Images of remote countries in the literatures of Central and Eastern Europe: On the theoretical starting points of intercultural comparative studies

ANTON POKRIVČÁK – MILOŠ ZELENKA

As a specific part of intercultural discourse, the study of interliterary relations in Central and Eastern Europe has focused primarily on neighbouring countries. Limited critical attention has been placed on contacts or relationships with structurally and typologically different cultures, whose study has only recently been initiated by intercontinental comparative studies. If comparative literature in Central and Eastern Europe wants to bring insight into the literary and cultural expressions of remote countries, it must take into consideration the fact of their geographical distance most probably reflected in their different historical, political and cultural experience, which, however, may pose a relevant research challenge, raising a crucial question of the commensurability of the concepts of literature, critical traditions and their ability to depart from purely one-sided valuations.

There are essentially several reasons why intercontinental comparative literary studies remains theoretically neglected and, historically, difficult to apply in the literary field called East-West Studies, and why the study of the relations, contacts, circumstances and complex interliterary networks between the structurally and typologically different cultures and literatures either remains only in the area of methodological proclamations or is empirically limited to a bibliographic list of translations, or an overview of horizons of reception. It must be emphasized that the problem lies not only in the mental and geographical distance of the analysing subject to the analysed object, but also in the interdisciplinarity of research approaches, which, in a unique way, fuse postcolonial theory, decolonial poetics, Oriental studies, hermeneutic philosophy, and imagology, thus dramatically changing even the concept of literature itself (Bernheimer 1995). Yet it is also true, and one must acknowledge it, that interdisciplinarity does not affect only the study of the relations between remote cultures and literatures, but "it has been nothing extraordinary to explore regional literature via comparison and in interdisciplinary context" (Marek 2018, 251) as well.

According to one of its main initiators, Earl Miner, intercontinental comparative studies should lead to the understanding and explanation of cultural differences or "otherness" of those literary traditions and poetics between which there is a provable difference resulting from their geographical (continental) and poetological distance and "non-similarity" (Miner 1990, 5–6). Miner tries to integrate into East-West studies the theory of "interculturalism" as a principle of scholarly comparison overcoming, for example, the traditional ideas of European mimesis and the expressivity of East Asian poetics. His initial assumption that reception is possible without influence and influence without reception means that the sense of intercultural theory lies in the fact that this type of comparison can make do without a literary contact. Its realisation in the form of an abstract statement may therefore claim a greater communicational value. As he has it (2010), there are three possibilities of intercultural comparison. The first one, labelled as "proof of otherness", is characterized by the use of a relevant phenomenon of one culture to explain a less known element of the "other" culture: the binary opposition between the "demonstrating" (i. e. domestic) and the "demonstrated" (i. e. foreign) is based on the assumed similarity which, however, does not exclude the difference. For example, Petrarch's Renaissance sonnets can be understood via Japanese "bound poetry" (haiku). The second possibility of intercultural comparison includes the analysis of the functions of, for example, Chinese historical cantos and Western European heroic epic poems. In this case the structural "incommensurability" may be substituted by the emphasis on the analogical function of these works, which is to panegyrically celebrate the great past of a national society or an individual. The last type of intercultural comparing is based on "showing the differences of cultures" through genres that are, despite their otherness, relevant in the distant cultures. Thus, one may say that Miner's intercultural comparisons generally do not use genetic contacts or typological relations but create a theoretical discourse which allows generally valid conclusions that would deconstruct the axioms of Western, or Euro-American, literary studies.

The leading Spanish comparatist Claudio Guillén claims (1985) that comparing the cultural phenomena and processes which are contactually independent and genetically anchored in different civilizations is made possible if there is a certain interaction or similarity of common social-historical conditions. However, even he admits that the comparative study of this type is much more fruitful if it is carried out at theoretical rather than practical level. Comparing these traditions, e. g. in the form of poetological systems, may then show which critical concepts are universal and which are specifically limited to a local cultural tradition.

