrust, for me, in linguistic reliability. I am fascinated by the way in which language is taken for granted and used unquestioningly as if it were a perfect set of tools. In another language, the whole set of tools would be different and one would not necessarily be able to say or think exactly the same thing. So how can I be sure of thinking or believing what I say? Are my thoughts not just trapped in a pre-existing language, are we not *prisonnier(s) des mots d'autrui,* as Barthes says?[12] This skepticism is further deepened by philosophy where every term demands an accurate, infallible definition and language is threatened by its own logical incongruences. Much of what lies behind the writing of my texts springs from this initial *mise en question* of language itself, as attempts to look at words and language themselves. It is interesting to see what happens when language—as imperfect as it may be—is deprived of its habitual function and used beyond what is commonly accepted. Works or texts that operate on the border of the different systems—that may be other than lingual—require a different sort of reading and may also trigger reflection on reading itself. Similar to how Magritte's *La trahison des images* reflects on the discrepancy of word and image, a short sentence is sufficient, for Tomas Schmit, to question word and world, and thus language itself:

> das wort ozean ist ca. 22 quadratmillimeter groß.[13]
> *the word ocean covers some three square centimeters.*[14]

They are attempts to look at the words and language themselves, and not any specific language, but language in a broader sense. According to Lev Rubinstein, one of the founders of Moscow Conceptualism, that artistic system works not with language, but rather with *consciousness*:

[11] Slavs and Tatars, *Not Moscow Not Mecca*, Vienna, Secession, 2012, 7.

[12] Roland Barthes: *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*, Paris, Seuil, 1953, 12.

[13] Tomas Schmit: no. 630, in *katalog 4,* No. 531, Köln, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2007, n.p.

[14] Tomas Schmit: *katalog 4,* No. 587, Köln, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2007, n.p.

> To be more precise, with the complex interrelation between individual artistic consciousness and general cultural consciousness. Hence, the feeling of flickering between native/foreign language, between the presence/absence of the author in the text, and so on.[15]

Each piece tends to develop its own rhythm and tonality, and the arrangement of the pieces in the entire reading/book is determined by all of these aspects, the context, visual dimension and musicality. Still, operating on the border of several languages allows the texts to retain a certain abstract character. The languages I use are not necessarily related to any specific sphere or geographic area, and since two of them are not my mother tongues, they are free of connotations that are usually built in for native speakers. Consequently, I do not use different languages when writing longer texts as radically as I do in the short pieces. Translingualism, in this case, is closely related to minimalist writing.

In my pieces, I play with the minimal variations that take place within or across languages, so it feels natural to use languages that are closely related—after all, the texts are only written in European languages. Although meaning may shift with sound, it never does so as radically as it does between Finnish and Japanese, for instance. Homophone translations that Tomomi Adachi and I worked on for the MAVOtek project on Japanese Dadaism sounded entirely plausible in Finnish, while meaning had completely changed. Maybe the European languages share more of an underlying rhizome and also a certain aural compatibility, which is useful when shifting from a language to another via meaning or sound, a process described by Sebastián Zabronski as words opening doors that—as soon as several languages are involved—turn into revolving doors.

The latest work, the artist book sentences, is entirely monolingual. The sentences refer to themselves and play with the English double meaning:

> this sentence is looking for the ideal reader
> this sentence would prefer to be in french. or at least in british english.
> this sentence refuses to be translated.
> this sentence continues behind your head.
> this sentence wishes it were written by someone else.
> this sentence is a lifetime sentence.[16]

[15] Lev Rubinstein: *Compleat Catalogue of Comedic Novelties*, Brooklyn, Ugly Duckling Presse, 2014, xii.
[16] sentences from Cia Rinne, *sentences*, Copenhagen, Forlaget Gestus, 2019, n.p.

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MULTIMODAL CODE-SWITCHING IN MY WORLD MUSIC ART

Irén Lovász

Introduction

During the past several years I have been experiencing, both as an active and creative singer in the international world music scene and as a professional cultural anthropologist researching folk religion, poetry and music, to what an extent human voice, traditional singing and music are able to serve as effective means of intercultural communication for several reasons. Being active in these two professions simultaneously requires permanent code-switching of academic and artistic communication. During my performances I combine linguistic and musical codes of academic and artistic communication; that is, code-switching has become an inherent attribute of my performances. In other words, during my university lectures I often sing to illustrate and demonstrate my thoughts by musical examples, and during my concerts I often add some academic explanation, comments to the actual songs for my audience. With my attitude towards my musical performances and my academic studies about it, I could also be regarded as an "Elephant-Zookeeper."[1]

The basis of my world music is that in different cultures one finds similar and related archaic texts, melodies, songs, whose recitation served specific emotional, spiritual or communicative purposes throughout many centuries. Switching the linguistic, musical and cultural codes in my art helps me not only to strengthen the message but also to make it transculturally accessible. In the chapter below, I am going to share linguistic and multimodal[2] examples of code-switching in my world music.

[1] Vladimir Natasha Lvovich: "Elephant-Zookeepers:" Scholars and Makers of Multilingual Creativity, conference talk, *Code-Switching in Arts*, online conference, 29 September 2022.

[2] Johanna Domokos: The Tibetologist Csoma and the minimalist Szemző creating along the linguistic unknown, in Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: *Literary Code-Switching and Beyond*, Budapest, L'Harmattan – Károli Books, 2023, in print.

Individual Code-Switching by Languages and Melodies

To exemplify three different types of my individual code-switching, I go back to my first CD *Világfa* (Worldtree), which manifests my artistic interpretation of intercultural relations of the nomadic people. In this recording, I use three different ways of so-called suprapositioned code-switching:

1. I sing a Mordvin folk song in Mordvin language above an archive recording of an ancient Hungarian ritual song *(regősének)*, *Regörejtem*, languages: Hungarian and Mordvin.[3]
2. I sing unisono with a Chuvash archive recording, *Napfelkelte/ Sunrise*, languages: Chuvash and Hungarian.[4]
3. I sing ancient Byzantine melody after an archive recording of an ancient Hungarian (Szekler) ritual song *(székely regősének)*, *Dehóremeróma*, musical codes: Hungarian and Byzantine melodies.[5]

I used the method of code-switching above to demonstrate the intercultural relations, how different cultures affected the Hungarian traditional music during the early nomadic centuries of its history during the migration from Asia to Central Europe. I used Finno–Ugric, Turkic, Greek–Byzantine examples. The CD was first published by the Hungarian National Museum for the great archeological exhibition of the millecentenary of the Hungarian Conquest of the Carpathian Basin, celebrated in 1995.

Nonverbal Singing and Cultural Code-Switching

The next example will demonstrate my nonverbal singing and cultural code-switching of improvisation in the spirit and style of Chinese-like melody, while singing the *Föld* (Earth) track of my CD *Belső hang* (Inner Voice, 2007), an improvised duo piece on voice and didgeridoo, to represent the voice and sound of the Earth.[6]

And another creative piece for representing the voice of Mother Earth is improvising in the spirit and style of the Sámi *joik* singing, with an authentic Sámi *joik* melody on my Soundscape CD: *Voice of Earth*, 2015.[7]

[3] Irén Lovász: *Regörejtem*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5At1l2AmvU, accessed 28 October 2022.
[4] Irén Lovász: *Napfelkelte*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8H_RSFiAyMo, accessed 28 October 2022.
[5] Irén Lovász: *Dehóremeróma*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rXu2ziuCP4, accessed 28 October 2022.
[6] Irén Lovász: *Föld*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8rjm_rfIzg, accessed 28 October 2022.
[7] Irén Lovász: *Voice of Earth (feat. Groove & Voice Trio)*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt2tx-WRaifY, minutes 7:12–9:10, accessed 28 October 2022.

Regarding the musical and verbal interferences, I am going to suggest a Jungian interpretation of the function of these code-switching modalities, especially related to his notion of the collective unconscious. The term, *collective unconscious,* as Encyclopedia Britannica describes,

> […] is introduced by psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung to represent a form of the unconscious (that part of the mind containing memories and impulses of which the individual is not aware) common to mankind as a whole and originating in the inherited structure of the brain. It is distinct from the personal unconscious, which arises from the experience of the individual. According to Jung, the collective unconscious contains archetypes, or universal primordial images and ideas.[8]

That could be the reason, for instance, why I have chosen the didgeridoo to represent the voice of Earth in my Inner Voice CD, regardless of the fact that this aboriginal instrument is not at all authentic in our traditional Hungarian folk music. That might be the reason also for choosing the nonverbal musical forms of the archaic Sámi *joik*s, with which I had already got acquainted in 1983 in Lapland in my ethnomusicological fieldwork and also while attending a Sami Music course in Kaustinen, Finland. Recalling the deep impressions from these memories, experiences of my individual life, definitely provided inspiration to the rich treasury of motifs, forms, basic ethno–music, folklore–genres, musical and linguistic forms of my actual musical pieces. But I am convinced that without being open and sensitive to all the treasures of mankind that had been created and preserved in any parts of the world in any historic condition of humanity, my repertoire would be much weaker, much more pure and offering less creative potential. The only reason for being able to use the rich material for endless inspiration for our artistic expressions, I believe, is the open access to the collective unconscious of the treasury of mankind. I am grateful for that. Just like for being able to use different free code-switching techniques in musical improvisation, and ways of expression of my inner voice in any local or intercultural communicative context.

Multipersonal Code-Switching

Finally, I exemplify a *multipersonal code-switching* with the event when we, Hebrew, Turkish, Iranian, Czech–Moravian and Hungarian folk singers, were singing each other's folksongs in each other's languages at a live recording of a concert in 2014. It was the closing concert of a multiethnic Folk Holidays folk festival in the Czech Republic. I sang together with Michal Elia Kamal, an

[8] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, "collective unconscious," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 28 February 2020, https://www.britannica.com/science/collective-unconscious, accessed 11 November 2022.

Istanbul-based singer of Hebrew–Iranian origin, and a Czech singer from Moravia. We sang each other's folk songs together.

Figure 1. The Three Voices: Jitka Šuranská, Michal Elia Kamal, Irén Lovász. Photograph by Kamila Berndorffová, 2014.

In the first example, I sing a Hungarian folk song in Hungarian with the two other singers of different cultures and languages. They each translated one verse of it into their mother tongue and sing it also during the song. So in the flow of the musical performance of this Hungarian folk song in Hungarian, a Hebrew and a Moravian text can be also heard by native singers:

- 1. *Csak azt szánom–bánom,* a Hungarian folksong based arrangement,[9]
- 2. *Za vodů*, a Czech–Moravian folk song adaptation.[10]

I find it very special and that is why I share with you the phonetic description of the Moravian lyrics into her Hebrew mother tongue, how Michal Elia Kamal made notes for herself on the rehearsal. It was also published in the liner notes in the booklet of the CD, reproduced below.

[9] Jitka Šuranska – Michal Elia Kamal – Irén Lovász: *Csak azt szánom-bánom*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVN9QjgKTsU, accessed 28 October 2022.

[10] Jitka Šuranska – Michal Elia Kamal – Irén Lovász: *Za vodů*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLxkQ_7G9bY&list=RDnLxkQ_7G9bY&index=1, accessed 28 October 2022.

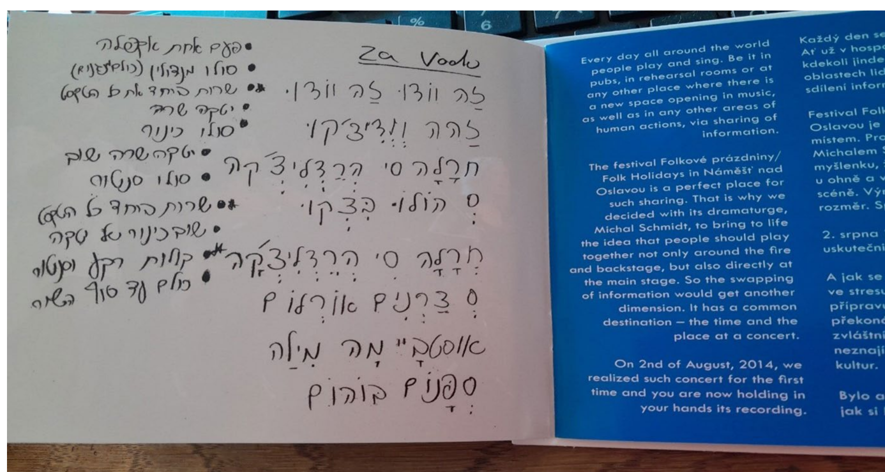

Figure 2. Three Voices CD booklet. Photograph by Irén Lovász.

Just to present an idea of the third language-code, I show you a Turkish song arrangement, *Bursanin*, in which we all sing together in Turkish with the musical accompaniment of the big international band of 12 musicians of Czech, Moravian, Armenian, Bosnian, English, Turkish, Iranian and Hungarian origin.[11]

Figure 3. The Multiethnic world music band of Three Voices, 2014.
Namest Nad Oslavou (CZ, 2014).
Photograph by Kamila Berndorffová, 2014.

[11] Jitka Šuranska – Michal Elia Kamal – Irén Lovász: *Bursa'nın Ufak Tefek Taşlan*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRwUj_J4vSc, accessed 28 October 2022.

I am convinced that despite the fact that we, the musicians and singers of different cultures and languages, did not know each other before, and we had only two days to set up this concert, getting involved into each other's folk music and languages, we could eventually communicate with the channels of languages and music very naturally. Because music is one of the most effective means of intercultural communication. It also helps using different languages easily because of the rhythm and the music of the uttered speech–formulas. Using code-switching in folk–world music helps to get closer and to understand each other in intercultural context. We all experienced that if you learn a folk song of an unknown, new culture and language, you receive a gift which belongs to you forever.

Melody as Matrix Language

In addition, I would like to introduce to you a Moravian folk song in the Moravian language, the way I had learned it from the Czech–Moravian folksinger *Jitka Šuranská* as her grandmother's song, as well as an exact parallel of it from the Hungarian folk tradition in Hungarian. I created this as the *Jitka Šuranská memorial song* after her death a few years ago. I performed it several times in international concerts with my multiethnic group in our concert "Roots and Wings."

The Hungarian version is not a translation. It is not a different melody. It is the same melody with a different text in a different language, which had been preserved in different vernaculars as a Moravian and as a Hungarian folksong! These songs belong to the oral traditions of neighboring countries, cultures that had grown closely related during the centuries of cultural history. This is again a very special example of code-switching in an intercultural context. The great composer and ethnomusicologist Béla Bartók would probably agree that in such cases it is not important which one is the original source, and who the "real author" is. Below you can see the texts of my musical performance dedicated to Jitka Šuranská and titled *Jitka Šuranská memorial song*:

Tobě dobre, můj šohajku, a mně zle,
tobě líčka červeňajú a mně né,
Tobě kvetne za klobúčkem zelený rozmarýn
a mně plače v kolébečce malý syn.
Tobě roste na za hrádce červeny tulipan,
a mně plače v kolébečce malý pán.
(Text of the Moravian folk song)

Tisza partján mandulafa virágzik
Mandulája vízbe hull és elázik
Terem még a mandulafa mandulát, mandulát
Tisza partján nevelik a szép leányt.
Terem még a mandulafa mandulát, mandulát
Tisza partján nevelik a szép leányt.
(Text of the Hungarian folk song with the same melody)

The matrix language in this last example is the melody. And the embedded languages are the Moravian and the Hungarian. There is code-switching of musical and linguistic codes, as well code-switching between two different linguistic codes.

Conclusion

All my examples from my world music experiences offer a different perspective of code-switching, different from pure linguistic code-switching in narrative communicative framework. Since "Literary code-switching manifests itself in a narrative communication framework", there are a few questions suggested for further studies in this field:

- How could we describe the special features of multimodal meaning–making in such an ethno/world-musical context?
- How should we define the diagonal code-switching relations between the communicating artistic agencies of a performance: who are the author, the narrator, the performer and their addressees?[12]
- We cannot speak about a real author in folk poetry and traditional music contexts, because of the special features of oral tradition compared to the written one, though we can define artists, musicians, singers as authors in the contemporary world music context, as the real authors in a written tradition.
- But who would be considered as the implied author in the world music performance? Could we rather use an Implied Source (IS) here, instead?
- And we could use Performer (P), instead of narrator (N) and Receiver/ Audience instead of Reader, etc.

As we see in this very complex cultural and intercultural communicative system, where folk music in itself has very special features of artistic communication, it is rather difficult to define the communicating agencies,

[12] Cf. Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: Zero degree code-switching and the narrative framework, *Polyphonie* (2022) http://www.polyphonie.at/?op=publicationplatform&sub=viewarea&area=1, accessed 28 October 2022.

especially in multimodal code-switching in multi-ethnic and multicultural world music contexts. These open questions might offer exciting avenues of investigation for further studies in this field.

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WRITING THE MULTIVERSE

Tzveta Sofronieva

Multiverse stands at the core of my poetic work and, in my view, is a powerful concept for the analysis of multilingualism in literature. It mirrors the diversity and the sheer amount of possibilities of verses in poems. It implies the difference in the literary strategy and the many paths toward understanding ourselves, the riches of our abilities to impart and inspire. It expresses the complexity and multiplicity of the Anthropocene aesthetics. It is the continuum I am moving in and feel I belong to, the spacetime I attempt to investigate and enlarge.

