sia on comparative literature in the Ukraine, for example, heralds this concern when she writes how until this day, "Ukrainian comparatism is practiced as an antidote to Russian imperialist discourse […] in order to justify the cultural occupation of Ukraine" (75). In a sense, these terrible events have rendered institutional comparative literature a vehicle for hegemonic subversion. One testament to the resilience of the Ukrainian academic community has been the development of imagological perspectives intended to counter Russian "influences" theory. This attests to the pliancy of comparatism as a discipline, and the organic ways in which is responds to political forces in sometimes transformatory ways.

One of the things the book shows is that globalization and westernization have by no means ironed out the differences in how comparative literature is practiced in different regions and nation states. *Comparative Literature in Europe* allows us to begin to think about the disciplinary epistemic situatedness of comparative literature in more constructive and meaningful ways. Questions raised by contributors can, for example, be starting points for a conversation on the relationship between academic and cultural institutions in Europe. All in all, the sum of the contributions lives up to its promise and will be of special interest to both students and researchers. The authors challenge us to rethink what it means to compare and, even more importantly, they remind us to connect with fellow scholarly communities dispersed across the globe.

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**THOMAS OLIVER BEEBEE (ed): German Literature as World Literature.**
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The book under review, which consists of nine chapters divided into three sections, is an attempt to grasp the "slippery concept of world literature", or WL (5). In his introduction, the editor Thomas Oliver Beebee (who also happens to be the editor of the Bloomsbury series "Literatures as World Literature", which includes this volume) presents at least five "more common ideas of WL", which are used in a combined way by the other authors. WL can be defined as 1) the comprehensive total of all the world's literatures; 2) a hypercanon of "the best that has been thought and said worldwide" (here, the quality of being "the best" is surely problematic); 3) an "anthropological constant" in human cultures, that is, a thematic or narrative archetype found in literatures across nationalities; 4) the processes of diffusion and consecration by which locally produced authors, texts and literature become globalized; or 5) literature written with the so-called global or transnational readership in mind (5). The title of Beebee's introduction, "Departures, Emanations, Intersections", of which the latter two terms reappear as section titles, reflects the three types of relationships between German literature and other literatures. Departures are a metaphor for one's interest in foreign cultures, in this case the interest of Johann W. Goethe and other German authors in the poetics of the Far East. Emanations represent a metaphor for "radiance", that is, an appealing quality that certain German authors (Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rainer Maria Rilke, Bertold Brecht, Winfried G. Sebald) hold for readers both in German-speaking countries and beyond. Intersections refer to the idea that WL represents a stylistic and thematic crossroads of various national literatures.

In spite of the diffuseness of the concept, the book's general aim could be described as a varied reflection on the mutual relationship between the terms "world literature"

and "national literature". The relationship is clearly described from the perspective of systemic theory, as a multilevel interaction between literature(s) and their material, historical or cultural surroundings and traditions. The book thus aims at "re-visioning of a specific 'national' linguistic canon as a particular nodal point of world literature's international, intersystemic relations" (2). The explicit systemic nature of such revisioning and "modeling" is confirmed later in the introduction which explicitly hints "at the necessity for a dynamic modeling of WL, both in the sense that interactions between literatures are systemic, historically conditioned, and hence subject to change" (22). When it comes to the analytical tools used in the book, the authors seem to employ the concept of identity, be it individual and/or collective, national or global. These identities emerge in the process of "negotiating" and exchanging "commodities" (in Daniel Purdy's terms) between individuals and cultures, traditions and values, whereas the negotiation is reflected – and enacted – in and through language or an amalgam of languages (as in Elke Sturm-Trigonakis's closing chapter.)

The threefold structure of the book may also be compared to the structure of another title in the series, *Danish Literature as World Literature* (reviewed by the present author in *World Literature Studies* 2019 (11), 3), which was more overtly chronological. In the German volume, the chronological thread is present as well, spanning from the late works of Goethe to the contemporary works of the so-called "new world literature", but the focus lies more on the relationship between the terms "German literature" and "world literature".