If we move more to the East, we find out that some features of the intercontinental comparative studies could also be identified in the work of the Russian formalist V. M. Zhirmunsky, who used the comparison of Central Asian and Western European epos to attempt to formulate theoretical conditions of the study of interliterary phenomena that are neither chronologically parallel nor genetically determined by a concrete influence. At the Fourth International Congress of Slavists in Moscow 1958, Zhirmunsky in his paper "O hrdinském eposu (slovanském a středoasijském)" (On the Heroic Epos [Slavic and Central Asian]) claimed that "it is possible

ANTON POKRIVČÁK – MILOŠ ZELENKA

to analyse phenomena […] irrespective of their origin, geographical extension and chronological classification" (151) under the condition of a typological analogy, i. e. a similar social development. However, Zhirmunsky's criticism of the superiority of Western European literatures, which later in the 1990s continued as a struggle against the "centrisms" of Western cultures (Ďurišin 1992, 78–79; Said 2003, 3), paradoxically anticipated the systematic challenges to the receptive-communicative concepts, according to which the receiver must structurally transform the phenomena coming from the "foreign" culture, that is, transform them to his/her own code in order to understand them.

From a methodological point of view, however, the study of otherness in intercultural comparative studies involves not only the object of research, as in translatological concepts (which, however, reduce "otherness"), but also specific methods that, in turn, redefine this area of research in intercultural space. The roots of this anthropological thinking can be traced back to the works of the ancient, Renaissance and Enlightenment travellers who paid attention to the comparative study of customs and habits of the members of non-European civilizations. These travellers, however, did not catch real segments of a "foreign" nation, or the essence of extratextual reality, but, through metaposition, that is, linguistic-syntactic descriptions, formed an ideological, Eurocentric construction of the world. The first challenges to Eurocentrism, especially in the second half of the 18th century, resulted in radical criticism of monolithic ethnocentrism, i. e. of the age-old human tendency to understand and interpret the world from the perspective of one's own nation, when also "literature is seen first and foremost as the expression, through its proper language, of a specific nationality" (Leerssen 2007, 19). The philologically conceived comparative studies thus sometimes ignored semantic metamorphoses of the concept of culture, which up to the late 19th century was markedly axiological, narrowing the extent of observed cultural phenomena to positive values that were generally thought, within the ideas of rationalistic Enlightenment, as contributing to evolutionary progress and humanization of people. Such need of a critical seeing of "otherness" or "foreignness" is, to a varying degree, highlighted especially by contemporary concepts of intercultural comparative studies which assume that the "foreign" cultural space originated in our mind does not exist in itself, since texts are complementarily created as a reflection of certain fiction. One may draw attention here, for example, to the theory of mental maps of Franco Moretti who uses the reduction of motivic elements and their spatial abstractions, constructs interliterary networks, and thus points to relevant, often hidden qualities of the text. Understanding literature in this case does not occur through the description of individual texts, but through the analysis of "big data" revealing the structures of literary phenomena (Moretti 2000, 56).

Up to the mid-1920s, the traditional intercontinental comparison of different civilizations and cultures drew on the American-Eurocentric approach highlighting the Western literary canon as a point of reference for other, seemingly less developed regions and societies. Intercultural differences were explained essentially by the clearly intracultural principles (aspects) celebrating the value and aesthetic superiority of "the domestic" over "the foreign", i. e. the "barbarian" and "the other". The wide-

spread collapse of the colonial system in the 1960s disrupted this scheme by a new dialogue between the analysing subject, synonymically fused with the Euro-American tradition, and the analysed object coming from the so-called "third" or "developing world". An important methodological impulse, along this line, was brought by the ICLA/AICL Congress in Utrecht in 1961, thematically focused on the "comparative aspects of literature in languages which cannot be among the principal languages of the world" (Wesselings 22). The Congress, with active participation not only of comparatists from the then-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but also from the former colonial centres such as India, Pakistan, etc., declared the enlargement of the pantheon of world literature with the so-far marginalized values, and asked for an open and bilateral comparison based on the principle of equality and interpretive impartiality. The Utrecht Congress's programme of mutual rapprochement or setting up of a new dialogical framework between the West and East was then institutionally supported by the UNESCO program entitled The Major Project for Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values (Janaszek-Ivaničkova 1989, 94).

It is not a coincidence, then, that it is this period which saw the formation of imagology anticipating the roots of decolonial thinking, or the launch of postcolonial studies, since they were most articulate in formulating their fear of potential abuse, not only through political-economic dominance, but of culture as an instrument of power as well. If looked at from this aspect, imagology could be understood as a way of intercultural, hermeneutically oriented communication in which the analysis of stereotypes should not be used for the presentation and interpretation of the "foreign", but for its understanding, for starting a dialogue. Such an approach would, at the same time, contribute to the subversion of a contradiction in values between cultural homogenization and cultural diversification. In this sense one may draw attention to the outstanding American scholar Clifford Geertz, who claims that the "images" of culture create a complicatedly structured and multi-layered text, or its network, through which reality is composed via verbal means and interpretive procedures. The factors important for the analysis of images and ideas circulating in intercultural communication between the members of the studying and the studied culture include both the consciousness of "how people in a given culture perceive the world via their imagination", as well as knowing "on what cultural models and premises the images are based and how they are mutually influenced, changed and reflected" (Soukup 2011, 277).