As an active word "verse" has its origin in Latin and means, on the one hand, to write poems, to engage in versifying, and, on the other hand, to turn around, to oppose, to familiarize by study or experience, to teach about. *Multiverse* stands then for the many lines of a poem, for various languages in poetry, for diversity in styles, for combination of rhythms, for manifold of expression and presentation, as well as for familiarizing and passing on poetic discoveries. In my mother tongue "verse" is not a part of the word "multiverse." *Multiverse* is translated into Bulgarian мултивселена [multivselena], and I would even go further in the translation and the interpretation transferring it as многовселение [mnogovselenie]. The origin of the word lies in Old Slavic with connections to Old Greek and is related to the word "to inhabit." "Vse" meaning "all, the whole creation, the entire" and "vselenie", meaning "instilling, implanting a new spirit, letting inhabit, inspiring, animating." It implies the many paths towards understanding ourselves, the riches of our abilities to inspire, to fill life with meaning. And, in a different way than the English word "verse," it comes to the same nuance of imparting, of sharing experience.

This corresponds to the ideas developed by the Nobel Physics Laureate, bilingual poet and cultural historian Erwin Schrödinger, whose fundamental work in quantum mechanics and in its interdisciplinary and philosophical implications has substantially shaped our contemporary knowledge. He is known as one of the fathers of quantum mechanics because of his wave equation, which is celebrated as one of the most important achievements of the 20th century. His thoughts on heredity in life and in cultural history inspired Watson and Crick for their discovery of the DNA's structure while his interpretations of the quantum mechanics led to various developments in physics. These discuss and underline the complexity and multiplicity of our world, the variety and unpredictability of possible outcomes, the dependence on the

observer, the adjacent and divergent worlds, the emergence of universes on connected branes or the role of dark matter. According to the ideas which Schrödinger introduced, multiverse stays for a theoretical framework in modern physics postulating that there is a vast array of potential, identical or diverse, parallel universes, which in the wholeness of their possibly infinite number comprise all of reality. The structure of the multiverse, the nature of each universe within it, and the relationships among these universes differ from one hypothesis to another. The concept itself offers a rich reservoir of ideas for us in literature especially from the most recent theories which deal with the communication between the different universes within the multiverse or with high number of dimensions in it.[1]

The different universes within the multiverse are called "parallel universes," "other universes," "alternate universes," "alterverses" or "many worlds." I propose for the research on literary multilingualism the term *otherverse* for all parts of the literary multiverse, no matter of their type (whether clones, alterverses or other). The analysis is then distinct from the use of clones and parallel realities in science fiction and of alterverses in gaming or alternate universes in cosmology, so that we can work holistically and do not slip into relativist attitudes. But most of all, I suggest this term in order to stress on the otherness more than on the similarity or on alternation. Each time when we face literary multilingualism, we need to look for the emergence of a poetic innovation and the strategy towards an addition of an aesthetic feature.

We, as humans, need different points of view, various ways to inquire and perceive; and we need these again and again differently woven and intertwined in ever new self-organization processes. In multiverse, we feel the urgent need of contact points between the adjacent and the divergent worlds. Aware of the manifoldness around us, curious and fearing that we do not comprehend it, and also that we do not understand ourselves, we are urged to investigate and to communicate.

From the very beginning of my literary work, I have been bringing worlds together. Already my first poetry collection, *Chicago Blues* (1992)[2] is bilingual, Bulgarian and English, not classically in left–right page bilingual frame but in a stream of a diary of a voyage in the U.S. and Canada during the Fall of the Berlin Wall; next to my poems there are several art collages of mine, music

[1] I have offered only a very brief summary of the concept "multiverse" in Physics; however, there is a huge reservoir of publications on its developments, so readers can easily find further sources depending on their own interest in philosophy and the cultural history of natural sciences or on their proficiency in the language of mathematics. To fully understand the ideas behind the notion of multiverse, I recommend reading as many works of Erwin Schrödinger as possible. I have also written an article about him as a multilingual author; see Tzveta Sofronieva: Erwin Schrödinger's Poetry, *Science & Education* 23.3 (2014), 655–672.

[2] Tzveta Sofronieva: *Chicago Blues*, Sofia, Divit Books Edition, Svobodno Poetichesko Obshtestvo, 1992.

accords, natural science concepts, my translations of poems by the Canadian Margaret Atwood, Czech Silva Fisherova, Chinese Duoduo and South African Siphiwe Ngwenya, reflections in subtitles and an afterword. The manifoldness is to be found in various manifestations through all of my works after that—my dozen poetry collections crowned with the 2020 *Multiverse. New and Selected Poems*,[3] intercultural anthologies I edited,[4] reading series I curated, "Der Buchstabentag" (The Day of the Alphabets) as a literary salon in the 1990s or "Das Wissen der Dichtung" (The Knowledge of Poetry) in House of Poetry in Berlin in 2015, my literary art installations, "Borrowed pillows" Lille, 2005, and "My Cyborg Identity" at MIT and the Goethe Institute in Boston 2012 and in the DHMD/ Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung Exhibition "Sprache" (Language) 2016,[5] the co-foundation of the Emergency Theater in Sofia, which works combining psychodrama with interactive performance and presents multilingual plays of mine, most recently *Scenes at Dawn* 2021–2023.[6]

As revealed in my poem "Journey to the West," written in English 1989 when I first arrived in Canada,[7] in multiverse I am in interaction with others, take different positions in sentences, make different connections, find a meaning.

A word in an unknown language.
I know there must be sense,
must be a meaning.
It's probably marginal.
Maybe a preposition
or a noun.
Either used often or
too strange for the ear.
Learning all languages
I listen attentively
to the springs of their speech.
I follow the air in the circles
of the vowels coming to me

[3] Tzveta Sofronieva: *Multiverse. New and Selected Poems*, J. K. Dobbs (ed.), Buffalo, White Pine Press, 2020.

[4] Tzveta Sofronieva (ed.): *Verbotene Worte: eine Anthologie*, München, Biblion Verlang, 2005; Tzveta Sofronieva (ed.): *11. 9. Web Streaming Poetry*, Belgrade, Auropolis Supernova, 2010; Tzveta Sofronieva (ed.): *Verbotene Worte/Andere (W)Orte, digitale Anthologie*, https://www.kakanien-revisited.at/beitr/verb_worte, accessed 29 December 2022.

[5] Tzveta Sofronieva: My Cyborg Identity, 2012, in Colleen M. Schmitz – Judith E. Weiss: *Sprache. Ein Lesebuch von A-Z. Perspektiven aus Literatur, Forschung und Gesellschaft,* Dresden, DHMD, 2017, 32.

[6] Tzveta Sofronieva: *Scenes at Dawn*, Emergency Theater, Bulgaria, dir. Juliana Saiska, June 2021. Cf. https://toplocentrala.bg/program/performance/stseni-na-razsamvane, accessed 29 December 2022.

[7] Sofronieva: *Chicago Blues*, 18.

from mouths of people
close to me and far away;
search for a language in which
I am a word.
[…]

I was never afraid that I can get lost in translation. I believe that one can always find a language to talk to and with other people all over the world; and by "find a language" I mean that one can find understanding how people are and why they are like this. It is tiring, it is difficult and often without success, but it is the only way we go on in life: We are translating all the time, we translate what we see, we translate feelings and thoughts, so that we communicate with others, and while perceiving they are already translating. A constant, endless, ever–lasting move back and forth in comprehending. The challenge is to find the meta-level that allows us to talk about *how* we talk with each other. We need to constantly ask each other questions and also constantly question ourselves. We have to find out if multilingualism brings us to flight and togetherness or rather fails within its own narcissistic beauty. A multilingual poem lets us face our fears and develop our curiosity. We need to accept the impossibility of having it all 100 percent. And still we are free, we have a choice.

There is a big variety of multilingualism in my work. There are single words and expressions in —on the surface—monolingual texts. There are mixed languages within a line or a poem or a cycle of poems or a poetry collection in a main body of one tongue. There is bilingual, trilingual and translingual work. Dialects and slangs also speak; melodies of folks and children's songs flow. Words of other poets and homages on them celebrate the whole body of literature before us. Mathematical rhythms accompany musical accords and rhetoric signs. Linguistic analysis is next to word play, naughty syllables associate foreign languages. Hand in hand are new words introduced and forgotten ones re-approached. Clones and alterverses shape the aesthetics of the Anthropocene. One can find all this and more, and find it direct or latent, as well as both simultaneously. The knowledge, thinking and structural shaping from the tongues of the natural sciences manifest strongly in my poems, and rarely through terminology or formula but always incorporated, installed in images and in the structure and inner logic of the poem. I write multilingually also in terms of genre. I express this directly by commenting and announcing in subtitles, by changing genres when self-translating, or when I include the same text in a volume of poetry as well as in a short story collection. My literary art installations, multimedia performances and scenic readings are an expression of poetic multilingualism. Multilingualism is an immanent feature of my work and has been natural for me since my childhood. At first, I felt that the various languages I used were parallel universes between which I was moving and

balancing. Later, I knew that it was not the languages that made the world different but rather it was I who needed to learn to trust my own multiverse.

It is always an overwhelming experience to get acquainted with words that describe something for which up to this moment I have not had words. Old forgotten words, local words, foreign words, unknown words—if their sounds and meanings echo inside me, it means that I encounter, that there is less emptiness in my world. Even if later on I do not use these newly discovered words, they remain inside me. When I am on the shore of the North or Baltic Sea, I drink the light of the pastel-colored landscapes; on the Mediterranean I embrace the clear lines and the intensity of the bright colors. My eyes do not forget the light of each of them even when I am far from it. Invention needs a departure from the known, but in fact the supposed lost is always present. In multiverse the uniqueness of the eyeing and the sensitivity sharpens, deepens, broadens, and manifests in the structures of the poetic thinking.

The notion of code-switching as it is most often used in the linguistics stresses on the switching, even described as swapping, between languages. In the setting of the literary multiverse the emphasis is on the translingual code, on the emergence of a new linguistic key.

There are otherverses that are parallel worlds which have the same characteristics and properties and only little deviations, and otherverses that are clearly dealing with alternation and opposition in the new poetic space and that obey different laws and are constituted with different constants. The multiverse as in the quantum mechanics creates a new universe when a diversion in events occurs. In the modern theories, under the umbrella of the string theory, which works with at least 11 dimensions, multiverse contains branes that collide and cause new universes, then bounce back and pass through time until they are pulled back together and again collide, destroying the old contents and creating them anew. I have written several otherverses with the title "The Beginning and the End of the Metaphor." In German, I use the word Seepferdchen (seahorse) and in Bulgarian водно конче ("water horse" if we take the two separate words but as a whole, the English translation is "dragon fly"). In my first language, the poem comes from the joy of breathing from the crisp air while riding a water horse = dragon fly over the water, getting energy from the day. But if you ride a sea horse you need to learn a new way of breathing, don't you? The English translations of the two poems differ accordingly:

Giddy up, dragonfly!	Giddy up, sea horse!
Breathe	Breathe
confidence from the day.[8]	Confidence into the day.[9]

[8] Translated from Bulgarian by the poet. It is a part of the poem with the same name published in T. Sofronieva: *Multiverse*, 90.

[9] Translated from German by Chantal Wright in Tzveta Sofronieva: *A Hand full of Water*, Buffalo, White Pine Press, 2012, 91.

In German, a language I studied in my late twenties after several other languages, I needed to learn to breathe in deep waters, and in this process, I had to constantly grant my day some hope that breathing in there is possible. I feel that in order to really understand the water, it is not enough to live in it, there is a need to become a part of it to the extent that I am able to breathe inside/from/within it. My German poem "The Beginning and the End of the Metaphor" is not a mistaken self-translation of the Bulgarian poem with the identical name. This is easily recognized when stepping out of tongueistic frames. It is an otherverse, and if we define such a work as self-translation then we need a very serious enlargement of the notion of the self-translation, which, in my view, will still not suffice. I use the word *tongueism* because we need to differ between a discrimination of the text on the basis of literary multilingualism, and a discrimination of a person / an author on the basis of language, the latter called linguicism. Going back to the space-time of my English, a language from my early childhood, my otherverse with the same title in English[10] in the collection *Multiverse* (2020) is referring to the source and to the place of memory acquisition in the brain. And yet another otherverse poem includes Japanese and French. And the fact that these otherverses all have the title "The Beginning and the End of the Metaphor" is intentional. Only after considering the multiverse features of each poem can we search for linguistic codes.

Another example for otherverses in my poetry are the poems "I or Cloning"[11] written in English in 2019, the poem "I", written and entitled "Аз," in Bulgarian in 1981 and published in *Зачеваща памет* (*Conceiving Memory)*,[12] the German written poem "Ich,"[13] and the poem in English "Cloning."[14] The four poems create meaning and imaginariness that differ much. In Bulgarian, the poem works with the words азът [azat] (the self) and азот [azot] (nitrogen) and focuses on the relationship between a growing up individual and society; it focuses on loneliness and choices under dictatorship. The German written poem works with the word Stoff (matter, material) in Stickstoff (nitrogen) and the invented words Stich–Stoff (piercing matter), Ich–Stoff (I–matter), Erstick–Stoff (suffocating matter), and focuses on recognizing the self as a tenant in the natural world and on the relationship to nature as means for finding peace with oneself. The poem in English in the collection *Reflections in a Well* works with splitters of many I's—plural—and focuses on the search for personal identity and the Other in a globalized time-space with a large number of dimensions, on the fear of disappearing in the manifoldness. The 2020 poem in

[10] Sofronieva: *Multiverse,* 90.

[11] Ibid., 21.

[12] Tzveta Sofronieva: *Зачеваща памет*, Sofia, Edition Avantgarde, Prozoretz, 1994, 48.

[13] Tzveta Sofronieva: *Landschaften, Ufer,* Edition Lyrik Kabinett, Hanser, 2013, 76.

[14] Rumiana Ebert – Tzveta Sofronieva: *Reflections in a Well*, London, Paekakariki Press, 2018, 33.

English combines the previous in meaning and develops farther toward rebuilding human identity in the current era of the Anthropocene and understanding time as a many–branched tree, wherein there are infinite unpredictable outcomes and yet, we carry the responsibility for our choices and the manifoldness offers us a chance to persist. The motto "I, I, I, I… only four times and the word becomes totally senseless" is a quote from the penultimate page in *The Death of a Beekeeper* by the Swedish poet and novelist Lars Gustafsson,[15] the central theme of which is revealed by the repeated self-hypnosis of the protagonist: "We begin again. We never give up"—an important message in our Babel world. The four otherverse poems seem to be monolingual. However, each of them is written multilingually, including several national and scientific languages.

The splinters of I—as poet and scholar Jennifer Kwon Dobbs writes in her foreword to my book *Multiverse*, a new and selected poems collection which she edited—"are not fragments of the self that are lost as fallout in a wasteland's chaos, but rather the creation of a way of seeing whole worlds and a range of futures in motion. These worlds will continue to interact with each other, just as words and the particulates of words will interact and in unforeseen ways produce meanings anew."[16] The way Dobbs is looking at the 2020 otherverse as a self-translation in a different space–timeline proves how appropriate multiverse is as a setting for discussing a self-translated poem. Literary multiverse enables one to integrate the time dimension in a productive manner, and to get to the ability to observe several higher space dimensions zooming in and out. A self-translation is then not simply a conventional transfer of the poem into another language by the author her/himself and if there are decided changes in the poem in the new language, these are neither an improvement upon the original nor insufficiency in the target language. In multiverse it is a self-organization of the matter of the poem, a different integral sum of the I-splitters of the poem itself, it is a self-transformation of the poem into a new timeline and new set of dimensions. This, of course, can have very different expressions or realizations, and some can be "simply" in the same but enlarged universe, others in a completely new universe, furthermore it could happen in a set of new universes, etc.

Sometimes I translate my poems in the same way as I translate other poets—transferring a poem to a new world within the same universe. For example, I have translated my poem "Strong interaction" written originally in German[17] into Bulgarian and into English. The German original includes Polish and Bulgarian words as well a lot of Physics. I cite from Nobel laureate

[15] Lars Gustafsson: *The Death of a Beekeeper*, trans. Janet K. Swaffar – Guntram H. Weber, New York, New Directions, 1981, 156.

[16] Jennifer Kwon Dobbs: Introduction, in Sofronieva: *Multiverse,* 17.

[17] Tzveta Sofronieva: Starke Kraft, *Spiegelungen*, Heft 2.2018, 178.

Wisława Szymborska's poem "I am too close to him to dream of me."[18] Blaga Dimitrova, with whom we became friends in the 1980s, a highly acknowledged poet and a Vice President of Bulgaria after the democratic change from 1992, gave me her not yet published translation of this poem that used the word преблизко (extraordinary near, over the limit of closeness).

Преблизко си. Jestem blisko,
za blisko, żeby mu się śnić.
You are too close to me in your sleep.
You are dreaming of the gas station attendant
who gave you the fuel that you call dark energy
and think you need more urgently than ever.
You are dreaming of the waitress
who served you the coffee,
which you call dark matter and devour
believing you achieve inner cohesion.
You're dreaming next to me
in our marital bed, more honest than
those of love affairs inside hotels.
The interaction force puzzles our bed.
Closeness and attraction are a weak duet.
The larger the distance between the quarks,
the stronger the force between them.
"All quark and baloney," you say.
"So far free quarks haven't been observed."
You smack your lips in your sleep.
Your hand feels my shoulder, my hip.
You make love to me while I'm almost asleep
and beset by doubts about closeness,
having no dreams, while I believe in emptiness
which we always have to fill, each time anew.