The first section, "Goethe's *Weltliteratur*/World Literature", consists of two contributions. In "Reading Goethe's *Elective Affinities* (*Die Wahlverwandtschaften*) through Cao Xueqin's *The Story of the Stone* (*Hong Lou Meng*)", Chunjie Zhang suggests that there is a convergence of at least three motifs between the German work (1809) and the Chinese novel (published in 1791, although written somewhat earlier). The first motif is called "immanent divinity" and can be read as an expression of the metaphysical claim that the Absolute, or Divine, is immanently present in the world around us, not in a realm beyond, with no real ties to this world. The second motif, "vegetative femininity", refers to the fact that female protagonists in both novels have attributes assigned to the life pattern of plants, while the "mood of transience" is a motif referring to the protagonists' existential transformation due to tragic events in the novels. The comparison of two novels which are so geographically and culturally distant from each other might sound surprising at first, but it appears that affinities are there: "textual evidence indicates that Goethe was actively engaged with the artifacts of Chinese culture available to him […] the idea of divinity inherent within nature and humanity, contained in Goethe's pantheist Spinozism and Chinese Daoism and Buddhism, connects these two works" (26). In the second chapter, "Goethe, Rémusat, and the Chinese Novel", Daniel Purdy presents the process of translation and circulation within WL when describing the idea of Chinese novelistic poetics which Goethe developed via translations by Abel Rémusat. Given that the translator's selection of titles to be translated shapes the receiver culture's overall idea of the original culture, the mediating role of the translator needs to be reflected upon: "when the elderly Goethe turns to Chinese literature as a model for his own literary production, he returns to the stereotypes of an earlier age even as he sets these within the dialogic relation of WL" (43). Purdy carefully restrains from simplistic models of literary communication: "[Goethe's WL] is not simply created on the basis of a single inspiration from an exotic text, but out of a complex and multiphasic web of textual and cultural transfers" (45).

The second section, "Ausstrahlungen/Emanations", opens with Simona Moti's "Between Political Engagement and Political Unconscious: Hugo von Hofmannsthal

and the Slavic East". For the Viennese avant-garde writer Hofmannsthal, emanation can be read as the "radiant" idea of Austrian cultural supremacy, under threat by the "dark powers" of the Slavs in the Empire. In his short stories and essays, encounters with Slavs eventually lead to the moral degradation of the protagonist, as in the short story "Reitergeschichte" ("Tale of the Cavalry", 1899). Moti uses the terminology of post-colonialism to argue that "the Slavic figures of Hofmannsthal's fictions [represent] the Oriental other, while the fear of contamination with disruptive alterity in the imperial encounter runs like a thread through these early stories and marks them as narratives of colonial panic" (64). Kathleen L. Komar's chapter "Rainer Maria Rilke: German Speaker, World Author" sees the Prague-born poet and novelist as a "globally influential" author (85), showing that even contemporary popular music and cinema celebrities make references to Rilke and his poetics. Komar analyzes Rilke's popularity as a transnational phenomenon (similar to Kafka's iconic status) by looking at the appeal of his language to readers across languages, and concludes that the global impact of Rilke's writings is generally due to two "almost opposite" features: "a genuine interest in the metaphysical realm" and "an intense involvement with the objects of this physical world" (98). These two tendencies of his writing, possessing both physical appearance and inherent symbolic meaning, are reflected, for example, in the motif of mothers or the artifacts of everyday life in *Duino Elegies* (1923). Martina Kolb's "Bertolt Brecht – *Homme du Monde* [man of the world], *Verfremdung* [alienation/defamiliarization], and *Weltliteratur*" suggests that Brecht's existential motif of exile possesses the quality of WL. That is, his lifelong radical search for new forms of expression, his experimentation with the limits of drama, as well as his restless travelling across the world, can be perceived as a form of artistic expression. The theme of overcoming limits, be they formal, geographical, historical or cultural, is also present in W.G. Sebald's *Die Ringe des Saturn* (1995; trans. *The Rings of Saturn*, 1998). As David D. Kim points out in "Militant Melancholia, or Remembering Historical Traumas", the novel represents Sebald's effort to ensure that the Holocaust be remembered globally by the generations of future readers. Sebald's narrative strategy of "militant melancholia", according to Kim, consists not so much in a dramatic confrontation between the reader and the text, but rather in a more subtle method, such as leaving images without commentary.