The concept of imagology with the adjective "comparative" was for the first time used in 1966 by Hugo Dyserinck, one of the founders of this method, in his article "Zum Problem der 'images' und 'mirages' und ihrer Untersuchung im Rahmen der vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft" (1966). The Belgian researcher took it over from a text by the psychologist Oliver Brachfeld (1953) who claimed that social groups capture the world around them culturally, i.e. subjectively, permanently putting the subjectivity of their thought constructions into the processes of knowing. Following the study of national images by Marius-François Guyard and Jean-Marie Carré, who wanted to overcome objective differences between nations through the

search for similarities – though "Carré's *Les écrivains et le mirage allemands (1800–1940)* of 1947 was still (understandably, perhaps) fed by anti-German national bias" (Leerssen 2007, 21) – Dyserinck created his programme in opposition to the American structuralist of Czech origin René Wellek, who was consistently refusing this area of research as a fashionable matter of sociological history of artistic taste or so-called national psychology. Wellek's arguments were most clearly explained in his "The Crisis of Comparative Literature" (1964) in which he refuses the French theorists' preoccupation with external relations and claims that the literary study, including comparative literature, should have its own research methods. In his later theoretical writings, Wellek even considers so-called extrinsic factors to be dangerous for literature, an "attack on literature" carried out by the scholars who came to the forefront of critical attention from the 1960s onwards, including deconstruction, postmodern and postcolonial theory. Dyserinck, drawing on the theory of three worlds of the German philosopher Karl Popper (the nation as "a group of people connected by the same mistake as regards their history"), was also challenged by the idea that imagology essentially does not belong to literary studies, since it has political objectives (Gáfrik – Koprda 2010, 438). In fact, despite their seeming neutrality, images have their "denoting" as well as "noetic" function, and as stereotypes they occur not only in artistic texts, but also in literary criticism, historiography and literary theory.

However, contrary to Wellek's belief that imagology is extrinsic and ideological, Dyserinck claims that studying images of national ideas contributes to the de-ideologizing of literary studies. In his view, literary historians do not ask questions concerning the qualities of national literatures in their mutual confrontation, but examine what qualities are assigned to individual literatures and which interest groups are served by individual functions. Although the level of literariness in imagology seems to be rather high, with a possibility of considering images as even being similar to deconstruction's uprooted, non-teleological and non-motivated signifiers, its de-ideologization is, naturally, of a different essence than Wellek's, looking more towards the post-structural than the structural. This may be illustrated also by Guyard's claim that the image of the "foreign" is not only formed by artistic texts such as fiction, but is also influenced by non-literary texts generated through television, print and other mass media. However, Wellek's criticism is visible here as well, since Guyard methodically narrowed the object of imagology: its sense should not then be in an extraliterary search for a mutual understanding between ethnic groups, or in a search for the occurrence of myths in individual and collective consciousness, but in becoming a functional supplement to classic literary history.

Dyserinck, who together with his disciples (M. Fischer, K. U. Syndram, etc.) founded the so-called Aachen Comparative Programme (the concept of "Laboratory Europe"), was also concerned with intra- and extra-literary functions and the meaning of images in European regions, as mentioned above, and conceived of imagology as a method which transfers the sociologising or psychologising issue of national mentalities to the form of the de-ideologized view of the nature of nations. At the same time, he asked a question of the specificity of imagotypical structures originating in artistic texts, realizing that our knowledge of the "other", or a "foreign" coun-

try, is influenced and manipulated especially by media, and not by literature as art. Would then these imagotypical structures be different from the stereotypes created in the texts of a non-literary nature? It is this semantic space between the referential relation of utilitarian texts and the possibilities of artistic literature to generate fictive worlds with their own concepts of "otherness" determined by imagological discourse which is, to a certain extent, independent of the external reality. Comparative imagology – here Dyserinck anticipates the later culturological-anthropological approach of Konstantinović (1979) – thus always moves in intercultural space. It draws on reality, though negating it, at the same time, through its repeated fictive constitution. The imagologist thus respects the fact that an image of a "foreign" country is not based on a concrete geography, but rather comes from the reader's imagination.