Differently, the multilingual poem #mymothersdog[19] translates monolingually, when seven lines with words from Hungarian, Bulgarian, Serbian, French, Russian, Spanish, English, German, Romanian and music through lyrics parts/word associations from a children's song become eleven lines in an English parallel poem.

[18] Wisława Szymborska: I am too close to him to dream of me, trans. Wisława Szymborska – Joanna Trzeciak Huss, *The New Yorker*, 9 December 1996, 78.

[19] Sofronieva: *Multiverse*, 180.

"My mother's dog was modern and funny.
He peed only in the designated places.
He was castrated and frustrated," Maria said.

kutyapisi пиши бриши l'etranger ширина
родината пасмина псета pesetta Euro Europe
rope and rape appe тихо се сипе първият сняг
галено щипе всички ни пак, the dog е още
малко кутре, може ли Шаро да разбере, колко си
глупав half-breed сега how anxious гледаш снега
visitor viitor gate of the genes megalomania megjelölni

a dog's pee writes on the white, wipe the wide,
learn to mop and to mob the migrant, mother
tongue, father land, wolf pack, dogs in the manger,
what a mess, hoggishness, human stress, decimal,
euro in bar, rope and rape, be an ape, megastar,
puppy dog, don't be pissed off with your first snow
or dodge the frost, crossbreed, take a step, look ahead,
downstage, mongrel, anxious eyes, ice's yours, so am I,
being dogged, you crash into the gate, stay ahead
of the pack, you're the genes' gatecrasher, a megahit,
blast! brand: a human who hotdogs megalomania

Yet another poem, "An unknown word", written in 2005 in the Villa Aurora in California, exists in Bulgarian,[20] German[21] and English,[22] but there is no original or translation to be defined because they were written at the same time at the same place in one multilingual process. The three poems are parallel, simultaneously born, in the way the three languages are spoken in my family. In the process of creating the poem all three languages were mixed, and they formed the variations already in the course of the writing. In the poem I use folk and children's songs from the languages and songs that belong to cultures with rich experience with migration for work far from home. The Bulgarian poem flows as a song of a woman who is constantly on the move. In my English verses the language switches between lyrical, the language of a child raised in a multinational family, the language of a recent immigrant and the bumpy translation process. It is not a coincidence that in all three poems the word which the child uses for missing the mother is the German word for

[20] Tzveta Sofronieva: *Разпознавания*, Plovdiv, Zhanet45, 2006, 5.

[21] Tzveta Sofronieva: *Eine Hand voll Wasser*, Aschersleben, Edition Zeitzeichen 26., Verlag UnArtIg, 2008, 20.

[22] T. Sofronieva (ed.): *11. 9. Web Streaming Poetry*, 144.

homesickness, not the Bulgarian or the English. In the German version the language is smoother, expressing my artistic appreciation for a tongue I had right at that time adapted as a literary homeland. And the translation of the poem from German into English by Chantal Wright is smooth, which I appreciate; here is the beginning of it:

> *Носталгия* is a strange word:
> homesickness, Heimweh, Nostalgie.
> In Bulgarian the word does not exist
> and yesterday my daughter said:
> Мамо, имам Heimweh за теб.
> You can live in Berlin,
> Beverly Hills, Bitterfeld, Konska, Paris,
> as long as it smells of Mom
> and her rapidly aging hands
> that can commune with owls
> and hold you tight.
>
> *I feel her arms a huggin' me*
> *As when she held me then.*
>
> *Я кажи ми, облаче ле бяло,*
> *отгде идеш, що си ми видяло,*
> *не видя лиии...*[23]

In the notes to my book *A Hand full of Water* in her translation that won a PEN Translation Fund Award 2009 and the Cliff Becker Prize in Translation 2012, Chantal writes: "The italicized text in the English translation is taken from James Royce Shannon's (1881-1946) song "Too Ra Loo Ra Loo Ral (That's an Irish Lullaby)." Its use was inspired by an alternate English version of the poem, by the poet, which was published in *11. 9. Web Streaming Poetry* (Auropolis Supernova: Belgrade, 2010). "An unknown word" exists in Bulgarian, German and English versions created by the poet."[24] I quote her note to focus the attention to the word "alternate"—this poem has three versions in three languages that are parallel poems. None of them is an alternate poem in terms of alter-verse although they are all otherverses. The version of the translator is, in the logic of the multiverse setting, also not an alternate universe but rather a parallel one, a clone. But this is opening a new story, the story about translation of multilingual poetry. Chantal Wright, who is an acknowledged scholar

[23] Sofronieva: *A Hand*, 65.
[24] Chantal Wright: Notes, in Sofronieva: *A Hand*, 92.

in the field of literary translation, has written on this topic in relation to my poetry in her articles and books.[25] It is certainly worth discussing with her and other literary translation scholars the proposed multiverse setting in this aspect.

I was often advised to keep the processes of creation of my poems by myself and claim one otherverse as an original. I was often asked to affiliate myself to one national literature or to identify myself as a hybrid author. But views that are constructed around dichotomies and work with static notions belong to the grand old narratives of the history of culture. They are of little help when examining literature today, as a variety of literary, linguistic, and individual choices, as a transformative spacetime with high number of dimensions. The decision to create in an adopted language—or even further to move creatively in a set of several languages—is a decision for the Other, for investigation of oneself and of the world, for devoting to experience that is alien, unimaginable, unpredictable. It is a decision to think *in* new structures and not *about* new structures. I treat versions, (self)translations, clones, alter-verses and other types of multilinguality expression in poetry as otherverses in a multiverse because this gives an access to analysis of the laws they obey and the strategies used for their creation.

My English poem "Taking Flight" is an otherverse in a multiverse of poems that vary strongly in length and meaning; there are two poems in German,[26] and one in English.[27] What at first glance looks like development of a theme upon an original is in fact an otherverse in a different spacetime where literary multilingualism obeys the mythical method as T.S. Eliot calls it referring to James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Eliot's own widely used narrative technics and myth compressions, and views from the string theory.[28] The linguistic hyperspace offers vibrations resulting from invisible connections between the dimensions

[25] Chantal Wright: The Water under the Bridge: Tzveta Sofronieva's "Der alte Mann, das Meer, die Frau," in Elka Agoston-Nikolova (ed.): *Shoreless Bridges. South East European Writing in Diaspora*: New York, Rodopi, 2010, 97–116; Chantal Wright: Tzveta Sofronieva's "Über das Glück nach der Lektüre von Schopenhauer, in Kalifornien" (2007), in Rob McFarland – Michelle Scott James (eds.): *Sophie Discovers Amerika. German-Speaking Women Write the New World*, Rochester, Camden House, 2014, 261–274; Chantal Wright: *Literary Translation*, London, Routledge, 2016.

[26] In Cornelia Jentzsch (ed.): *Nur ein Wolkenschatten?*, Münster, Daedalus Verlag, 2012, 108–117 and in Sofronieva: *Landschaften, Ufer,* 21–26.

[27] Sofronieva: *Multiverse*, 103–113.

[28] T. S. Eliot: Ulysses, Order, and Myth, *The Dial*, November 1923, 483; T.S. Eliot, Tradition and Individual Talent, in *The Sacred Wood, Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, New York, Alfred Knopf, 1921, 42–53; Jackiey Ash: *Mythical Method in T. S. Eliot's Poetry*, https://www.english-literature.info/2021/03/mythical-method-in-eliots-poetry.html, accessed 9 January 2023. Michio Kaku, who is active in popularizing science, gives a good view over the topic of multiverse in *Parallel Worlds: A Journey Through Creation, Higher Dimensions, and the Future of the Cosmos*, Anchor, 2006. He has also written a lot about all aspects of the string theory, and offers a good summary of it in his article "Hyperspace and a Theory of Everything and M–Theory: The Mother of All Superstrings", available on his official website at https://mkaku.org/home/articles, accessed 9 January 2023.

of the different languages. The poetic narrative mirrors condensed myths in a bunch of dimensions of several languages, adds sets of time–coordinates to question the duality of identity and reliability, exchanges words from different linguistic contexts super–symmetrically, and is constantly reacting on occurring metaphor disturbances and instabilities of the form. It would be a long new essay if I start to talk about the poem "Taking Flight," which is multilingual in a great range of ways and which is per se about multilingualism in poetry. I want to make only a brief sketch of some of its elements. As we can read in the works of the Harvard professor of Literature Daniel Albright, the English modernists were the ones in poetry to deeply connect with the main ideas of the natural sciences that shaped and continue to shape our era.[29] In works of other scholars, we can also follow how Eliot and Schrödinger shared the same understanding of simultaneity and tradition. With the name Daedalos written in different ways, I refer to Greek mythology and to Stephen Dedalus from *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) by James Joyce who lets his protagonist formulate a theory of art as intelligible matter directed towards an aesthetic end.[30]

As a child in Western Bulgaria, I was raised with Greek epos and Greek mythology as the most natural fairy–tales a grandparent would tell. The citations from "Hymn to Aphrodite" by Sappho are from an English translation by William Hyde Appleton in the volume *Greek Poets in English Verse*.[31] Though this poem by Sappho is conventionally considered to be completely preserved, the initial of a crucial word in the poem is uncertain: some sources render it as Ποικιλόφρον' and others as Ποικιλόθρον'. Both words are compounds of the adjective ποικιλος (literally "many–colored"; metaphorically "diverse", "complex", "subtle"; –θρον means "chair", and –φρον "mind"). Examples of the idea of infinite worlds existed in the philosophy of Ancient Greeks. Hellenic Atomism proposed that a collision of atoms creates infinite parallel world, the philosopher Chrysippus suggested that the world eternally expired and regenerated. In his logic, he stressed the importance of prepositions as conjunction, disjunction and conditional in the search for truth and discussed that the power to name the object resides in the understanding of its impression, the understanding that has the power of utterance.[32] Another cross connection in the poem: Ari (Asparuh) Leshnikoff was a Bulgarian first tenor in the legendary German ensemble Comedian Harmonists that performed during 1928–1934

[29] Daniel Albright: *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot and the Science of Modernism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, 7–29.

[30] Chapter 1 in James Joyce: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Project Gutenberg™ eBook, No. 4217, 2001, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4217/4217-h/4217-h.htm, accessed 9 January 2023.

[31] Sappho: Hymn to Aphrodite, trans. William Hyde Appleton, in W. H. Appleton (ed.): *Greek Poets in English Verse*, Cambridge, The Riverside Press, 1893, 118–119.

[32] John Sellars: *Stoicism*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006, 61–65.

as one of the most successful musical groups in Europe. The poem uses quotes from the lyrics of a song they performed, "The Way with Every Sailor" (1931). There are many more elements and a high number of dimensions that form them together in nearly three hundred lines. These constitute the universe of an otherverse poem which itself is a homage on the literary multiverse. Here some switches of codes in the poem:

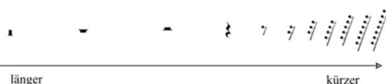
> […]
> Here she is—Sappho flying. Alone. No Icarus.
> No Daedalone, who mastered the art of navigating
> in the air, who adored cybernetics,
> who compiled the operation manual of our world,
> and wired in the beginning our social media posts.
> Today nobody knows exactly who is who
> and whether SMS or SOS is needed.
> Nobody knows about Sappho's flight and Daedalus' death,
> about Daedalus as a hybrid creature, a whale,
> who breathes in one language and swims in another,
> remembers in one and dreams in another,
> departs in the first and arrives in the other.
>
> She—a dead bird's body that flies.
> She—sun of Lesbos and sun of Andros,
> wife of a man from the Cyclades
> to whom she bore a daughter,
> Kerkylas from the isle of Andros,
> the κέρκος of Heracles.
> She—не е кукла, пише стихове, има дъщери,
> exiled to Etna,
> but everywhere the snow can turn into hail,
> always thin air, only the vastness touches the eyes.
> And she leaps into the blue.
> At least that's what we know from the storytellers.
> They tell a lot, but only these are certain:
> "before," "after," "despite," "because,"
> "instead of," "for," "nor," "yet" and other such
> prepositions and connective words
> between her and all those onlookers on Lefkada,
> where, bound to a tree or bird, she had to choose
> between the white of the cliffs and the white of the surf.
> The white belongs to her
> […]

Signs that regulate breathe in the rhythm of the poem but also bring a specific meaning are the "instructions" how to read Sappho:

Let's follow her: - u - x - | u u - u - x
therefore хайде! now let's sing:
Es blühen in allen Hafen Rosen! tralalalala
Das ist die Liebe der Matrosen, tralalalala
und πάρα δ' ἔρχετ ὤρα (para d' erchet ora)
vorbei geht die Zeit.
It's too late. Time goes by.
This too will pass.
Ποικιλόθρον multicolored, diverse.
And let us make it as she demands: see above.

Or, in another poem, remind of the three seconds that a brain recognizes as present (a quote from the end of the poem "Poetry and Philosophy of the Presence"):

I am a Mickey Mouse
a Celtic god with big ears who can
only hear[33]



In another poem,[34] I use signs for chords from the song "Once in a Lifetime" of the American rock band Talking Heads (active between 1975–1991 and considered by the National Public Radio in Washington D.C. as one of the 100 most important American musical works of the 20th century). The poem needs these chords so that the readers can feel the urgency for recognizing and formulating their own very personal questions in the present epoch of the Anthropocene. The readers are offered the grief and the shaking, the anger, the helplessness, the need to rethink life not through the music but rather through the dashes, signs and letters used for the chords when these are voiceless, music–less. They speak out the tender horror of our resistance, or sheer inability to change our behavior, so hostile to the future in the middle of the climate crisis.

[33] Sofronieva: *Multiverse*, 92.

[34] Tzveta Sofronieva: #andyoumayfindyourselflivinginashotgunshack, in Sofronieva: *Multiverse*, 197 and in Tzveta Sofronieva: *Anthroposzene*, Bielefeld, Edition Translingual, hochroth, 2017, 22.

And you may find yourself living in a shotgun shack,
and you may find yourself in another part of the world
with some TALKING HEADS
freestyling o n c e i n a l i f e t i m e.
And you may ask yourself: Am I right? Am I wrong?
And you may say to yourself: What have I done?
And you may tell yourself: It's all right.
And you may ask yourself: How do I know?
Everything's stuck together.

```
E  |5-5-5-2-5---------------|
B  |5-5-5--3--5---3--3-3--3-|
G  |--------------2--2-2--2-|
D  |------------------------|
A  |------------------------|
E  |------------------------|
```

```
A F#  F#m A
A F#  F#m A
A F#  F#m A
A F#  F#m A
      F#m A F#m
A A F#m   F#m A
F# G  F# G
F# G  F# G
```

What's the matter with you?
It's alright.
How do you know?

How do you know
which choice explodes in your soul,
which thunderstorm has passed within you
and how far it is?
Glaciers turn into salt,
a sand-cheek warms your hand
and clings to you.
How many grit wounds
on hands and faces, and on hearts
are yet to come?

Until the supercell turns into sand.
Same as it ever was.

This poem, which originates in the end of the 1980s, is from *Anthroposcene* published 2015 as a German book in the Hochroth Translingual Series and in English in the *Multiverse* collection in 2020. The editor of the Translingual Series, Johanna Domokos, invited me not only to give her the pluri- and translingual manuscript parts of which she already knew but showed an explicit interest in the development of the links I offered between literary multilingualism and the Anthropocene aesthetics. The word "Anthropocene" clearly captures something essential about our time, and Paul Crutzen said that coining it he hoped would be a warning to the world.[35] The concern is how we are going to adapt to life in a volatile world we have created and maintain human civilization and earth diversity.[36] *Anthroposcene* explores the current epoch in which translation between points of views, frames of thinking and life paradigms is urgently needed. It represents the literary multilingualism as an inherent necessity of today's literature in an innovative struggle for a language aesthetic that help us to create acceptable futures together. The quest for more language enables us to experience other narratives and questions the hyper-performative, self-staging, quantity- and image-ruled present. A fully foreign word makes us stop, brings the needed frustration and makes the urgency to make a choice and a relation clear. One can look to fill the gaps of non-understanding or ignore them, but one needs the awareness that they exist.

In the #thedirectorshoutsattheactors,[37] I use an Arabic word which I heard often repeated by children refuges from Syria and Afghanistan when they were telling stories about their disparate odysseys on the Balkan roads. The word is clear in my mind although I do not exactly know what it means but the misuse and abuse emanate from it. I place it right after the English "maximal use", the slippery slope between "the highest profit" and "the best application". In the poem I use a hotchpotch of Bulgarian in Cyrillic and Latin letters (Bulgarian language is written only in the Slavic alphabet) in grammatically incorrectly combined words. Simultaneously, I make a combination of the words "Ware" [vare] (goods), German, "вяра" (belief), Bulgarian, pronounced vjara or vera, "wahrer" [varer] (true) and the similar in sound first syllable of the German word "Vertrieb" (distribution) which second part is the German word "Trieb" (instinct, drive). Thus, it is revealed what the poem pays tribute to, and its connection to the eight specific meanings of the book title as a word, coined in the beginning of the book. Here I am citing parts of the poem:

[35] Elisabeth Kolebert: Foreword, in W. J. Kress – J. K. Stine: *Living in the Anthropocene*, Washington D.C., Smithsonian, 2017, x.

[36] Roy Scranton: *Learning to die in the Anthropocene*, San Francisco, City Light Books, 2015, 17.

[37] Sofronieva: *Anthroposzene*, 19, as well as in Sofronieva: *Multiverse*, 194.