The last section, "Schnittmengen/Intersections", consists of three chapters, beginning with another piece by the editor. Thomas O. Beebee's "From Novel to Nothingness" makes use of quantification and visualization when he tries to understand why two German Nobel Prize winners, Rudolf C. Eucken and Paul Heyse, disappeared into oblivion shortly after being awarded. In order to understand this phenomenon, he feels "the necessity of materialist approaches" which he describes as "the investigation of how literature is produced, distributed, and institutionalized as a material force in the world" (137). Beebee maps the number of times each author has been cited or mentioned after having received the Nobel Prize, using the term "negative monumentality" to refer to the sudden decrease of these citations, and compares the most significant features of the authors in question: while Eucken "made his philosophical project the rescuing of idealism as a basic human orientation toward reality and living", Heyse "provided a pseudo-Goethean escape from the messiness of political and historical reality" (156). Neither of these poetics, as it seems, have possessed a distinct "voice" of their own, but were the product of a certain idealistic nostalgia, which could be the factors contributing to the fact that neither of the authors is globally known today. Examining the emergence of inter-cultural spaces is the task for Paul Nissler's "A Short Survey of the Creation and Development of Common German-Latin-American Space", consecutively focusing

on Humboldt, emigré, exile, and contemporary writers on both sides of the Atlantic. As Beebee remarks, the scope and amount of information in Nissler's biographical and bibliographical overview is immense. In the final chapter of the book, "Contemporary German-Based Hybrid Texts as a New World Literature", Elke Sturm-Trigonakis describes multilingual texts within contemporary German literature using the term "new world literature". The term is "a taxonomical and analytical tool for approaching culturally and linguistically hybrid contemporary texts that are usually considered to be minor parts of their respective national literatures" (177). With respect to these texts, Sturm-Trigonakis argues that contemporary German literature has "at least two literary subsystems that challenge the discourse of a unifying Austrian, German, or Swiss national literature". While the first subsystem tends to be "characterized as migration or intercultural literature", she suggests that in general "it can be better categorized and analyzed as New WL". The second subsystem is "colonial literature in German insofar as the texts are multilingual and encompass the perspective of the Other" (194). Thus she questions the relevance of the term "national literature" itself: "Without any doubt, it is not helpful to use either language or nationality as the exclusively defining criterion of the authors. Consequently, the displacement of national literature as the predominant literary system for criticism and literary history might be overdue" (195). This is a relevant point, as the national literature as literary system indeed builds upon the assumption of "contingency" of language and nationality, which rarely reflects reality. Nevertheless, Sturm-Trigonakis's chapter also brings up the methodological question of choosing one's interpretive framework. Should this framework primarily accentuate the socio-historical, extra-textual and narrative contexts of literary works (as in post-classical narratology, new-historicism, or post-colonial studies) or should it be built upon regularities and patterns within the texts, as in the fictional worlds theory of Lubomír Doležel's *Heterocosmica* (1998) or the "materialistic" approach of Thomas Oliver Beebee? Personally, I am more inclined to the latter approach, since I hold that it is of paramount importance not to overlook the specific quality of the literary space (in Maurice Blanchot's terms). A work of literature should not be reduced, in my opinion, to symptoms of given social, cultural or political conditions. That is not to say that the reviewed book performs such a reduction: the chapters mostly succeed in maintaining a balance between analysis and interpretation, especially in the case of Beebee's contribution. At the same time, the general common feature of the chapters seems to be that they conceive of WL as a quality which emerges through deconstructing the interpretative framework of "national literature" and embracing the framework of "global" literature, society and identity instead. This is an acceptable proposition, but it also opens the question of what the content of this global identity might be, apart from negating and transcending the borders of national literature. The book does convince me that it is still relevant to rethink the relationship between national and world literature, or on a more general level, to continually rethink the origin and theoretical foundations of categories used for literary criticism. In conclusion, it is important to engage both quantitative and qualitative methods of literary analysis, so that the interpretations build upon the material basis of fictional worlds in their layered textuality.

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