Dyserinck's theory was significantly complemented in the 1980s by Daniel H. Pageaux (1983; 2010) who on the one hand drew on the anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, on the other hand came close to Ďurišin's theory of reception (1992, 94–95) and Lotman's communication model (1990, 45–63). According to Pageaux, who analysed images of the Iberian Peninsula in French writing, comparative literature must be heading toward cultural anthropology, and culture as a human science is becoming "a workshop" to produce images which work in interliterary communication. A comparatist may put together a picture of time and society from texts of art, based on their new reading, and thus be more sensitive than a political historian in getting through to the sense of "the foreign", to the recognition of a real rhythm of historical process. In the imagological perspective, texts are thus not distinguished according to their aesthetic nature, but according to their thematic significance and impact on receivers. The basic question asked by the imagologist is: to what extent can the investigation of the relations between works of art and the social structures in a concrete space and time be considered objective? Pageaux, who later anticipated the theory of fictional worlds, generally set three methodological principles which resulted from his long-term investigation into French-Spanish relations: 1. although the image of the foreigner is determined by the political-historical context of a certain synchronous section, it is neither a copy nor connected with the foreigner in the sense of mimetic reflection; 2. the form of the image is influenced by cliché, i. e. by a phrasal expression – "there is a limited stock of basic key words summarizing Spanish culture, psychology, and, especially, the French definition of Spanish realia" (2010, 451). The French view of the Spanish "foreigner" thus oscillates, depending on the historical context, between "Hispanomania" and "Hispanophobia"; 3. The circulation of images goes on irrespective of the aesthetic value given by the traditional division of culture into the so-called value and trivial element, since the image of "otherness" in both extreme positions of a differentiated culture arrives at analogical schematized (iconicized) structures. In the textual analysis of the image of the foreigner, one proceeds methodologically from determining big, binarily oppositional structures of the text, through an identification of large thematic units, up to the language level which also captures "otherness" through words.

The creation of an image of the foreigner proceeds semiotically as an indirect way of his/her symbolisation, most often through metaphorization, i. e. through the

description and transfer of what cannot be expressed directly. Symbolization identifies and self-defines the valuating (denoting) subject or community at various levels. The denoting subject or community is considered to be: 1. lower in relation to the "other" (deception, obsession); 2. higher, superior (phobia); 3. mutually complementing (love, philia). The question of the "veracity" of the image of the foreigner remains as a marginal, "unsolvable" problem, since an image always represents someone, while what comes first are the ideas and the ideological systems the image of the foreigner is subject to. On the other hand, the "imaginary", even though it does not exist, may be scientifically studied, since in these images, even though they have a form of fictive stereotypes, society and its individuals are identified in mutual relations. A concrete image thus becomes a basic building block of imagological reflections, a starting reference point that may be linguistically captured as a linguistic formation that becomes, in harmony with Lotman's terminology, a secondary language. Imagology, based on the binary opposition between the diachrony of the research object and the synchrony of methods (in essence, a contradiction of the object's "growing older" and the field's "becoming younger"), thus provides a methodological starting point for the writing of an alternative history of literature from the aspect of its figurativeness. If previous research was characterized by scholarly exclusivity, allowing to read the text only in one way, imagology calls for the right of "bricolage" and the layering of methodological procedures leading from narrowly aesthetic analyses up to historical and culturological research. A literary historian who gives up the ideal of objectivity always compares the results of his/her "reading" with cultural and social circumstances and relates them with the past and needs of the present.

In the next stage, from the 1990s to the present, imagology has been developing in two directions: towards literary theory and comparative study of verbal texts, and towards anthropological analysis of the history of mentalities. In the first conceptualization, it remains a specific method of analysis and interpretation of a literary work, understanding it under the influence of the methods of New Historicism and intercultural communication as a form of social interaction, since literature, as a historical and cultural construct, is created not only by authors, but also by social discourse that produces literary stereotypes as well. Imagology therefore studies the origin, functions and structural mechanisms of the stereotypes in which the features of nations and ethnic or other groups are manifested. It wants to identify, for example, the motivation of the origin of a concrete stereotype in literary texts, and to explain the national or ethnic anchoring of a character, including his or her physical appearance and inner characteristics, together with speech. The creation of literary stereotypes, as a set of standardized and repeating ideas of certain groups, which "assign a limited number of qualities to all members" (Krekovičová 2010, 10), may be indirectly reflected in the linguistic, compositional and thematic structure, i. e. in the presentation of a character, setting, atmosphere, in the means of expression or in the development of story or plot. In the intertextual chain are then studied the inter-semiotic and interspecies transfers of individual stereotypes, their migration from text to text in the form of special identification elements that lead either to canonization or to a radical change. In their monumental publication *Imagology.*