[…] organize your brain structures
for maximal use.
استغلال
Distribute goods and truth
Ware veraмоята вяра в дните chestiti wahrer Ver–Trieb
This
Tribute
Dos, tres … uno!
But please,
PLEASE!
Use more symbols,
more images.
Not these words!

In another poem,[38] I use the Latin for the Bulgarian last line in a German or English language poem although it is not correct since the Bulgarian is not a language written in Latin letters. The line means "Happy Birthday" in Bulgarian and, to the contrary of Anthroposcene poems, in this poem I do not want the reader to stumble, but the opposite, to be able to read the sound with no pause. The poem demands a celebration, love without obstacles, joy from new sounds, comfort in non-understanding, no need for more than what exists.

X.
In what tongue shall I sing

I must celebrate the words, not only you
for everything that celebrates birth must be named
in order to exist
you are a puma because I call you so
I call you and you are
one of those strong graceful mountain cats
that remain true, hunt only when necessary
walk supple, majestic
and look straight into the eyes
after the Californian
I take the German words
I call your arms arms
and your home my home
in my mother tongue I lack words

[38] Tzveta Sofronieva: *selected affordable studio apartments*, trilingual German, Bulgarian and English by the poet and with the French translation by Jean Portante and photos by Yvan Goll, Berlin, hochroth, 2015, 40–42.

since in Bulgarian you firmly promised
to be, and everything
that already exists, resists naming
I want to celebrate you without words

Chestit Rozhden Den!

This poem is a part of the chapbook “selected affordable studio apartments” (2015) which celebrates the multilingual creativity in poetry. It consists of 12 poems written in German, translations of these into Bulgarian and English done by myself and translations of the poems into French by Jean Portante. They are inspired by the trilingual work of the French–German poet Yvan Goll (1891–1950), the titles of my poems are quotes from his poetry. This multilingual homage proves that in poetry 3 plus 3 can be 4 because it is in the languages he and I used, and every language is good for the heart’s labor.

VIII.
The Saga of our hidden hearts

all those places are gentrified today
selected affordable studio apartments
long-term rental Paris Auteuil, Brooklyn et al.
Rue Raffet rented on YouTube
Villa Emo in Padua everyone’s holiday home
interiors, facades, nearby shops
garages, hotels, mountains and squares
forgotten mirrors
photos in the archives
celebrate the peace doves
their flight between places and alphabets

you, Tristan Torsi, Isaac Lang, Jean de Saint-Dié
Ivan Lassang, Johannes Thor, Jean Langeville
Apollinaire’s son, Celan’s father, Geo Milev’s buddy
lightbringer Orpheus, weary Odysseus, Yvan sans Terre
talk to the doves, sitting on dull clouds
that drink in the landscapes of civilization
you take the sun seriously
Every season is good for the heart’s labor[39]
any time is good for celebrating those who build

[39] This line is a quote from Yvan Goll`s poems for Claire from “Poèmes D’Amour” (1930), in Yvan Goll, *Die Lyrik in vier Bänden*, Band II, Berlin, Argon, 1996, 114–115.

Using different languages in a poem when creating new words does not necessarily mean to mix words, alphabets, syntax and morphology. Each time it depends on the inner laws of the particular poem. In my "Adding a New Word to the Dictionary,"[40] the text demands not only the meaning of "scene" from Greek and English for the coined term *Anthroposcene* but also German adding "Anthropozähne", human Zähne [tsene] (teeth) which sounds similar to a plural of Anthropozän (Anthropocene) and the Bulgarian with the very important nuance of the word "the Anthropocene"—the article is in Bulgarian an added "a" at the end of the word, and the word then is also: антропоцена, the human "цена" [cena] (value). The multilingual coining of the word naturally unmasks the essence of the current epoch.

In the literary multiverse each "technic", every verse is depending on the specific laws and constants of the universe it belongs to, the universe of the particular poem. The poems do not simply mix known and unacquainted words but a riches of images, gestures, rhythms, comfort zones, traditional performances, known melodies, linguistic myths, literary contexts, words acquaintances, syntax brakes, scientific knowledge bits, knowledge patterns, emotional and literary belongings, humoristic zooming in and out, demasking artificial distances and offering means to deal with gaps. Over a dozen tongues meet, play, merge, flow, interfere and emerge as new spaces within the coined word "Anthroposcene" already in the beginning of the book:

kapusta Maria
Maria's cabbage
Kohl und Maria
Pusta Мария ех опустяла
зелева
зелена
зе-еее-ле Se-eee-le
cheeeese
cake Käse-kuchen
-füße a hegy lábánál
hegyes köröm hegyes mell
В полите на планината
politeia planinar
politena plan@a
oversized chromosome
Garten-Haar-Mücke
Kräuter Kröte Bäche
Bach Klang Wach—ach!
Maria Madonna mia[41]

[40] Sofronieva: *Multiverse*, 2020, 175.

[41] Sofronieva: *Anthroposzene*, and Sofronieva: *Multiverse*, 177.

If the poems in my book *A Hand full of Water* discuss, demand and protect the freedom of language,

We wander through language, we wander,
и не земя, вода на длан ни е нужна,
for we have learned to thirst.
We learned it from the water, the water
That knows no rest by day or night
Always picturing its flight, the water.

Language is like water.
In stasis it slips away,
in flow it finds its form,
feeds more than it drowns,
will not wash away stains,
is the reason shoots emerge.
[…][42]

the *Anthroposcene* poems redefine freedom itself and use this new attained freedom to set new questions, both social and aesthetic ones. They celebrate the literary multilingualism as a great means for getting acquainted with a variety of narratives and to become able to demythologize these narratives together. Such processes make us free and could help us to last as a species.

In a feature about the anthology *all dies hier, Majestät, ist deins: Lyrik im Anthropozän*, German literary critic Jan Wilm appreciated my poem "An der Küste, Durch Wind gestochen" (On the Shore, the Cell Harp)[43] as a developing new aesthetic of the Anthropocene era.[44] In this poem, I switch codes between German, Bulgarian, English, Russian and Japanese (although it is a monolingual poem with only two expressions in Japanese), but much stronger is the relation between these languages and theoretical physics that is fully interwoven into the poem and is presented with several switches itself. The used codes belong to a chosen set of historical and modern aesthetics elements. And I quote here a part of this poem in order to stress again on the continuity of attempts and possibilities that the literary multiverse offers for understanding the worlds we are born into and the worlds we create.

[42] Tzveta Sofronieva: *A Hand full of Water,* trans. Chantal Wright, in Sofronieva: *A Hand*, 43. German original in Tzveta Sofronieva: *Eine Hand voll Wasser,* Aschersleben, Edtion Zeitzeichen, UnArtIg Verlag, 2008, 14.

[43] Tzveta Sofronieva: *An der Küste*, in Anja Bayer – Daniela Seel (eds.): *all dies hier, Majestät, ist deins: Lyrik im Anthropozän,* Berlin, Kookbooks Verlag, Berlin 2016, 94.

[44] Jan Wilm: *Büchermarkt, Aus dem literarischen Leben*, Deutschland Radio, Köln, 14 March, 2017.

3
Unrepeatable is the charm
of each blossom and of each tsunami,
物の哀れ *mono-no aware*,
ephemeral beauty, cell-spell,
the dark of the pupils scatters into space,
the atoms never stop
playing the game of perfection.
The fear gathers splinters of hope,
rolls red suns and small shells,
autumn leaves and news from comets.
The human is perfect
only in the attempt to begin again.[45]

We live in an extremely interconnected world. The consciousness about the (im)possibility of mutual understanding is crucial. At the moment, it seems that only Zero (Nothing, Emptiness) or Endlessness exist, that there is only black and white with no nuances. All we have taken with us in the voyage towards a common multilingual thinking of humans resulting in a deeper mutual respect, better understanding and more creativity, seems insufficient. The dream of a harmonic merge between Homo Ludens, Homo Sapiens and Homo Anthropocenus feels much farther away than we hoped for. But the fact that we still insist on going on in Multiverse is the sheer proof that our hopes make sense. Sure, there are gaps and chasms in our communication all the time. There are plenty of languages we do not understand. Not only national languages; we need translation between points of views, frames of thinking, methods etc. we need translations of propaganda and misuse of language. Each day we stand in front of new world circumstances we need to translate to ourselves. Everyone needs to decide for themselves what to do in the situation. A chasm can be explored when one goes slowly down and then up. One could also fly over to escape a chasm, or can look for a bridge, or can build a bridge. Of course, a person can decide to ignore a chasm and hope that if one falls down in it, there will be a savior at hand. Other people may simply enjoy the view of a chasm and then step back far from its edge to stay safe. Or they could leave to tell stories about it. One could settle at a chasm to watch it every day while another would love to stay away and forget its existence. And some may even feel like eliminating it while filling it with earth. And so on. It is similar in poetry. One can look for all meanings or ignore some. Most important is that one is aware that they exist.

[45] Tzveta Sofronieva: *On the Shore, the Cell Harp*, in Sofronieva: *Multiverse*, 155–160.

The pitfall of humans seems to me to be in the circumstance that experience is non-hereditary. And that is why literature is so important. It allows us to sensitively observe, feel emotionally near and even grasp the experience of others. Poetry that embodies views, images and linguistic structures new to a reader can open a window or even a door to a new possible universe, and the readers are at least able to realize that we live in a multiverse. They can recognize their own possibilities and fears, they feel the need to take decisions and to order priorities and to identify borders and to deal with them. One of poets' tasks—if we accept that we have some and if we take the responsibility to have some—is to develop the language aiming at a better world, at fairness and humanism, at keeping human and nature rights, at a possibility of futures. There is no way to really improve the world or secure a future—there are only ways to attempt a better world and to attempt a possible future. Multilingual poetry helps not to despair and dive in desolation, but rather to keep on dreaming and going, *gestaltend*, and not feeling alone in space and time.

Poetry, in my view, and the multilingual one even more strongly, deals with the question of what it means to be a human being. Cosmologist George Ellis calls the multiverse an excellent opportunity to reflect "on the ultimate nature of existence: why we are here." and adds that it is "a delicate path to tread."[46] Who are we, why do we need love and why are we ready to kill, why do we accept and nurture the crime of torture and murder—both the eliminating of other humans and social groups, and the violence against the planet, polluting and destroying. And how can we find out who we are and why we are here and how we could avoid murder and self-destruction, if not multilingually? If not bringing together the manifold of emotions and thoughts and knowledge, and trying again and again to comprehend, and endure.

Literary multilingualism is an inherent necessity of today's literature in an innovative struggle for a language aesthetic that helps us to create acceptable futures together. It is far more than a direct or latent national–languages–mix in literary texts. The notion of language and the notion of the multiverse and the amazing diversity of multilingual strategies in literature have gone already for a long time far beyond this. I work multilingually true to the fact that, as Kandinsky says, the necessity gives birth to the form.[47] Each time anew, each time in its unique way.

[46] George F. R. Ellis: *Does the Multiverse Really Exist?*, *Scientific American*, 1 August 2011.

[47] Wassily Kandinsky – Franz Marc (eds.): *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, trans. Henning Falkenstein, Boston, artWorks/MFA Publications, 2005, 169; and Wassily Kandinsky: *Über das Geistige in der Kunst. Insbesondere in der Malerei,* München, R. Piper, 1912, https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.27758#0011, S. 9, 31, 35, 55, 68, 118.

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SABIRA STÅHLBERG'S "JOURNEY INTO LANGUAGES"

A Conversation with One of the Most Multilingual Poets in the World

Marianna Deganutti

Introduction

It does not happen every day that I have the chance to discuss the hidden side of literary multilingual practices. Most of the time, the way multilingual writers and poets use different languages in their works remains an unknown and unobserved process, which could only be reconstructed, or sometimes guessed *a posteriori*. This process is particularly interesting in an author such as Sabira Ståhlberg, who has adopted an extraordinary variety of multilingual strategies in her literary production, from latent forms in her initial work *Molnvandraren / Pilvivaeltaja* ('Cloud Wanderer', 2006),[1] which was parallelly written in Swedish and Finnish, to the manifest polyglot practices present in her latest poetry collections *Polyglotta Sabirica* (2015, translation *Polyglorica,* 2017)[2] or *Wan Sun* (2021), and mixed-style work *MoonSoon mišmaş* (2023).[3] Endowed with a multilingual repertoire which includes many dozens of languages belonging to disparate linguistic families, she clearly shows how productive literary multilingualism can be. In her works, code-switching is the norm rather than the exception, and it should not come as a surprise to find English written in Cyrillic script or Japanese *kanji* and Chinese *hanzi* flowing together. Sometimes, her multilingual practices become so intense that it is not even possible to identify a clear matrix or dominant language, and languages may simply freely and creatively intermingle. In this conversation, I invited her to open the door—at least a little—to her sophisticated multilingual cosmos.

Marianna Deganutti [MD]:
The number of writers using multiple languages or language/s other than their primary has remarkably increased over the last decades. This has certainly

1 Sabira Ståhlberg: *Molnvandraren* (Swedish) and *Pilvivaeltaja* (Finnish), Helsinki, Basam Books, 2006.

2 Sabira Ståhlberg: *Polyglotta Sabirica*, Varna, Lecti Book Studio, 2015. Sabira Ståhlberg: *Polyglorica.* Literary translation with Gruppe Bie into German, Bielefeld, Hochroth, 2017.

3 Sabira Ståhlberg: *Wan Sun*, Bokpil, Helsinki, Bokpil, 2021; Sabira Stahlberg: *MoonSoon mišmaş,* Helsinki, Colorit rf. 2023.

contributed to creating a new awareness and consciousness of multilingual writing. Alongside the "modernist trinity of Samuel Beckett, Joseph Conrad, and Vladimir Nabokov,"[4] in more recent times André Aciman, Edwidge Danticat, Andrei Makine, Yoko Tawada, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Milan Kundera, Irène Némirovsky, and Jorge Semprùn have also emerged, just to give a few names. This should not come as a surprise in the context of the globalization characterizing our era.[5] Mobility for writers means new challenges, but also new opportunities. For this reason, translingual[6] and exophonic[7] authors have increasingly attracted the attention of literary multilingualism scholars.

Typically, those writers have never heard other languages apart from their first language during their childhood, with the consequence that migrating into other tongues often becomes an experience characterized by a deep sense of cultural and linguistic loss and displacement. This is masterfully described by Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*[8] and even by Vladimir Nabokov, whose childhood was not perfectly monolingual. Nabokov declared that he had transited from his "natural idiom (…) untrammeled, rich, and infinitely docile Russian tongue' to 'a second–rate brand of English."[9]

Sabira, you are a migrant author as well, but you grew up with a lot of "*multi";* in a multicultural and multilingual family with a multiple minority background, and therefore you appear to come from a different category of writers. You remind me more of an author such as Elias Canetti, born in the Danube town of Ruse/Rustschuk/Ruschuk in Bulgaria. He had a minority background, too, and his childhood was characterized by remarkable multilingualism. The first children's song Canetti learned was in Spanish, the language spoken by his parents was German, his wet-nurse talked to him in Romanian, one of his playmates taught him Bulgarian, but he also came into contact with "Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Armenians, Gypsies [Roma]", etc.[10] What does it mean for a writer to start from a multilingual repertoire rather than from a single native or first language?

[4] Steven Kellman: Does Literary Translingualism Matter? Reflections on the Translingual and Isolingual Text, *Dibur Literary Journal* 7 (2019), 111.

[5] Jan Blommaert: *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

[6] Steven Kellman – Natasha Lvovich: *The Routledge Handbook of Literary Translingualism,* New York, Routledge, 2021.

[7] Susan Arndt – Dirk Naguschewski – Robert Stockhammer: *Exophonie: Anders–Sprachigkeit (in) der Literatur*, Berlin, Kadmos, 2007.

[8] Eva Hoffman: *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*, London, Vintage 1998.

[9] Vladimir Nabokov: *Lolita*, New York, Putnam, 1955, 318.

[10] Elias Canetti: *The Tongue Set Free: Remembrance of a European Childhood*, London: Granta, 2011, 7.

Sabira Ståhlberg [SaS]:
You cannot lose what you do not have. I never possessed a single identity and I am not sure if I really understand what it means. People who in their childhood—for family, background or other reasons—get the possibility to identify with a majority may have an easier early life when they are constructing a self–image and identity. But the moment they move outside this comfortable environment that their self–concept and emotional language are connected to, they stumble straight into the wild without carrying even a pocket knife.

In contrast, those like me who grew up hopping between languages and cultures know how to manage in the jungle. We carry a rucksack full of equipment and food which we constantly fill up. Yes, we were enormously challenged as children and had to deal with all kinds of more or less dangerous creatures: languages, cultures, minorities, majorities, codes, concepts of linguistic and cultural purity, nationalism, racism and xenophobia, verbal and physical violence, identities, behavioral models, expectations that we function as monolinguals (or "everybody else"), and deny our multilingualism, etc.

As adults we continue to be challenged by the surroundings, and also challenge ourselves into creating further strategies for communication, adaptation, and ultimately, survival. So when we move into a new world, the technology aspect is clear and tested. We do not need to spend valuable energy and time discovering how to function. There are no fears and no foreigners. We simply walk in, sit down on the sofa and ask what's for lunch.

Being multilingual and multicultural is the most natural state of being for me and has been so for many years, but in my childhood the situation was totally different. In comparison with Elias Canetti, I grew up in a time and space where tolerance temperatures had fallen below zero. I was not accepted by any of the minority or majority groups I "ought to" have the right to belong to because of my family heritage and my linguistic and cultural competences. I was imprisoned in an in-between world by people, schools, authorities and rigid attitudes allocating everybody into standardized but absurd categories. It was a dark and menacing no man's land between the barbed-wire boundaries of different groups, and a schizophrenic situation. In my own view, I belonged everywhere and I worked hard to perfect languages and codes—only to be rejected, again and again.

I did not turn into a hybrid, but became a conglomerate, and I went into language hypermode. I developed multiple language and culture competences, but they were distinct and had their limitations; still I switched between them effortlessly, according to the situation. But I felt trapped by the linguistic and cultural rules I forced myself to follow so that people around me would not find me even more exotic than they already thought I was. When other kids found out about Santa Claus, I had long stopped believing that adults could deal with the aggression and bullying I encountered daily.

Before learning to speak any intelligible languages that adults could possibly understand, I communicated fluently and freely in an unknown language with my teddy bear. She spoke to me, too. Very early on I created my own world into which I could retire when things got rough. This world grew with me. When I learned to read simultaneously in a couple of languages, my private language disappeared from use, but I can still hear echoes of it in my mind and sometimes it appears in my dreams. After diving into literature, every language and every book I read not only enlarged my world, but also provided me with additional identities, or *aspects* of my fluid, malleable and multifaceted identity, for those who prefer to see identity as one single entity.

This feeling of elasticity of who I am increased when as a teenager I started travelling on my own through Europe and Asia, and it continues to be with me as a multiple migrant, scholar and writer. Researching multilingualism and multiculturalism, an incurable curiousness, a strong drive to want to know and do things my own way, deep talks with people who are in similar situations, writing and more writing have made me more courageous and capable of dealing with the past and the present; I speak publicly about difficult issues and work to support endangered and minority languages and cultures. I have also written books about these topics, among them *Multicoloured book* (2020),[11] which in Easy Language discusses migration and challenges a cultural mover might encounter, and *Multicoloured language* (2020),[12] which explains language learning and multilingualism in simple terms.

A child is trapped in categories and specific social situations, but an adult can choose where and how to live. An important aspect of being me is that I do a lot of things which seem disconnected, and I work in many fields. This is utterly confusing for people and authorities who still insist on knowing my mother tongue, ethnic background, race, etc. "Multilingual" and "multicultural" is my definition of myself, but as yet, forms lack such boxes to tick. Still, I can choose at any given moment who I am, in which language and how I speak and write, and how I communicate. I am free.

MD:

One of the few analyses written about how to better identify the difference between translingual and endemically multilingual writers is by Penelope Gardner–Chloros. By referring to Alsatian writers and indirectly to other borderland and minority-language contexts, such as the Caribbean, French-speaking Canada, and many parts of Africa, Gardner–Chloros affirms that: "Whereas in 'translingual' writers the emphasis is on the new possibilities

[11] Sabira Ståhlberg: *Multicoloured book*, Helsinki, Bokpil, 2020, https://villa.bokpil.eu/en/multicoloured-book/, accessed 20 October 2022.

[12] Sabira Ståhlberg: *Multicoloured language*, Helsinki, Bokpil, 2020, https://villa.bokpil.eu/en/multicoloured-language/, accessed 20 October 2022.

offered by using a new language, in multilingual writers the question is rather why some things are written in one language and some in another, and why switches occur where they do."[13]

Language choice, in other words, seems to be one of the most productive tools to approach works written by multilingual authors. By language choice, Gardner–Chloros does not simply refer to the preference of one language or a set of languages over the others, but also to the way tongues are arranged in a text. "Far from being a random matter of momentary inclination,"[14] the language choice is the result of an elaboration dictated by multiple factors, even when it does not appear as such. Around the language choice, as suggested by Kremnitz,[15] rotate endless objective and subjective elements, spanning the writer's linguistic and cultural background, the political context, the presence or absence of a determined literary tradition, stylistic and aesthetic matters, language ties,[16] personal motivations, etc.

Given that your linguistic repertoire includes dozens of languages—including English, German, French, Finnish, Swedish, Romanian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, Tatar, Mongolian, and many others—language choice is necessarily at the core of your writing process. How do you pick the languages at your disposal when you write? Is language choice more of an unconscious or conscious process?

SaS:

My language choices are both conscious and subconscious, and the choices are in my view correctly defined by Kremnitz as "endless". Often I decide to use a specific language, but understand why only after I have made the choice—sometimes even weeks or months later. I also experiment consciously; in *Wan Sun* (2021) I used aspects of language learning strategies as the basis for the "configuration" of the poems. A serious question for internal debate that comes up regularly is: is what I write too complicated and baffling for the reader, academic, or for the poor student who gets the task to decode this entangled knot which is my complex poem or text? I try to keep a balance, but my direction is clear. I care much less about the reader when writing multilingually today than before, but I do provide a translation. I have come a long way, from my first novel *Molnvandraren / Pilvivaeltaja* (2006), written parallelly in two

[13] Penelope Gardner-Chloros: On the impact of sociolinguistic change in literature: the last trilingual writers in Alsace, *The Modern Language Review*, 108 (2013), 1101.

[14] Jan Fishman: Domains and the relationship between micro- and macro-sociolinguistics, in J. J. Gumperz – D. Hymes (eds.): *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, New York, Rinehart & Winston, 1972, 437.

[15] Georg Kremnitz: *Mehrsprachigkeit in der Literatur: Ein kommunikationssoziologischer Überblick*, Wien, Praesens-Verlang, 2015.

[16] Gustavo Pérez Firmat: *Tongue Ties: Logo-eroticism in Anglo-Hispanic Literature*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

languages, through to writing the same story in four languages at the same time (*Dog Weather on the Black Sea*, 2014). At the beginning of my multilingual poetry writing, in *Polyglotta Sabirica* (2015), I chose to mix mostly European languages in order to make it easier for the readers, but with *Wan Sun* (2021), I embarked on a road which brings the reader closer to the linguistic world which is natural for me. My next books are even more challenging.

When I start to write a new multilingual book, I have a general idea about it, but in the following weeks, the contents move back and forth between languages. I write short texts and jot down thoughts. Slowly, one by one, the jigsaw puzzle pieces start falling into place. My brain works 24/7: sometimes I dream of a text, often I watch the text in my mind when half asleep or daydreaming, I get ideas and decide on languages when reading, cooking, walking, talking with someone about a completely unrelated topic, listening to or playing music, and in general going about my daily life. A finalized book is the result of numerous days living with, within and outside the text, making choices and clarifying ideas, letting thoughts, fleeting impressions, memories and all kinds of other elements my life is full of float through or sink into the writing. Some elements and languages are caught in the sieve at certain points and remain in the text, others might stay for a while but are then flushed out, while several just flow in and out.

This process cannot be defined or categorized in simple terms, nor do I believe it can be ever fully described. Although I am doing my "scholarly homework" observing myself, taking notes, saving different versions of texts, etc., the whole multilingual writing process remains elusive and I have difficulties breaking it down into analyzable pieces. As a scholar, I am intrigued by this multilevel process and I am still trying to map it out. As a writer, I accept that I cannot define exactly everything I do, and that I do not need to. Some language choices I can justify, but there are many for which I must invent an explanation. It is not necessarily the real reason for choosing a specific language; it is only for the record or to provide an answer when someone asks.

If you would follow me just for one day and record all my language activities, you would find that I am constantly moving between languages (usually a dozen or so per day, with daily variations), mixing, coding and decoding, inventing or laughing at language jokes and puns, playing with words which have different meanings in different languages, rhyming, reading books in several languages (I read at least half a dozen books in parallel), watching films, participating in seminars or conferences, checking words or structures in dictionaries or grammars, listening to the radio from anywhere in the world, and so on. I watch and listen to languages I do not understand just for fun and the enjoyment of listening to the melody of them, or because I am interested in a film, book or something else expressed in a specific language. All of this is normal for me and for lots of people around me. In my view, there is no

distinction between "my" languages and "other" languages. All are simply languages and they offer different possibilities for communication in speech and writing.

Today, when I choose languages for a poem, my decision is no longer determined by which languages I know and use. I am way past that. The contents, the message I want to convey, music, sounds and visual aspects are far more important. I read the poems out loud and change words or forms if the rhythm or sounds feel wrong. I have developed an intuition for what feels "right", and I regularly overrule my internal editor, a product of years of schooling, who says I should stick to the rules. Call it gut feeling, call it creativity—the fact is that the choices live and change until the book is published. Even then, until I forget what I have written (and that happens quickly, I do not hold on to texts), I will continue processing and chewing the poems.

The contents of a poem or a text often give logical—at least for me—choices of languages and scripts. This "logic" is not necessarily clear to the reader, even when I discuss world politics or ecology, because it is usually based on my personal experiences, memories, interests, connections between things I am thinking, reading, dreaming, discussions with others or myself, the topics and questions floating around in my life at the moment, or any idea appearing in a split second when writing or editing the poem. I might start out with the choice of one language and a script, but as the poem grows and develops, suddenly it becomes clear that another language, script or a mixed word or phrase would suit it better. It is an insight, like lightning from nowhere; yet I know it comes from the folds in my brain. If I start thinking, I might find some of the connections which led to this sudden revelation.

MD:

This whole process reminds me in a way of James Joyce's seventeen intense years spent writing his final work, *Finnegans Wake*.[17] He also tapped into all sorts of sources from dictionaries, songs and lullabies to newspapers and books, taking advantage of his conversations with friends, students, colleagues and family members, random encounters, people talking in the street, etc. Another coincidence is also that Joyce made the most of what I would define as an extended linguistic repertoire which included the languages he knew—he was fluent in six or seven tongues—as much as the tongues he only knew partially or very superficially. Scholars identified up to seventy languages, if not more, in his last book.

This is to say that the idea of linguistic repertoire is certainly composed of the 'set of competences' at the speaker's disposal, but at the same time it is also

[17] James Joyce: *Finnegans Wake*, London, Faber & Faber, 1975.

determined by the resources they do not have.[18] Literary scholars usually expect writers to employ the languages they master or they know well enough to be used in a literary text. It would be strange to doubt Tolstoy's French skills in *War and Peace* or Hemingway's Spanish in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.[19] What could be the advantages of using an unknown language, or a tongue, in other words, for which "there is no semantic content to pay attention to"?[20]

SaS:
I would not call such languages "unknown". That would mean to push them far away and foreignize them. There are languages I am not (yet) acquainted or connected with, in fact the majority of the thousands of languages in this world... To me languages are like people: some people are close, we have been walking together for years. Others I only know slightly and think I understand, but getting to know them better, I realize how much more there is to find out. Some I do not know (yet), but we connect immediately upon meeting—or maybe not (yet). I do not agree that semantic content can be ignored—if a writer does not pay attention to it, the resulting text will be shoddy. At any given moment, independently of my degree of understanding of a given language, I am aware of the semantic content or strive to find it out, even if I want to use only one word in its basic form.

The traditional way in literature, for Tolstoy and many others, is to put in a few words or a phrase in another language and (sometimes) provide a translation. For my novel *Molnvandraren / Pilvivaeltaja* (2006), I had to invent another way due to the publisher's fears of unreadability. I wrote the novel parallelly in Swedish and Finnish, but I had to hide the multilingual elements in the Tatar–language names of characters, and in zero code-switching[21] reflecting Tatar, Russian, Chinese and other language speakers talking in the book. The text looks monolingual, but it is in fact multilingual in structure and flavor. I have since discovered in my research that many multilingual writers take this "monolingual" road, hiding their multilingualism in plain sight to make it visible for those who are capable of seeing it. Although at the time

[18] Brigitta Busch: Expanding the Notion of the Linguistic Repertoire: On the Concept of Spracherleben – The Lived Experience of Language Applied Linguistics, *Applied Linguistics*, 38 (2015), 17.

[19] Lev Tolstoy: *WAR AND PEACE: ORIGINAL VERSION*, trans. Andrew Bromfield, New York, Ecco, 2007. Ernest Hemingway: *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.

[20] Marjorie Lorch – Paul Meara: How people listen to languages they don't know, *Language Sciences* 11 (1989), 343–353.

[21] Johanna Domokos: *Endangered Literature: Essays on Translingualism, Interculturality, and Vulnerability*, Budapest, L'Harmattan–Károli Books, 2018. Johanna Domokos: Multilingualism in the Contemporary Finnish literature (Suomen kirjallisuus) (2020), in J. Domokos – J. Laakso (eds.): *Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Finno–Ugric literatures 2*, Vienna, LIT Verlag, 2020, 39–60.

of writing the novel I protested against the limitations, I learned the method and now find it great fun to hide multilingual language in anything I write officially monolingually, including fiction, Easy to Read books, and academic texts.

When I use a language from a language family or cultural sphere I am not well acquainted with, instead of limiting myself to existing competences or resources, I use several strategies to find out more. I get to know it to any degree I decide through the study of grammar and vocabulary, or I pick up a book and try to read; listen to speech or watch videos to get a taste of the language; catch a couple of words or phrases I happen to take a liking to or which have a meaning for me for some reason, in any grammatical form; play with elements from the language and transform them into something else for a specific purpose; and create bridges between it and those languages which are already walking with me, discovering possibilities of expression and meaning fields in the language through comparisons, (mis)understandings, semantic and syntactic exploration, etc. I do not need seventeen years to write a polyglot book with dozens of languages; from idea to publication just a few months are enough.

The cost of time invested in these discoveries is far outweighed by the benefit of the result. I get the satisfaction of having explored a new part of the language jungle. I was born too late to become an explorer of uncharted territories—most of the world existed on maps when I discovered that I had a liking for adventures—but language expeditions are highly enjoyable. My writings, especially my multilingual poetry, should be seen as travel narratives of my linguistic journeys.

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DESERT/ED TRAIL

A Journey into Unknown, Forgotten and Lost Languages in Eurasia and Multilingual Writing

Sabira Ståhlberg

Following desert/ed trails of ancient and modern languages and writing systems, the multilingual author, who is also a language nomad and researcher, embarks on a literary-scholarly journey in the Heart of Eurasia. Paths and traces of unknown, forgotten and lost languages, scripts and codes are discovered; existing knowledge and understanding of their background, present roles, connections and heritage are explored; and processes from thriving and spreading to fading into the shadows and finally being lost in the desert sands of history are mapped out. Scientific and poetic methods, as well as graphic expressions, language mixing, script experiments, references and inferences are used to awaken memories and insights. The journey goes far beyond the aesthetic and linguistic levels discernible through ordinary literary analysis. It challenges the readers to look for their own language trails, use of codes and multiple switches in the past and present.

Desert

Lost in the дъст [dust]

Shifting shamol [wind]:
needles of qum [sand]
төөлөр [*töölör*, camels] snort and stray
dunes drift over the yol [trail]
эргэж хар! [*ergej khar*, turn back], turn around
a moment ago we had таърих [*ta'rix*, history] –
now it is lost in the дъст [dust]

Figure 1. Poem Lost in the дъст
Languages: English, Uzbek, Kazak, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Modern Mongolian, Tajik, Bulgarian Cyrillic transcription of English

Gobi. Desert. Sunset.

When a marvelous red and golden sunset in the Gobi Desert shattered the world I had known until then, I fell in love with deserts. My dictionary had contained only archipelagos, sjöar [Swedish, 'lakes'], green fields and lush and deep metsiä [Finnish, 'forests']. Çüldä [Tatar, 'in the desert'], at the horizon where the intensely blue Himmel [German, 'sky'] and the endless yellow sands blend, tous les mots [French, 'all the words'] failed me. My future was sealed. When Хувь заяа [Khuvi zayaa, Mongolian, 'Fate'] breathed a hot wind in my face, it put a тамга [tamga, Mongolian, 'seal'] on my forehead. My life trail became irrevocably intertwined with that vast sea of sand and the Heart of Eurasia.

Clouds. Darkness. Storm.

The silence, tystnaden [Swedish], hiljaisuus [Finnish]. The stillness, ümsümlik [Turkmen, 'silence, stillness']. The singing and wailing wind, buran [originally Persian word, widely in use in Central Asia]. The lonely bushes and trees, agaçlar [Tatar]. Then nothing but Heaven 天 [tiān, Chinese, 'sky, heaven'] and Earth, maa [Finnish]. Yet I learned to have fear, Angst [German], of the desert, too. When the sky, le ciel [French] turns dark and a storm brews, or dust clouds tower in the sky—lose no time, just run for shelter! It seems that the desert, 砂漠 [sabaku, Japanese] does not change, but at the same time everything, всё [vse, Russian] in the desert 사막 [samag, Korean] is in a process of transformation. The desert never ceases to surprise.

Heart.of.Eurasia.

The Heart of Eurasia hides many secrets [English, French] in its deserts. Where is this Heart of Eurasia? you might ask. Parts of it has been called Inner Asia, Zentralasien [German, 'Central Asia'], Центральная Азия [Tsentral'naya Aziya, Russian], 中亞 [Zhōngyà, Chinese] or Orta Asya [Turkish]. Yet the Heart of Eurasia I speak about is an enormous region without clear borders. For millennia it was the vibrant center and fertile soil for all kinds of човешки [choveshki, Bulgarian, 'human'] encounters, linguistic, cultural, social, economic, political, and all kinds of other activities. This Heart, yöräk [Tatar], expands and retracts throughout tarih [Turkic, 'history']. Like a human heart, καρδιά [kardiá, Greek] in the body, it is the essential organ in the blood circulation system, ratio [Latin, 'system'] of the Eurasian continent. The Heart has pumped life, viața [Romanian] into innumerable cultures through its arteries, and the veins have brought back new impulses from the fringes.