The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey (2007), Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen summarize texts with national features and define individual concepts and categories of the imagological method from the aspect of their national diversity and complementarity: for example, literary stereotype (auto-stereotype as a group's fixed idea about itself; hetero-stereotype as an idea connected to the "others"), literary image, topos, cliché, national symbol, emblem, myth, and so on.

In its second orientation, imagology drew inspiration from the works of acknowledged ethnologists and theorists of the nation: Ernest Gellner (1983), Benedict Anderson (1983), and Anthony D. Smith (1986), as well as from the theory of ethno-images by the Dutch researcher Joep Leerssen (2018) who understands imagology as a research into imagems, i. e. the differentiated national images oscillating between the polarity of affirmative and contrast symptoms within one stereotype. The relevant formulae of stereotypes include, according to Leerssen, the aspect of ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism or colonialism, the binary opposition of normalcy or exoticism, image of the barbarian and the educated, as well as contrastive stereotypes applied on the basis of the theory of climate (north vs. south, west vs. east, centre vs. periphery, Orientalism vs. Occidentalism). A significant impulse for the study of ethnoimages can also be found in the imagological concept of the Iranian semiotician Bahman Namvar Motlagh (2011) who understands the stereotype as a form of canonized literary and cultural image determined mainly by sociological starting points. He takes imagology as a partial element of ethnopsychology, therefore the research of stereotypes in texts is most often connected to the analysis of race, nationality, religion, sex, profession and age, with basic functions of stereotypes being defined as differentiation, identification, justification, generalization and affirmative reproduction (positive thematization of subject matter or motif). For Motlagh, the interpretation of stereotypes through thematic areas means that the resulting value of a concrete image within, for example, a national literature is determined by comparison with the canonized model frequented in the superior literary aggregate or social discourse.

After 1989, imagological reflections have penetrated the environment of Central and Eastern Europe, i. e. the regions with specific ethnic, national and religious situation intensively reflecting postmodern processes of globalization and provincialism. This brings a danger of hidden or open politicization of the imagological method, and, at the same time, additional methodological problems: the relation of the aesthetic value with the national nature of the image from the aspect of its ethical determination, as well as the question of the general validity and adequacy of the transfer of the terminology and semantics of imagological concepts, historically created mainly in German-French confrontation, to Central-Eastern Europe where the image of the "neighbour" (e. g. Czech-German, Slovak-Hungarian, Polish-Russian relations) was structurally formed under different conditions.

Other impulses for the development of East-West Studies came several decades later at the 14th Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (AILC) in Edmonton and the 17th Congress of the AILC in Hong Kong, which responded to the process of globalization and the post-industrial information revo-

ANTON POKRIVČÁK – MILOŠ ZELENKA

lution (Janaszek-Ivaničkova 2010, 206). The congresses focused on polyculturalism and the specificity of the so-called small literatures, linguistically and ethnically different or existing in the middle of the so-called big cultures, for example, the texts of Chinese diaspora on the American continent, including Canada. The motto of the Hong Kong congress "At the Edge: Margins, Frontiers, Initiatives in Literature and Culture" reflected the changes of the research paradigm of intercontinental comparative studies: literature no longer aspires to universality and absolutes, but within the emancipatory postcolonial discourse, emphasizes its hybridization and transcontinental nature. It is not just the common mixture of languages, cultures and ideas, but also the transformation of the civilizational identity of ethnic communities that seems to be a problem especially for traditional Asian cultures based on the stereotype of ethnic homogenization, i. e. the traditional idea of national unity based on one race, one land and one language (the Korean comparatist Boo E. Koh) (Janaszek-Ivaničkova 2010, 209). As early as 1985, the Dutch Americanist Hans Bertens tried to distinguish contradictions between the semantics of two complementarily interconnected postmodern concepts of polyculturalism and globalism. While polyculturalism assumes respect for differences, especially negation of the impact of West European civilization, respecting the optics of "natural chaos" without setting any conditions of teleological movement towards agreement, globalism, in the sense of "new universalism", draws on monolingual approach to reduce literary and cultural differences in favour of a higher, hierarchically superior unified whole. Similarly, the Dutch theorist Douwe Fokkema's thesis of the so-called cultural relativism, drawing on the hermeneutical tradition of "empathy" and Gadamerian understanding, proclaims the openness towards the alternative cultural models (not to all political systems), negating the function of the centre in favour of periphery (1988). The research interest concentrates on the transgression and creolization of cultures, including acknowledging the linguistic and cultural rights of national and ethnic minorities in a unified social and political whole.

If, for example, one was to analyse the depiction of Indian, Chinese or Japanese culture and identity in the context of Central and East European imagination, it would not be possible through a classic literary history of mutual relations. The images of the "foreign country" do not have support in a concrete geography, but rather in the imagination of the reader. Therefore, one must be interested not only in how distant countries are reflected in our literary critical discourse, but also to what extent the critical procedures prevailing in Anglophone literary studies can be productive in reconstructing the Central European images of, for example, India (Gáfrik 2018). With respect to the already classic publication *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said, for example, there have been discussions about the proper definition of the concept of the Orient (the geographical area east of Europe narrowed just to the Near East and India, or the area including also East Asia, i. e. Japan and China?) and Orientalism that would challenge, as the American comparatist Dorothy Figueira (1991; 1994) claims, a simplified contradiction between imperialism and its victims, i. e. essentially negative consequences of Orientalism understood as a monolithic object of the Western European Orientalist discourse.

A possibility of the existence of a Central European perception, or of national forms of Orientalism, admits, in this case, other forms of the study of "otherness", if not for any other reason than for the fact that the Central and Eastern Europe do not have a history of colonialism and they themselves were bearers of "Orientalism" in the past. For example, the Canadian comparatist Tötösy de Zepetnek (1998) understands Eastern and Central Europe as a postcolonial territory and speaks about a specific, secondary "colonization" carried out in the Soviet Eastern Bloc through political, economic as well as cultural pressure. But even after 1989, Central Europe was supposedly subject to the colonial influence of the West manifested by mass culture imported especially from the USA, though in the post-1989 period the impulses of the West and East had a modified impact since Central and Eastern Europe became a place where the mediating function of cultural value was of a "self-referential" nature (Tötösy de Zepetnek, 1998), and therefore a means of national identity and sovereignty. Despite that, the identification and interpretation of post-socialist literatures and cultures of Central and Eastern Europe are influenced by Western theories of postcolonialism based on the material of the so-called "Third World" including Asia, Oceania, Africa and South America. It appears then that the middle position between the Western and Eastern bloc of the politically heterogeneous Central and Eastern Europe (despite its being part of the European Union) may nowadays be understood as a specific space of cultural mediation in the sense of "in between-peripherality", as Tötösy de Zepetnek claims. Central and Eastern Europe is therefore rather an intersection of "the network of interferences and transfers", a place of mutual attraction and repelling. In addition to its emulation of more developed cultures, this postcolonial model is characteristic especially by an effort to achieve a developmental autonomy that can lead even to political hegemonism and new nationalisms (for example, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, war in the Balkans, and so on). Nonetheless, a "de-ideologized" study of the importance and function of ethnic images and stereotypes in the process of the creation of national societies relativizes, not only in scholarly discourse, the understanding of a nation and its language as objectively given and organized taxonomic units for the study of intercultural processes.

LITERATURE

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Bakuła, Bogusław, ed. 2015. *Dyskurs postkoloniałny we współczesnej literaturze i kulturze Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Bonami.

Bakuła, Bogusław – Dobrochna Dabert – Emilia Kledzik, eds. 2015. *Comparisons and Contexts. Essays on Central-Eastern European Literature and Culture*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Bonami.

Bassnett, Susan. 1993. *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford UK – Cambridge: Blackwell.

Beller, Manfred – Joep Leerssen, eds. 2007. *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey*. Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi.

Bernheimer, Charles, ed. 1995. *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

ANTON POKRIVČÁK – MILOŠ ZELENKA

Bertens, Hans. 1985. *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History*. London – New York: Routledge.

Bilczewski, Tomasz, ed. 2010. *Newspółmierność perspektywy nowoczesnej komparatystyki. Antologia*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Brachfeld, Oliver. 1953. *Minderwertigkeitsgefühle beim Einzelnen und in der Gemeinschaft*. Stuttgart: Klett-Verlag.