Marginalized. Forgotten. Lost.

During the past two hundred years, however, the ever–shifting sands of world politics have sent the Heart of Eurasia into the margins of स्मृति [smṛti, Sanskrit, 'memory'; phonetic reference to Bulgarian смърт, smurt; Russian смерть, smert', 'death']. Its history has been forgotten, ignored and manipulated since the eighteenth century, in the name of nationalism and expansion of ambitious empires during the so-called Great Game. But even modern state borders cannot hide the fact that the whole of Eurasia has always been and continues to be deeply interconnected. Visible and invisible зам [zam, Mongolian, 'trails'; phonetic reference to German zusammen, pronounced tsu*zám*en, 'together'], have been created and lost again since the first humans stepped on the Eurasian continent. The same is true for языки [yazyki, Russian, 'languages'; phonetic reference to Turkish yazık, 'pity'], scripts 書寫系統 [shūxiě xìtǒng, Chinese, 'writing systems'; phonetic reference to Japanese 寿司, sushi] and uhingaro [Maori, 'codes'; phonetic reference to English zero, as in zero code-switching]. Several languages and writing systems have left traces, but many more are buried forever in the shifting sands of the deserts.

Desertification. Salination. Silence.

Today deserts are growing with alarming speed. Historical records tell, and archaeological discoveries show, that where now only desert winds howl there were many flourishing towns and oasis settlements in earlier times, some even until recently. Climate change contributes to the desiccation of desert border areas, but the main reason is exploitation and mismanagement by humans. There is life in the deserts, and humans live in deserts. Polyglot oases, waterholes and karez [underground irrigation tunnels; originally a Persian word used in Central Asian desert regions] are not that rare, if you know where to look.

But when the salt is drawn from below the surface and forms crusts, few life forms can survive in the area. This happens to human societies when one language is enforced and others are suppressed and oppressed. To survive, to be resilient and cope with changes and challenges, human societies must have variety and diversity, not only biodiversity in the surrounding environment, but also linguistic, cultural, economic, political, social and thinking diversity. Monolingualization is the salination of society, and salination is the transformation of a living, varied and pulsating habitat into a silent, white field of death.

Diversity. Freedom. Nomad.
The desert set me free. I had been brought up to live a standard settled city life. But the singing, whistling, silent sands called me with endless tunes, from whispering about the longing in my heart for the world beyond the horizon, to roaring about my restlessness which would not let me sit down and enjoy the security of limitations. In the desert I realized that I am a nomad. A nomad does not necessarily change geographical location all the time, but mentally the nomad is constantly shifting and adjusting in all aspects of life and thinking. In Eurasia, nomadic lifestyles can be traced back for at least some 2,000 years. They have changed in many ways over the millennia, but their basis for subsistence have been animal herding, hunting, gathering, hands–off (extensive subsistence) agriculture, trade and robbery.

As a language nomad, I own a herd of languages which I take care of and keep healthy and in good condition. But I also hunt up and gather words and expressions when needed, or when I get interested. For a nomad it is of utmost importance to be able to communicate: survival might depend on language use. Therefore a language nomad plants language seeds and lets them grow by themselves, harvesting when the time comes and the languages are required. The nomad also trades with languages, exchanging, learning, picking up new words and expressions, and sometimes borrowing or stealing language from someone else. A language is not like goods, however; it does not diminish or disappear when stolen. Language is a commodity which expands the more it is distributed and used.

CENTER

Тэнгэр [*Tenger*, Heaven, Sky]

Pick up a чулуу [*chuluu*, stone], my friend
Put it on the овоо [*ovoo*, heap]
Walk around гурван удаа [*gurvan udaa*, three times]
Тэнгэр [*Tenger*, Heaven, sky] is open:
Қауіпсіз саяхат! [*Qawipsiz sayaxat!* Safe journey!]

Figure 2. Poem Тэнгэр
Languages: English, Modern Mongolian, Kazak

Let's start our journey in the Heart of Eurasia. Our aim is to discover trails of unknown, forgotten, lost languages and their connections for the past few millennia in this vast region. As the kervanbashi [Turkic], the caravan leader, I have decided to follow the tracks of writing systems. There are probably hundreds of languages which never were written and we know almost nothing about them. We know very little about many of the written languages as well, but at least the scripts provide some information about language contacts, encounters, influences and development.

Obo. Stones. Transformation.

In the center of the world stands a sacred pile of stones, овоо [*obo, ovoo,* Mongolian]. This is the place where we start our journey. We put a stone on the heap and walk around it three times, connecting with the supreme spirit or sky god, *Tängri, Tangra* or *Tenger* [Turkic, Mongolian; compare Hungarian *tenger* 'sea'] to ensure a safe journey.

Old. Turkic. Runes.

There are also other significant stones in the steppes and deserts of Eurasia than ovoos. Stones think and move slowly if left to their own devices. They transform so quietly that a multitude of human generations have to pass before our eyes can distinguish a change. Yet when humans decide to leave their marks on a stone, a new world might open up to later generations. The Old Turkic script or runes (6th ~ 10th centuries) are lost and forgotten now, but more than a thousand years ago they were used in a vast area stretching from the Lake Baikal in eastern Sibir [several Turkic languages, 'Siberia'] to 匈牙利 [Xiōngyálì, Chinese, 'Hungary'; reference: the first character is the same as for Huns, 匈奴 Xiōngnú] in Europe. The oldest records of any Turkic language are written in these runes.

The stone inscriptions found mostly in modern Mo'g'uliston [Uzbek, 'Mongolia'] and Казакстан [Kazak, 'Kazakstan'] are valuable resources for the history of the Heart of Eurasia, because they look at the world from inside the Heart. The majority of sources about the region are reports on wars, conflicts and diplomatic contacts, descriptions of so-called barbarians (in Chinese there are several classes of foreigners), documented by the settled peoples around the Heart of Eurasia, or travel narratives by Europeans and Americans dating mostly from the nineteenth century. They all look at the region from the outside, 從外部 [cóng wàibù, Chinese].

Figure 3. Obo
Scripts: Old Turkic, Proto-Bulgarian, Khazar, Hungarian–Székely rovás (Hungarian, 'runic') script
Photograph and artwork by Sabira Ståhlberg

Hun. Turkic. Reconstruction.
What about the Huns? you might ask. Were they not earlier than the ancient Turks? Certainly. A people possibly identified as Huns was supposedly observed around 120 BCE in the present-day province of Gansu, China. A people called Huns appeared in Europe in the fourth century CE, but their language and origins are scarcely recorded. Was Hunnic a Turkic or an Indo–European language? Nobody knows, but there are lots of hypotheses. The historical linguistic reconstruction of many Eurasian languages is still in progress. The inscriptions in Old Turkic point to a language of the eastern Turkic group. In the western Turkic branch, scholars usually group Hunnic together with Onogur or Ogur (5th ~ 7th centuries), Bulgar (Danube "Lesser" Bulgaria, ? ~ 10th century, and Volga "Greater" Bulgaria, ? ~ 14th century), Khazar (? ~ 13th century), and чăвашла [chavashla, Chuvash, 'Chuvash language']. Only Chuvash exists today and is spoken mainly in Chuvashia along the Volga River.

Memory. Cuman. Codex.

Entering a new region, every caravan needs to gather information; its survival might depend on the collected news. The local inhabitants can usually offer toponyms, environmental knowledge, memories, experiences, and stories. Yet, not only stones but also empires leave memories which can remain alive for centuries. The Turkic language of the Cumans (? 11th ~ 18th centuries) has überlebt [German, 'survived'] mainly in what is now called the *Codex Cumanicus* [Latin]. It contains Christian religious Texte [German, 'texts'], riddles, and a dictionary prepared in Latin script by missionaries and others who had an Interesse [German, 'interest'] in communicating and trading with the mächtige [German, 'powerful'] Cumans.

Long after the Cuman-Kipchak federation was dissolved during the Mongol Eroberung [German, 'conquest'] in the thirteenth century, the area north of the Karadeniz [Turkish, 'Black Sea'] from the Dunărea [Romanian, 'Danube'] River to Kazakstan was called Cumania or the Kipchak steppe. The Cumans are now mostly forgotten and häufig [German, 'often'] left out of national histories, but they had an enormous influence over, and formed the history of vast territories for several centuries, in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, and far into Asia. Still today there are places carrying the Cuman name in central, eastern and southeastern Europe, Caucasus, Turkey, China, and Central Asia. To the Kipchak branch belong many modern Turkic languages: Kazak, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Bashkir, and several Siberian and Caucasian languages.

WEST

Yol [Way, Road]

Where is the [illegible] [path]?
Lost in the ساند [sand].
Where is the [illegible] [water]?
Dried up in the σαν [sun].
Yol bolsun. [May there be a road.]

Figure 4. Poem Yol
Languages: English, Sogdian, Persian, Manchu and Greek transcription of English; Modern Uygur Latin script

Modern research connects the Old Turkic runes with Sogdian, Persian Pahlavi and Aramaic scripts originating in the eastern Mediterranean region and present–day Middle East. The Aramaic script was itself an adaptation of an older Phoenician script. Several scripts in Eurasia are supposed to have developed from cursive versions of the Aramaic script: Old Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Syriac, Palmyrene, Mandaic, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic and Brāhmī scripts all have their roots in the ancient script used some 2,500 years ago. Some versions traveled eastwards and changed into new forms: Sogdian, Manichaean, Bactrian, Parthian, Tocharian, Khoresmian, and Khotanese (Saka), all now forgotten. Another branch is still alive: Among the dozens of Brāhmī script child systems in use today are Devanāgarī, Tamil and Bengali, and many South and Southeast Asian scripts, such as Nepalese, Thai, Khmer and Javanese. Arabic script spread in parallel with Islam, and it has been used and is still in use for several languages in the Heart of Eurasia.

Silk. Road. Myth.

How did an ancient Aramaic alphabet find its way into the Heart of Eurasia? Through the Silk Road? you might ask. No. There never was any Silk Road, 丝绸之路 [Sīchóu zhī lù, Chinese Simplified]. It is a myth and in modern times also a propaganda tool. A figurative speech about silk roads, *Seidenstraßen* [German] in plural, was coined by Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877. It was just an illustration. He knew very well that silk was only a small part of all the various goods transported, bought and sold throughout the Eurasian continent. Silk and similar luxury goods reached Europe mainly through many middlemen before the age of ship transport. There never was one road, but countless paths and tracks caravans could choose to follow at any point in time. These paths could disappear at any moment if a sandstorm deleted them or dunes shifted, and it would be as if they had never existed at all. If there had been a road, why would the Hungarian–British traveler Sir Aurel Stein's (1862–1943) Turki (Uygur) friends wish him *Yol bolsun* [Uygur], 'may there be a road'?

Herd. Safety. Explore.

Simple explanations are always more attractive than complicated ones, but for a language nomad nothing is straightforward. There are so many aspects to consider. In my capacity as caravan leader I must carefully explore the routes beforehand and listen to the news of other travelers. Where can water, suw [Turkmen] be found? Where do robbers attack caravans? Where can the traders and pilgrims dispose of their goods for the best prices, and buy new goods to finance their further journey?

As a language nomad, I always bring my herd of languages with me. It would be easy to just rely on my sheep, goats, donkeys, atlar [Tatar, 'horses'] and

camels, and to write in languages I have studied and pretend to "know" in the traditional sense of maktab [Uzbek, 'school'] teaching and language certifications. If I choose to remain in my comfort zone, my writing will consist only of meat, Fleisch [German] and süd [Azerbaijani, 'milk']. I need something more, so I must cast safety aside and explore, experiment and experience.

Old Uygur. Mongolian. Manchu.

The Sogdian script spread with traders to the Heart of Asia and developed into the Old Uygur script (8th ~ 17th centuries). Instead of being written from right to left like its parent, the Old Uygur script ran in the Chinese style from top to bottom. Its child system, the Traditional Mongolian script (~ 12th century), followed these top–down lines. The lines are read starting from left on the page, however; in Chinese, the first line is on the right. Some Mongolian languages are still written in the traditional script. The Traditional Mongolian script was used as the basis also for Manchu (~ 17th century), a Tungusic language related to other eastern and southern Siberian languages, among them Evenki. Manchu was the primary language of the last dynasty in China, the Qing (1636–1912). Manchu was gradually replaced by Mandarin Chinese in the Qing state and is presently critically endangered.

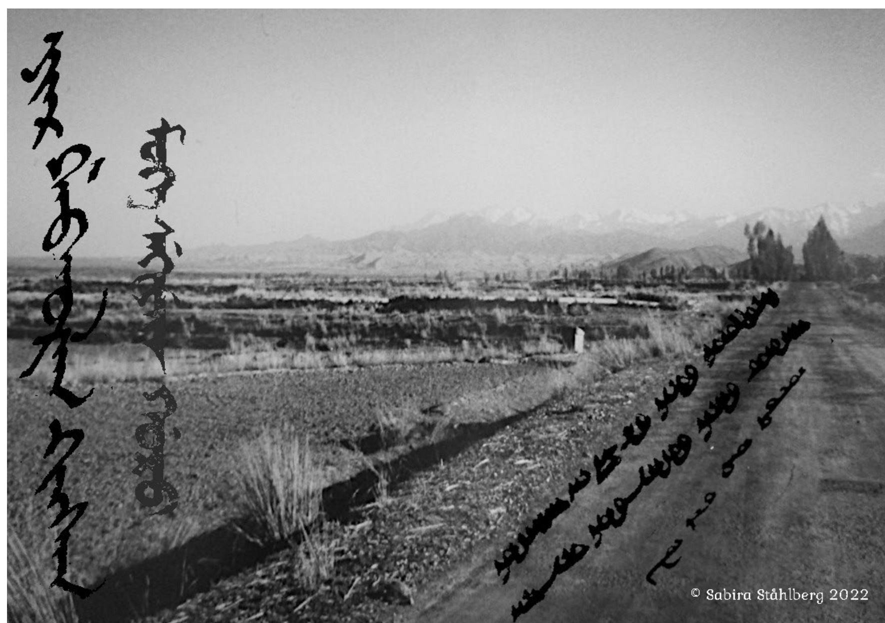

Figure 5. Road
Scripts: Sogdian, Old Uygur, Traditional Mongolian, Manchu
Photograph and artwork by Sabira Ståhlberg

South

Fata Morgana

Seek the सत्य [*satya*, truth]
like 물 [*mul*, water] in the desert
– yet when ᠲᠠ [*ta*, you] find it
you might not be able to བཏུང [*btung*, drink] it

Figure 6. Poem Fata Morgana
Languages: Italian, English, Sanskrit, Korean, Traditional Mongolian, Tibetan

With traders and Buddhist and other religious mendicants, pilgrims and teachers, South Asian writing systems walked into the Heart of Eurasia. Influential multicultural and multilingual centers like Gandhāra, which flourished some two millennia ago in today's north Pakistan and Afghanistan, were popular and bustling destinations for those who wanted to buy and sell, for faith tourism and for all kinds of other visitors. In the Heart of Eurasia much experimenting took place, and several writing systems and styles were often used before one script was adopted for a specific language at a specific time, as the rich library found in the Dukhan [Uygur Latin script] 敦煌 Dunhuang [Chinese] caves show.

The Tibetan script became fixed only in the eleventh century and it is supposed to be based on the Gupta script, which in turn originated in the Brāhmī script. The Gupta script gave birth not only to the Tibetan, but also to many other scripts in South Asia. The Tibetan script is now used throughout Tibet and the Himalayan region for several languages, including Sikkimese, Ladakhi, Dzongkha in Bhutan, among Tibetan–speakers in the northern Amdo region called Qinghai by the Chinese, and in the province of Gansu. Mongolian was also written sometimes in Tibetan script in the thirteenth century.

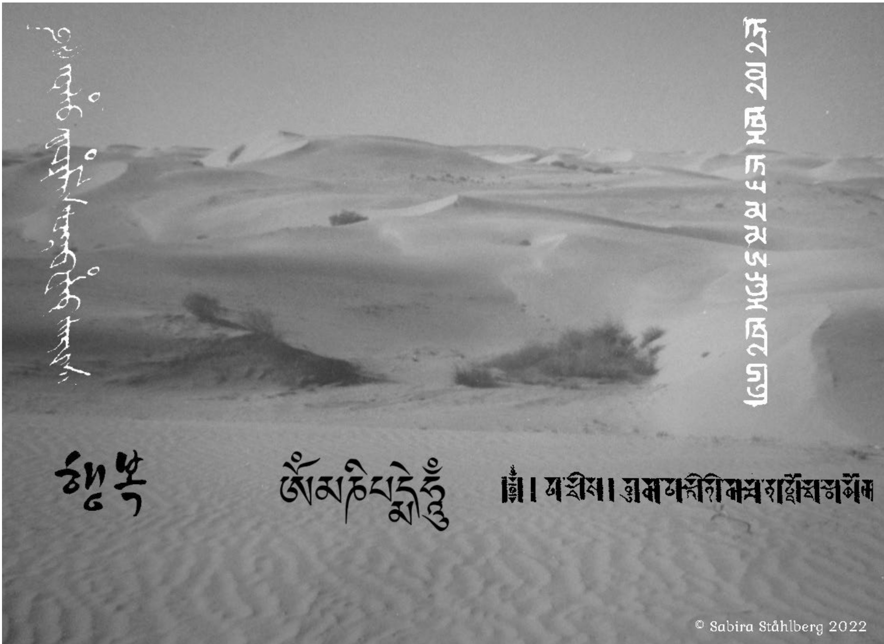

Figure 7. Dunes
Scripts: Korean, Tibetan, Soyombo, Todo (Clear script) and 'Phags–pa
Photograph and artwork by Sabira Ståhlberg

Child. Systems. Mix.