Corbineau-Hoffman, Angelika. 2000. *Einführung in die Komparatistik*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt.

Dąbrowski, Mieszysław, ed. 2011. *Komparatystyka dla humanistów*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Damrosch, David. 2003. *What is World Literature?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ďurišin, Dionýz. 1992. *Čo je svetová literatúra?* Bratislava: Obzor.

Dyserinck, Hugo. 1966. "Zum Problem der 'images' und 'mirages' und ihrer Untersuchung im Rahmen der vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft. *Arcadia*, 1: 107–120.

Dyserinck, Hugo – Karl Ulrich Syndram, eds. 1992. *Komparatistik und Europaforschung. Perspektiven vergleichender Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft*. Bonn: Bouvier.

Figueira, Dorothy Matilda. 1991. *Translating the Orient. The Reception of Sakuntala in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Figueira, Dorothy M. 1994. *The Exotic. A Decadent Quest*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Fischer, Manfred S. 1981. *Nationale Images als Gegenstand Vergleichender Literaturgeschichte. Untersuchung zur Entstehung der komparatistischen Imagologie*. Bonn: Bouvier.

Fokkema, Douwe. 1988. "On Theory and Criticism in Literary Studies. The International Point of a View (Presidential address)." In *Actes du XIIthe Congrèss de l' AILC. 1*, ed. by Roger Bauer – Douwe Fokkema – Michael de Graat. Munich: Iudicum Verlag.

Gadamer, Hans G. 1975. *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr.

Gáfrik, Róbert – Pavol Koprda. 2010. "Komparatistická imagológia." In *Medziliterárny proces VII. Teórie medziliterárnosti 20. storočia II*, ed. by Pavol Koprda et al., 437–443. Nitra: Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre.

Gáfrik, Róbert. 2018. *Zobrazovanie Indie v slovenskej literatúre*. Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV.

Gáfrik, Róbert – Miloš Zelenka. 2016. "Literárna komparatistika." *Podoby literárnej vedy. Teórie – metódy – smery*, ed. by Roman Mikuláš, 74–92. Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Guillén, Claudio. 1995. *Entre lo uno y lo diverso: introducción a la literatura comparada*. Barcelona: Editorial Critica.

Guyard, Marius-François. 1951. *La littérature comparée*. Paris: Presse Universitaires de France.

Janaszek-Ivaničková, Halina. 1989. *O współczesnej komparatystyce literackiej*. 2nd ed. Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukove.

Janaszek-Ivaničková, Halina. 2010. "Absoluty komparatystyczne a wolna wola." In *Komparatystyka dzisiaj. Problemy teoretyczne*. I. Ed. by Ewa Szczęsna – Edward Kasperski, 206–221. Kraków: Universitas.

Juvan, Marko, ed. 2012. *Svetovne književnosti in obrobja*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC SAZU.

Kola, Adam F. 2018. *Socjalistyczny postkolonializm*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo naukove Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika.

Konstantinović, Zoran. 1979. *Weltliteratur. Strukturen, Modelle, Systeme*. Freiburg: Herder.

Krekovičová, Eva. 2005. *Mentálne obrazy, stereotypy a mýty vo folklóre a politike*. Bratislava: Ústav etnológie SAV.

Leerssen, Joep. 2007. "Imagology: History and method." In *Imagology: The Cultural construction and literary representation of national characters,* ed. by Manfred Beller – Joep Leerssen, 17–32. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Leerssen, Joep. 2015. *Nationalisme*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1958. *Anthropologie structurale*. Paris: Plon.

Lotman, Jurij M. 1970. *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta*. Moscow: Iskusstvo.

Lotman, Jurij M. 1990. *Štruktúra umeleckého textu*. Trans. by Milan Hamada. Bratislava: Tatran.

Marek, Libor. 2018. "Literature from Moravian Wallachia: The Models of Transformation of a Regional

Narrative." *SGEM2018 Vienna ART Conference Proceedings* 5, 6.1: 251–258.

Miner, Earl R. 1990. *Comparative Poetics: An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Miner, Earl R. 2010. "Medzikultúrne porovnávacie výskumy." In *Medziliterárny proces VII. Teórie medziliterárnosti 20. storočia II*, ed. by Pavol Koprda, 198–216. Nitra: Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre.

Moretti, Franco. 2000. "Conjectures on World Literature." *New Left Review*, 1: 54–68.

Motlagh, Bahman Namvar. 2011. "Les stéréotypes à travers le prisme de l'imagologie." *Recherches en Langue et Littérature Françaises Revue de la Faculté des Lettres* 5, 7: 61–81.

Pageaux, Daniel Henri. 1983. "L'imagerie culturelle: de la littérature comparée à l'anthropologie Culturelle." *Synthesis* 10: 79–88.

Pageaux, Daniel Henri. 2010. "Kultúra ako dielňa na výrobu obrazov. Od porovnávacej literatúry ku kultúrnej antropológii". In *Medziliterárny proces VII. Teórie medziliterárnosti 20. storočia II*, ed. by Pavol Koprda, 451–459. Nitra: Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre.

Popper, Karl. 1976. *The Poverty of Historicism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Pospíšil, Ivo, ed. 2015. *Střední Evropa včera a dnes: proměny koncepcí.* Brno: Jan Sojnek – Galium.

Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge – Kegan Paul.

Schacherl, Martin. 2018. *Some tendencies in contemporary scientific texts*. České Budějovice: Pedagogická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity.

Sloterdijk, Peter. 1988. *Zur Welt kommen – zur Sprache kommen*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.

Smith, Anthony D. 1986. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Soukup, Václav. 2011. *Antropologie: Teorie člověka a kultury*. Prague: Portál.

Tötösy de Zepetnek, Steven. 1998. *Comparative Literature. Theory, Method, Application*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 2003. *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Virk, Tomo. 2007. *Primerjalna književnost na prelomu tisočletja: Kritični pregled*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC – SAZU.

Weisstein, Ulrich. 1981. *Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft*. Bern: Peter Lang Verlag.

Wellek, René. 1964. "The Crisis of Comparative Literature." In *Concepts of Criticism*, 282–295. New Haven – London: Yale University Press.

Wellek, René. 1982. "The Fall of Literary History." In *The Attack on Literature and Other Essays*, 64–77. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Wesselings, Johan Herman. 1961. "Opening Speech." In *Actes du IIIe Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée, Utrecht 21–26 VIII*. The Hague: Mouton.

Zelenka, Miloš. 2012. *Komparatistika v kulturních souvislostech*. České Budějovice: V. Johanus.

Zelenka, Miloš – Lenka Tkáč-Zabáková, eds. 2018. *Imagológia ako výskum obrazov kultúry (K reflexii etnických stereotypov krajín V4)*. Nitra: Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre.

Zhirmunsky, Viktor Maximovich. 1962. *Narodnij geroicheskiy epos*. Moskva.

Žirmunskij, Viktor Maximovič. 1984. *O hrdinském eposu (slovanském a středoasijském)*. Trans. by Jitka Jílková – Jiřina Táborská. Praha: Lidové nakladatelství.

**Images of remote countries in the literatures of Central and Eastern Europe:
On the theoretical starting points of intercultural comparative studies**

Intercontinental comparative studies. Imagology. National stereotypes. Interliterariness. World literature. Central and Eastern Europe. AILC congresses. Czech and Slovak comparative literature.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the research into interliterary relations traditionally drew on national concerns emerging naturally from the proximity of a great number of neighbouring nation states with their distinct cultures, or national minorities living within a majority culture. Yet the contacts or relationships with structurally and typologically different cultures have remained outside of critical attention. Studying them requires not only some knowledge of the extraliterary context in which those cultures are situated, but a methodologically different approach as well, such as is used in postcolonial or decolonial theory, Orientalism, imagology, etc. The paper draws attention to the problems connected with comparisons using these approaches, especially imagology, as their main methodological tool. At the same time, it aims at finding out how such approaches contribute to the understanding of cultural, ethnic, biological or material "otherness" (especially through stereotyped imagotypical structures), and whether it is possible to transfer, for example, the imagological concepts historically created in a certain context to a cultural area of a different civilization, and use them to analyze the nature of the literary.

Prof. PhDr. Anton Pokrivčák, PhD.
Faculty of Education
University of Trnava
Priemyselná 4
918 43 Trnava
Slovak Republic
anton.pokrivcak@truni.sk

Prof. PhDr. Miloš Zelenka, DrSc.
Faculty of Central European Studies
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Dražovská 4
949 74 Nitra
Slovak Republic
zelenka.milos@centrum.cz