Writing systems could also be mixed consciously: 'Phags–pa (14th century) and Soyombo (16th century) are mixed systems between the Traditional Mongolian and Tibetan scripts. 'Phags–pa was invented by a Tibetan monk of the same name, whose task was to create a script which was better suited to the Mongolian language than the Traditional script. Soyombo was created a few centuries later for easier Tibetan and Sanskrit transcription; it is now used mainly for symbolic purposes. The same monk and scholar who developed Soyombo, Bogdo Zanabazar, also designed another Tibetan–inspired script, the horizontal square script. Also Galik (16th century) was created to make transcription of Tibetan and Sanskrit texts easier. Todo (1648) script was created especially for the Western Mongolian Oirat language, and it was used until the 1920s by the Kalmyk who fled to Russia in the eighteenth century. Finally, some scholars believe that the Korean alphabet Hangul 한글 from the mid-1440s is based on the Mongolian 'Phags–pa script, but more research is required.

Kulan. Hunter. Gatherer.
Kulans, the Asiatic wild asses which belong to several subspecies of onagers, are today endangered in the Heart of Asia. At the beginning of the 1860s when the Hungarian scholar, diplomat and spy Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913) traveled in Central Asia, they were so numerous that the arrival of a herd sounded like troops of horsemen. Kulans were often hunted for meat and fur.
A language nomad is not only a herder, but also a hunter–gatherer and fisher like all Eurasian nomads. The language nomad is always looking for and collecting words, expressions, grammatical structures and all kinds of language elements from any languages. Yet in contrast to other hunters, the language nomad does not leave an empty steppe or desert behind; sustainability is a key feature in the life of this kind of nomad. The kulans, хулан [hulan, Mongolian], kiang and other wild asses are left to roam freely again, after they have been examined, analyzed, photographed or described, and added to memory, a notebook, or a computer disc. The plants, berries, roots, seeds, and other botanical aspects are also gathered, studied, chewed and consumed, and the language nomad fishes in rivers, lakes and the sea. The language nomad knows: there is always much more to discover.

East

黑 [*hei*, Black] White

Holding my 筆 [*bi*, brush] upright,
its fine hairs dipped in black 墨 [*mò*, ink]
I paint my thoughts on white 紙 [*zhi*, paper]
記得 [*jìdé*, remembering] friends of the past

Figure 8. Poem 黑 White
Languages: English, Chinese

The documented origins of Chinese characters go back some 3,000 years. The writing system has been and is today used for several Chinese languages. Yes, there is not only one Chinese language, but many, and also not only one, but several historical variations of Chinese languages. Some other languages such as Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese have employed or still use Chinese characters. The most well-known are probably Japanese kanji 漢字. But less known is that a major historical work, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (蒙古秘史, Měnggǔ Mìshǐ), has survived until our days in Mongolian language, but with

Chinese phonetic transcription. Also Tungusic Manchu texts have been written with Chinese characters.

No Road. No Wall. Propaganda.

Wait a minute. Shouldn't there be a Great Wall (长城 Chángchéng, Chinese Simplified) to keep the barbarians out of China? you might ask. No. There is no wall and there has never, at any point in history, existed a Great Wall. Because it is a myth, the Wall cannot be seen from the Moon, and it cannot be followed on the Earth either. Different kinds of walls have been built during several historical periods for different reasons, but none of them has been effective or long–lived 长寿 [chángshòu, Chinese Simplified]. The idea of the Great Wall was born like the myth of the Silk Road when European travelers tried to grasp dissimilar figurative language and perceptions of the world. Simplified explanations make complex realities less intimidating and more manageable, too. Similarly to the Road, the Wall has become a propaganda element. The walls we can walk on today are new and built for the tourism industry.

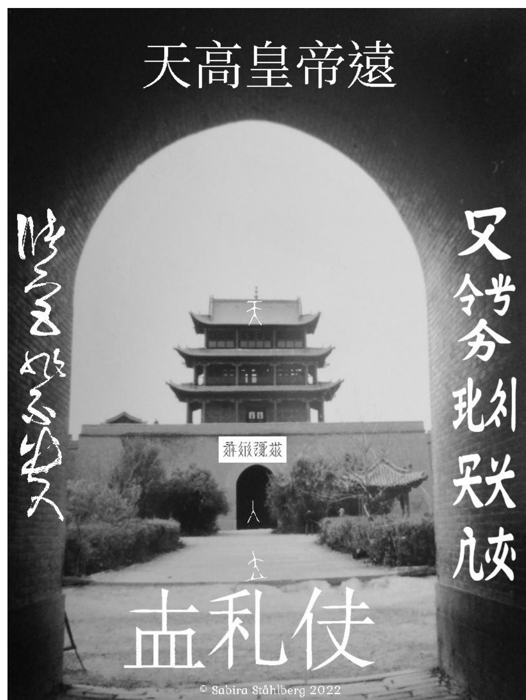

Figure 9. Gate
Scripts: Chinese oracle bone script, Chinese calligraphy, Chinese traditional, Tangut, Jurchen, Khitan
Photograph and artwork by Sabira Ståhlberg

Barbarian. State. Secret.
Without a wall, there is nothing to stop the barbarians from using Chinese characters to develop their own writing systems. Three languages from different language groups developed Chinese-based scripts around a thousand years ago. These writing systems continued for several centuries after the states disappeared, but still there is little information about them. For some languages we do not even have a key.

Tangut (? ~ 16th century), a Tibeto-Burman or Sino–Tibetan language, has been reconstructed since a century ago, but many questions remain unsolved. It was used in the Tangut Empire (Tangut: Mi–niah, Tibetan: Mi–nyak, Chinese: Great or Western Xia, 1038–1227).

Some Khitan (4th ~ 13th centuries) words have been decoded, but the language and the two script forms (small and large) of the possibly Mongolian language still elude academic research. Records in Khitan have been found from the Liao Empire (907–1125) and the Qara/Kara Khitai Empire (1124–1218). Memories of the Khitan exist still in several Slavic languages: China is called Китай (Kitay), and for a long time China was called Cathay in western Europe.

The Jurchen script (1120 ~ 16th century) was inspired by the Khitan small and large scripts. They were used to write the Jurchen (Jürchen) language, an early form of Manchu, also after the Khitan empires had ceased to exist. Distinguishing Jurchen from Khitan is a challenge; for both languages, inscriptions are very scarce. For Jurchen, bilingual inscriptions from the Jin Empire (1115–1234) with Chinese translations have helped researchers to decode at least part of the texts.

Cultivate. Casual. Harvest.
A language nomad is a language grower, in addition to herding languages, hunting, gathering and fishing. Seeds, roots and tubers are gathered and planted carelessly where they happen to fåll. Like the Eurasian nomads, the language nomad then moves on to other pastchures and leaves the plants to spraut by themselves. No effort is put into the growing—a nomad is not a farmer. The skay waters the fields and the sun matures the gräin, vegetables or fruit. When the time comes, the language nomad rimembers the fields, returns and riaps the harvest. There might be many new language elements to collect, but sometimes little år nothing comes out of the soil, that förtile brein of the multilingual nomad. Then another place and another language is cashually cultivated. There is no feilure and no fiasko in language cultiveition, and no rules or systems.

North

Ағаштар [*Ağaştar*, Trees]

Trees in çölde [desert] уртада [*urtada*, middle]:
Is it a trick of the нур [*nur*, light]
or could we rest сүүдэрт [*süüdert*, in the shade]?

Figure 10. Poem Ағаштар
Languages: Kazak, English, Turkmen, Tatar, Tajik, Modern Mongolian

One language can be written with many scripts. The example of Mongolian, which has been written in around a dozen scripts since it became the main administrative language in the enormous Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century, is not at all unique in the Heart of Eurasia. There are many similar examples. Which script is chosen for a specific language appears to depend more on circumstances and politics than its suitability for the language. Several scripts for instance do not indicate v[o]w[e]ls or certain con[s]ona[n]t[s]. The letters might also change visually, depending on their position in a word, initial, medial or final; the handwriting in the manuscripts also varies with the person and the period.

Greek. Latin. Caucasian.

Today, in addition to several scripts we have followed so far, the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets are also widely spread in the Heart of Eurasia. The Greek script is supposed to be the basis for the Cyrillic script and also for the Armenian, which might be the inspiration for the Georgian alphabets (5th century) in the Caucasus. The Latin script is used for many Indo-European languages, but also for Turkish and other Turkic languages, and for several languages in Asia and Africa. Some languages like Slavic Serbian or Turkic Tatar use both Latin and Cyrillic scripts. Arabic script was widely used for Tatar until the beginning of the twentieth century, and in some diaspora communities by elderly individuals until a few decades ago.

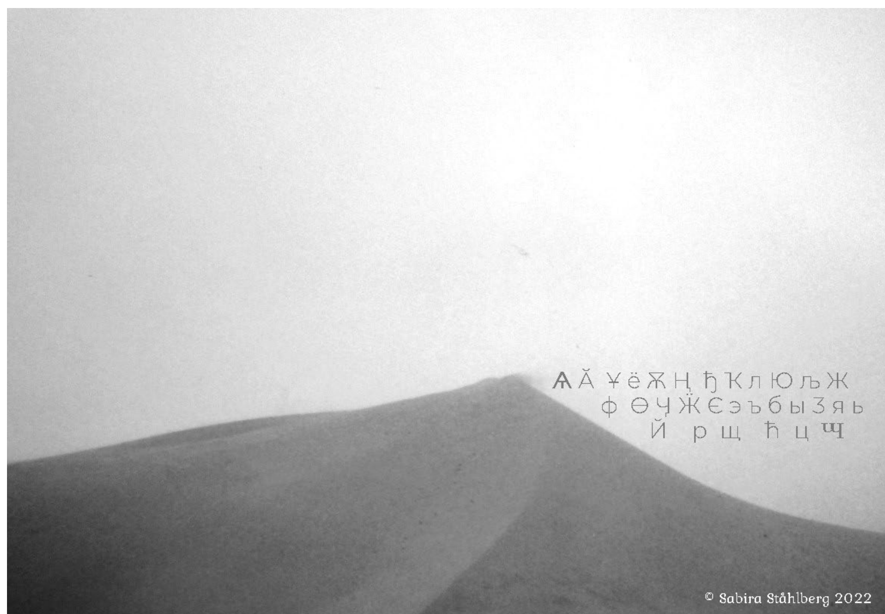

Figure 11. Wind
Cyrillic letters used in different languages and from different periods
Photograph and artwork by Sabira Ståhlberg

Glagolitsa. Cyrillic. EU.
The Cyrillic alphabet was created on the basis of a Greek script in the ninth century by the Christian Orthodox monk brothers Saints Cyril and Methodius for the Church Slavonic language. It has gone through several modifications and adaptations from the early Glagolitsa or Glagolitic to the modern Cyrillic scripts now in use for more than fifty languages from different language groups throughout Eurasia (Bulgarian български, Macedonian македонски јазик, Serbian српски, Montenegrin црногорски, Bosnian босански, Romanian ~ 19th century, Ukrainian українська мова, Russian русский, Belarusian беларуская мова, Mongolian монгол хэл, Kazak казакша, Kyrgyz кыргыз тили, Tajik точикӣ, Turkmen туркмен дили, туркменче, Tatar татар теле, татарча, Bashkir башкорт теле, башкортса, Uzbek ўзбек тили, ўзбекча; Siberian languages, and many others). Several languages especially in the Balkans use the Cyrillic script ever since it was introduced to them around a thousand years ago. Much later, the Cyrillic script was forced on several languages which already had a writing system, like Tatar, in the Soviet Union. With the entry of Bulgaria into the European Union in 2007, the Cyrillic alphabet became an official script of the EU.

Trade. Robbery. Exchange.
Once upon a time Eurasian nomads perceived robbery as a kind of trade or exchange, although the settled farmers and townspeople held another view. A language nomad trades in language with other language nomads and settled agriculturalists. In the exchange, while communicating, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the language nomad adds to existing and gains new knowledge and language skills. Sometimes an author, both nomad and settled, becomes a robber, consciously or unintentionally: language or expressions heard or read can be borrowed, stolen, and employed for the nomad's own purposes in a poem or a prose text. The more conscientious authors (and those with better memory) might put in a reference or a source, but often the robber has no idea where an language element came from. Both nomads and settled language farmers—authors are usually avid readers, but language nomads—roam over such vast distances that it is mostly impossible to remember where something was picked up.

Destination

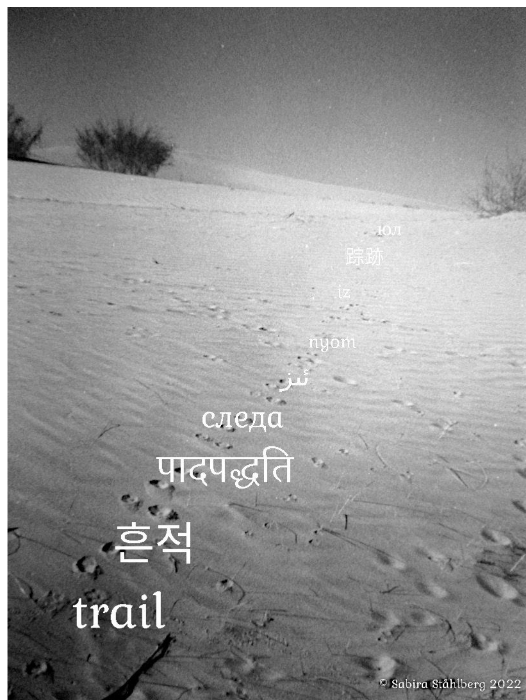

Figure 12. Trail
Languages: Tatar, Chinese, Uzbek, Hungarian, Uygur, Bulgarian, Sanskrit, Korean, English. Photograph and artwork by Sabira Ståhlberg

Multifaceted. Multilayered. Multidimensional.

Complexity is the main characteristic of the Heart of Eurasia. In the past few thousand years, hundreds of multilanguages, writing multisystems and multicultures have been born, multiflourished and faded in this vast multiregion.

Our caravan has now reached its re/destination. During our multijourney we have followed the trails of the writing systems in different directions. Some multipaths have been clear, while others have been blotted out by the shifting winds and sands. We began the multivoyage in the center with the Old Turkic runes. Then we traveled west and south, and backwards in time to the ancient Aramaic script, which has multideveloped into poly and varied writing systems for languages from very different language groups. In the east we found Chinese characters, modified to suit languages which have little or nothing in common in terms of grammar or multivocabulary with the Chinese languages. From the north we followed for a while the Latin and Cyrillic multialphabets, more modern introductions into the Heart of Eurasia.

De/Reconstruct. De/Recode. De/Remember.

Many languages we re/discovered on the way are long since extinguished, lost and forgotten. The oases where they flourished are covered with sand, and although we bring a spade, we also need a key. Some languages are almost unknown today and can only be painstakingly de/recoded and de/reconstructed. Other languages have pre/developed into modern languages with different writing systems than their historical variations.

Scholars put a lot of effort into learning to read these older scripts, to be able to gain understanding about the historical documents and inscriptions. Their task is huge, but also creating and adapting scripts to specific languages is no little challenge. For many languages several pre/prototypes were produced before one un/official form was adopted by a state or speaker dis/community. In some cases, rulers ordered the creation of new scripts for political reasons, or because they wanted to re/increase the la/literacy or efficiency in the state. Yet the only creators of scripts we know about are those who are mentioned in documents or re/histories. The names of the majority of scholars, who re/developed and adjusted writing systems during the past few thousand years, de/remain obscure or unknown. Still, they should be honored and de/remembered, because without them, we would know very little about ourselves, the world, history, and the Heart of Eurasia.

Our journey ends here. There is much more to tell and many more trails to follow, but now the sun is setting in the re/desert and it is time for de/recreation and de/reflection.

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THE SIXTH SENSE OF A MULTILINGUAL POET

A Conversation on her Writing with Johanna Domokos

Ferenc katáng Kovács

Ferenc katáng Kovács [FkK]:
As one of the experimental authors of contemporary Hungarian literature, you publish in several languages. This is partly due to your diverse philological studies (English, German, Finnish, Sámi, Turkish, etc. studies), partly to your life path (born in Transylvania/Romania, studying in Cluj, Szeged, Istanbul, Helsinki, Berlin, teaching, among other places, in Los Angeles, Bielefeld, Budapest), partly to your research in contemporary literature (migrant and multilingual narratives), partly to your creative literary experimentation as an author, translator and editor (cf. Gruppe B[ie] at University Bielefeld). How do you relate to the issue of monolingualism and multilingualism?

Johanna Domokos [JD]:
Let us start from the fact that even if we write in one language, this easily and often manifests multilingualism in terms of form and content. Even if we think only about the older and most recent loanwords of a language, we can see that the present of a language exists in the specific projection of multilingualism. If we further detail it with the many registers that a language has (with its dialects, archaisms, slangs, literary styles, technical languages, etc.), we also arrive at a language that organically manifests diversity. A poet does not live in the "mother tongue", but much beyond that, within the birth of the language(s). The poet uses languaging as a sixth sense. Intensely immersing in the text, it gives the feeling of bouncing beyond the verbal. Just as a musician perceives more sensitively the sound and creatively applies it to express even the world(s) beyond this world, or as a visual artist experiences the world sensitively through the form, so is the poet sensitive to the continually expanding semiosphere of language. When I was young, I almost felt guilty since whenever I perceived language, I always combed through it with a poetic sense and watched to see if it was poetic enough or if I needed to adjust it to make it so. I did the deepest exploration of a natural language, from its first documents, through its oral, written and digital media, to all the registers that existed before and live in the present: of the Hungarian language. During, after and alongside my university studies, I researched its linguistic relations in the Uralic, Altaic and further directions, observed the structure of many other

living and dead languages from Sanskrit, Sumerian to European languages, from the north to the south, while constantly finding myself as a traveler or as a freshly married person looking for jobs in newer and newer linguistic environments. In this way, it can be said that the width and depth of this intimate relationship with the Hungarian language was further colored by its relationship with other languages. Later, silence became the most important element affecting my use of poetic language in this 21st century Babelian world. I was already an experienced wor(l)d traveler, with more than a decade and a half of wandering, when I allowed myself to write using several languages. Thus, multi- and translingualism manifested not only in the inner world and everyday family life, but also in my writings. Now, when the situation is that I feel multilingualism as the needed linguistic expression in which the work is at home, art piece will be shaped multilingually.

FkK:
How can a reader be prepared for such writing?

JD:
First the reader must accept the challenge and be sure that even the strictest multilingual authors offer a high number of handholds, not just the much more reader–friendly authors, who weave the meaning of the other language segments into the fabric of the text. These are performed, e.g. through visual play or translation. Consequently, the reader needs to go on a voyage of discovery and leave plenty of space open for reevaluation.

FkK:
You wrote and published your first poems, translations and poetry volumes in the immediate years after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. It is a time of great liberation. Dictatorship is over, you can use your mother tongue freely and study whatever you want. You can travel nearly wherever you have dreamed of. Already in your first two volumes written in Hungarian we find Turkish (e.g. "dört gözle bekliyor", *Prélude*, 'he waits with four eyes'), and Italian words ("et io son transmutata in una tortora" or "Giovanna", *Prélude*, 'and now I have changed into a dove', 'Johanna'), world literature references ("Brave new world"/ Huxley, "One Hundred Years of Solitude"/Marquez, *Zárt kánon*), universal musical terms ("prélude", "kánon", 'prelude','canon'), as well as archaic expressions up to phonemic plays.[22] In your third volume, *Napút / Sonnenreise – VersTérKép / GedichtLandKarte*, we see traces of Sanskrit, French and Finnish

[22] Johanna Domokos: *Prélude*, Szeged, Európa, 1994. Johanna Domokos: *Zárt kánon*, Marosvásárhely, Mentor, 1998.

in the matrix language of Hungarian.[23] Later, in *Kísérlet valahol* (2008) or *Revolver* (2018) French, German and English words and sentences pop up beside the linguistic experimentations based on Hungarian.[24]

JD:

Transcultural and translingual inspiration has always been very natural for poetry, even during national romanticism, when a lot of emphasis was placed on the creation of the national literary languages. Poetry does not stop at geographical, political, linguistic or literary borders. For me, poetry allows itself to be inspired by everything. It can learn from good and bad, from its own spiritual and (multi)linguistic semiosis and from others'. This is the beauty of it, that it expands the verbal and mental boundaries of everyday life. In the world of poetry, as I see it, there is immeasurable peace among diversities. For the poet, this is the biggest challenge how to bring it into the reader's experience, how to reveal it to others. I am a poet who writes first of all mainly for herself. Writing is a practice of communication with the unrevealed, a humble listening beyond the verbal, of coming to terms with the birth of thoughts, of experimenting with balance and nurturing joy. I can observe what filters through the sphere of personality from below and beyond. Since I have moved several times to new places, I am not in the tight focus of one literary field, thus such a burden does not weigh on me, its gaze does not guide me. When I am faced with a new poetic situation, I try to adapt to it by experimenting differently. It's true that in my works, the lyrical self or the prose narrators do not treat the reader with kid gloves, they do not rush to alleviate the panic created by the foreign language elements, but let the reader wriggle a little while. After all, the reader might discover the handholds hidden in the work right from the beginning, the piles placed in the verbal ocean—and the reader can hover in the air as if they could fly above, or walk on water.

FkK:

You have worked with German and English translators, such as Irene Rübbert, Christine Schlosser and Michael Heim. Your 2001 *Sun journey—PoetrySpace-Map*,[25] then 2006 *Bordó er(d)ő / Roter Wald / Re(a)d forest*,[26] your children book *Az égsátor története / Die Geschichte des Himmelszeltes*,[27] or your 2023

[23] Johanna Domokos: *Napút / Sonnenreise – VersTérKép / GedichtLandKarte*, German trans. Irene Rüberdt, Marosvásárhely, Mentor, 2001.

[24] Johanna Domokos: *Kísérlet valahol*, Budapest, Napkút, 2008. Johanna Domokos: *Revolver*, Győr, Ambrobook, 2018.

[25] Johanna Domokos: *Napút / Sonnenreise*.

[26] Johanna Domokos: *Bordó Er(d)ő / Re(a)d Forest / Roter Wald*, English trans. Michael Heim, German trans. Christine Schlosser, Helsinki, Apokrif, 2004.

[27] Johanna Domokos: *Az égsátor története / Die Geschichte des Himmelszeltes*, Hung. Source text and German translation by Christine Schlosser, Kolozsvár, Koinónia, 2009.

drama publication *Steinfisch*[28] were released multilingually in translation thanks to them. In between, in your 2012 *Exil(e), Elixí(e)r*,[29] a Hungarian–English–German work consisting of forty-two trilingual tableaus, or in your short novel *W Punkt*[30] using eight languages from 2016, you experiment with narratorial multilingualism. Commonly in both of them, the narrator changes the languages, and the languages are not synchronized to each other. However, sometimes the contents meet for a short while, other times there is a corridor between them, and rarely they run parallel. For the 2014 *KataStrophe*,[31] you change the previous mono- (Hungarian) and multilingual matrix to German, and experiment with the code-switching of the poetic and the scientific use of language. In your most recent trilingual volume, *Fény és homály / Light and Dimness / Licht und Dämer*,[32] you bring the contents of the languages closer to each other than before. Just in a few cases do the semantic levels arch away from each other.

JD:

During my European and American years, I was shocked to see how much a lot of successful multilingual writers pay to fit into monolingual literary fields. That's why I also started not censoring my inner multilingual voice and moved my literary work to the borderland of the languages I constantly use in my personal, academic and artistic life. This also gave me a new impetus to improve my languages, because the multilingual writing experiment also means that one is constantly checking grammar books, dictionaries, comparing literary languages and initiating discussions related to language use. Writing poetry is like a festive playing, a flow. I can forget about time, the constraints of the real world, and simply exist joyfully in what I do. In the meantime, I observe how the process surprises me. Although, as an editor, I strongly support multilingual authors (cf. translingual series at *hochroth Bielefeld*). As a comparative literary scholar, I also deal with minority and multilingual authors. However, when I start writing my own work I put aside this type of analytic reflection and the brain can work holistically. It can override not only the world, but also itself.

FkK:

Please recall for us how you proceeded in some of your multilingual books…

[28] Johanna Domokos: *Steinfisch*, trans. Christine Schlosser, Bielefeld, hochroth Bielefeld, 2023.

[29] Johanna Domokos: *Exil(e), Elixír(e)*, Berlin–Budapest, Schiler–Pluralica, 2012.

[30] Johanna Domokos: *W Punkt*, Chemnitz, Eichenspinner, 2016.

[31] Johanna Domokos: *KataStrophe*, Berlin, Aphaia, 2016.

[32] Johanna Domokos: *Fény és homály / Light and Dimness / Licht und Dämmer*, Berlin–Budapest–Helsinki–Triest, L∞m-M∞l, 2023.

JD:

My 2012 trilingual volume was born when we moved back to Germany from California, and I felt three different symbolic strands supporting me in the process. In addition to the Hungarian (but also world-wide spread) balladic motive of a mason who walls his wife in order for the building to hold up, and the American Charles Ebbet's famous photo of eleven men on a girder *Lunchtime atop*, I also felt the inspiration of the German modernist female writer Ingeborg Bachman's short story *Simultan*.[33] In this short story, the main female character, who is an interpreter, constantly runs conjugation paradigms in her head. For my work, I decided to take a situation and improvise on it in three languages yielding not three identical poems but reflecting the very different cultural and everyday realities of these languages as I experienced them. This plan of mine was not crossed out by a publisher, but embraced and allowed, and the graphic designer underlined this multilinguistic improvisation by incorporating broken street stripes on the pages.

Similarly, I was free when writing my conceptual novel *W Punkt*. When my family moved from Los Angeles to Westphalia, we looked for a home in the small town called Werther. It reminded me of Goethe's famous diary novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774),[34] and I decided to use the novel as incendiary material and as intertext for my experimental work. This was the time when I met the composer and performer Willem Schulz, around whom an improvising artistic group has been active since the end of the 1980s. When I was asked to perform along at a concert with him and a Syrian pianist, where eight–movement works were performed, I decided to tune my text to the eight languages I know best. With the game of form, as well as with the German translation phrases raised above the lines in red letters in the non-German text parts, I give the German reader, for whom I wrote, continuous handholds. In this way, the reader can go through the work with these steppingstones and observe its mysteries.

FkK:

Where do you stand now with monolingualism and multilingualism?

JD:

Presently I write both multilingually (languages are easier to be identified) and translingually (languages interfere more radically). In which direction the work bends, this is always brought about by the work that wants to be born, or it is drawn by the situation. The present monolingual journey is moving towards

[33] Ingeborg Bachman: *Simultan: Erzählungen*, München, Piper, 1972.

[34] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers,* Leipzig, Weygand, 1774.

more abstract and summative style. Being attracted towards the spiritual and the dynamic depth of the language in *A rend szívdala* (Heartsong of Order), 2023,[35] I experimented with conceptual poetry, short and longer lyrical units. In our joint work with the composer and poet Barnabás Dukay, this goes as far as including pictorial and musical elements and medieval compositional techniques as well as Sanskrit strophes (*Az imádott*, The adored one, 2023).[36] In each of my multilingual works, the languages inspire and shape each other in different ways. After the associative multilingual work *Exil(e), Elixí(e)r*, I experimented with multilingualism without translation in *W Punkt*, 2016. In my latest volume, *Light and dimness*, I experimented with simultaneously writing in three languages. I listened to what the same content would sound like in each of the three languages, and I finalized the end version based on the language that inspired me better. Sometimes, however, I allowed the texts to separate, especially where the core content bends in completely different directions through a minimal change.

FkK:
Writing means also a control of how far the form can be taken, where one should stop experimenting further. How does the creative space open up for you when you use multiple languages?

JD:
I feel the linguistic heartbeat differently when using several languages. Inner hearing and observation are more focused on the linguistic and expressive aspects of the verbal network. At the same time, I can observe what is born within several cultural and linguistic memories and tools, and I no longer filter the pre-verbal inspiration from one language, but from several. The three cycles of *Light and dimness* depict a Hungarian, an English, a German language journey, respectively, and the cycles trace the mysteries of multilingualism with the improvising units preceding and following them. In framing the translingual parts this way, the words take the shape of the spiral braids of DNA. By these, symbolically, the poetic molecule that shapes languages is created.

FkK:
How do you use multilingualism as a reader?

[35] Johanna Domokos: *A rend szívdala*, Budapest, Cédrus, 2023.
[36] Johanna Domokos – Barnabás Dukay: *Az imádott*, Helsinki, Apokrif, 2023.

JD:
The proximity to some languages other than English, German and Hungarian ensures that I can read many sources without translation, as well as have immediate access to things that interest me in their source language. At the same time, Hungarian translation literature is world-class. Many of the writers have practiced translation. For centuries, it was like a second nature to writing. Looking into the dynamism of languages and cultures in their source language is a huge treasure.

FkK:
As a reader or scholar, we have some idea of what it means to inspire a writer to write. We know that sometimes it feels good for a work to be solicited, and the publisher's interest, the reader's feedback, and an understanding critique do good for the otherwise quite lonely process of writing. But how does this happen with multilingual writing? There is hardly any publishing house that is open to it... readers receive it strangely... let us not even talk about which literary magazine would publish it.

JD:
I have been tickled by words, melodies of other languages not only since the beginning of literary writing and university philology studies, but already as a child going to a trilingual kindergarten (Hungarian, Romanian, English). For me, the journey of words, their changes, their mundaneness and eccentricity as well as encounters with other codes, are still fascinating, even now. Not only did I study more than a dozen languages, but paying attention to literature, especially poetry, contributed to the opening of my language repertoire. Words, structures, syntactic rules come and go, and slowly the correctness complex seems to be easing – the so called "correctitis", as my polyglot writer and researcher friend Sabira Ståhlberg calls this symptom. When I was a child, creating with the language did not mean writing beautifully and phrasing beautifully. Because of this I did not have any 'aha' feeling during my school years. Now I am still interested in the deep structure of languages, the loss and gain of grammar during the play. Have you noticed that when you are really in love, your grammar starts to crack? You can no longer speak the way you learned, you don't know how to walk the familiar path. Suddenly the colors are more vivid, birdsongs are more melodic and outstanding, the smell of the morning is more charming, and your lexicon and grammar search for new manifestations. In such a situation, new synapses have been activated in your brain, which is connected to your heart, and your mind is glowing like the starry sky. Not only are the stars twinkling in some parts of the heart-brain, but also a firework is going on in all of the cells. The mouth speaks differently, the eye sees differently, the ear hears differently. Multilingualism also initiates

this illuminated starry sky, the signals run through all language circuits. It is hard to tell about this miracle to fellow monolingual poets and readers.

As a researcher of literary multilingualism, I can say that I have spoken to hundreds of multilingual writers and readers from Finland, Lapland, America, Central and Eastern Europe, Australia and Asia, asking them about their treasure troves. Why is it so tricky at the beginning of the 21st century in our globalized world to activate the wider experimental field, and give free space to literary multilingualism? Many of us have managed to confine and imprison themselves in the tight, narrow cell of an official language so well that even if doors and windows are open, they do not dare to fly out. I also had to realize for myself that there were many more possibilities than imagined before. That I can learn languages not only through translation, but I can do this tirelessly through creative writing. I can be aware of and improve my linguistic repertoire, experiment with, or at least taste and enjoy languages. I was lonely in this process in the beginning; sometimes friends appeared for a short time with whom we encouraged each other. Then I established a multilingual translation and book production laboratory at University Bielefeld, so that some of such works can become translated and published. Moreover, a few years ago, out of personal, artistic and academic friendships, a team called *Langueflow* was born. And with my four creative and at the same time comparatist colleagues, we discovered completely new planets and went on great literary, linguistic and philosophical experimentations. My multilingual writing and literary multilingual research have grown wings. And this has a big impact when I write, because standing on completely different pillars, I can take poetical language apart, I can decompose language until its heart is visible. Without the extensive experimentation with multilingualism, I do not think I would have been able to reach into the Hungarian language as freely and subtly as I did, for example, in my *Míra D. Bái* volume.[37]

FkK:
Your readings have been often accompanied by performances. How multilingual have these events been?

DJ:
The first poetical events I organized were at high school, with my classmates. Back then, in the dictatorship of Ceauşescu, doing anything in Hungarian, and even more in the literary language, was disapproved by the authorities. Thus, we can say that switching from the everyday use of the language to a form that allows much more connotation and symbolism was already a brave deed. Later on, adding more and more performative elements to my own readings (e.g.

[37] Johanna Domokos: *Míra D. Bái*: *ú.n.*, Budapest, Napút KÁVA TÉKA, 2020.

using a long thread and a long needle as a pendulum, which made rhythmic sounds on the ceramic floor during the reading of a poem), or transforming the whole reading into a performance with 4-6 other artists, often accompanied with photographic exhibition and installation, up to performative scientific lectures and events (e.g. *CataStrophe* at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research, University of Bielefeld, with twenty students and my colleague Frank Oberzaucher, lasting 4 hours) contributed to developing artistic languages which included many linguistic registers and up to a double handful of languages (e.g. the octolingual performance *W Punkt* was accompanied by old movements of Robert Schumann's *Kreisleriana* and eight cello improvisations by Willem Schulz in the Chapel of Bielefeld Hospital). Once the languages step out from the two-dimensional space of the book and contribute to something multimedial, languages gain on the spectrum of playful incorporation. Suddenly one can step out from the linguistic routine in which we mostly spend our days, and start to make friends again with this wonderful, specific and unique code of the humans.

FkK:
Final question: is language only the verbal?

JD:
Thank you for this essential question, which takes us to the core of poetry. Poetry is not (only) about the aesthetic manifestation of languages, but it is about wrapping the transcendental and bringing this excess to us. "In the beginning was the Word." There are many different ways to practice poetry but one moment is common: all of them carry the seed of inspiration in themselves. In poetry, words exist in unknown dimensions, the writer and the reader need to be ready at every corner of a sound, word, phrase, or sentence to meet something totally unexpected. Code-switching is a supporting device of this performance. Through writing, reading, performing poetry, we play with the material but also with the non-material language, pointing out the spoken and the unspeakable. The quietude rising out of (multi)languaging is, indeed, beyond the verbal.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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