

Fiction: heritage, choice, creation

BEÁTA THOMKA

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Tapes record reality. Minds record fiction. My mind was never one for remembering things right.
Too much fantasy. Too much muggy past. Too many daydreams.
Ismet Prcic (2011, 119)

The cluster of notions created in the title is not a literary-theoretical thesis, but a conclusion based on a rich corpus of narrative prose. The respective novels and texts, discussed below, are the miniature cross-sections and representative models of the issues that have lately received attention from research dedicated to interliterary, intercultural, and transnational relations. The literary texts are born in the growing “no man’s land” of connections, and as such, they present challenges for the criteria operating with a conventional linguistic, national and territorial angle. The relationship between the language of fiction and the author’s national belonging has become a destabilizing factor, although its beginnings, according even to the most modest calculations, are dated one-and-a half or two centuries before today. The supply of categories that national literary history operates with is not appropriate for interpreting the opuses created within interlacing languages and cultures, and neither is the philologically-angled comparative studies, which follows the tradition of comparing two literatures. “The equivalence of language and nation is a historically justifiable feature of comparative literature insofar as the subject appeared at the same time as, and as part of, the emergence in Europe of projects of self-consciously national literatures in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century. But, today, we need to be more critical of this implicit association” (Boldrini 2006, 18–19).

Polyglots, just as those who come to a new cultural milieu, are faced with a choice. Their native language, the sum of their historical, cultural, intellectual, literary, and imaginary experiences become their heritage that they take with themselves. For writers who inherited more than one language, choosing a language is a matter of free will, whereas the fiction of those who switch languages later usually cannot be traced back to wanton artistic choice, but rather to a consequence of historical coercion. Regarding this latter category of writers, multiple studies and investigations prove the connection between age and the importance of the acquired linguistic erudition. During the 19th- and 20th-century waves of intellectual exiles, it was rarer

for the older generations, but rather natural for the younger ones to base their literary careers on the newly acquired language. Literary careers started before the emigration were usually continued, even abroad, in the writers' native language, as they wished to create this way a continuity despite the isolation and exclusion from publicity they suffered in their homeland. Preserving one's native language functions as a survival strategy both for the ones living in diaspora and for those in minorities. For those prominent contemporary authors who were uprooted young, a couple of decades needed to pass in the new environment in order for them to debut as writers, and for their new language to become the milieu for the creation of fiction. This leads to the observation that temporal, age-related, and learning-related factors limit the validity of the geographical place of our origins, and also that of the knowledge acquired with our native language and the inherited languages. The fiction of writers shifting languages unites the knowledge of deprivation with the dramatic historical experience.

The historical experience of the 20th and of the 21st century gave rise to different poetics and creative habits. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the two world wars, the fascist-leaning Europe of the middle decades, dictatorial eastern-European ideologies, and strengthening nationalisms stand in the historical background of the last century of central-eastern-European literary models. The critical motivation behind the creative habits of this century is to be found in the row of further wars, among them the one leading to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, which resulted in massive waves of emigration, and the ideology of European intolerance. From a literary perspective, the defining ideological changes of our times can be captured in the various autobiographical and genetic versions of short fictions and novels (*Entwicklungsgeschichte*), in documentary and factual fiction, in traditional literary workshops and in those that approach the novel form with the purpose of changing it. Literature, in order to enforce its critical attitude, chooses from those creative parlances, forms, intonations of today that turn against the ignorance of universal issues. The free combination, alternation, mixture of models, structures, genres, intonations is outstanding but not unexpected. The poetics of fiction operates above the category of national literatures. The application, variation, expansion, alteration, and reformation of its forms and tools is achieved with every creation. This happens with a special force when those authors are involved who, on the threshold, make their own world sensible to a new environment, through their fiction and the values they take with them: "a reservoir of inspiration" (Biti 2016). The stories of the narrators, characters and the author interlace in various forms. In the process of interpretation – even irrespectively of the biographical reading – uncovering the threads of the fictional and the historico-biographical elements can be significant. This is what a few intellectual, creative fates, workshops and opuses also exemplify.

MULTILINGUALISM

Huan Octavio Prenz, the writer who calls himself "Yugoitaloargentinian," is the son of parents who emigrated from Istria to Argentina. Prenz, who rebels against the Argentinian dictatorship, returns to Europe as a political refugee, and later works

as a professor of Spanish in Belgrade, Zagreb and Trieste. In his novel entitled *Sólo los árboles tienen raíces* (2013), with the story, with the places, with the ceaseless changes of surnames, names, he narrativizes the feeling of belonging to multiple places: *Only Trees Have Roots*. The title reflects linguistic and translation theoretician George Steiner's thought, who states: "Trees have roots and I have legs; I owe my life to that" (Jaggi 2001, s.p.). Steiner is the descendant of a family that leaves Vienna in the twenties.

I was born in Paris and grew up in Paris and New York. I have no recollection whatever of a first language. So far as I am aware, I possess equal currency in English, French, and German. But I experience my first three tongues as perfectly equivalent centres of myself.

My natural condition was polyglot. [...] Even these three "mother tongues" were only a part of the linguistic spectrum in my early life. [...] This polyglot matrix [...] organized, it imprinted on my grasp of personal identity, the formidably complex, resourceful cast of feeling of Central European and Judaic humanism. Speech was, tangibly, option, a choice between equally inherent yet alternate claims and pivots of self-consciousness.

To the many-centred, the very notion of "milieu," of a singular or privileged rootedness, is suspect. (2013, 125–126)

Steiner believes that the "interference" of various languages "render(s) (one's) use of any language richer, more conscious of specificity and resource" (129). Contemporary writers re-enforce the validity of his thesis. The identity of a bilingual, trilingual person is created in the multilingual conversation happening inside them: many multilingual people do not even have memories of a state preceding their multilingualism. Those who do retain some memories become the indirect transmitters of the imaginary content that was preserved from the previous medium, one that is different from the language of their fiction. In the narrative this becomes a cultural surplus. If we consider Steiner's observations from the perspective of the writers who changed languages, we reach the conclusion that for those who were young when they were uprooted from their own region, the mother tongue(s) is (are) preserved in their spirit and linguistic richness. Furthermore, this mother tongue is preserved in that cultural heritage that they had access to in the past. As they are educated in a new linguistic context, this becomes the natural tool for their utterance. They have admittance into several traditions, but when it comes to the fiction-writing process, they turn to the language that they could grow up to, which they fit, live and create in.

According to the surmise of Bosnian-German writer Saša Stanišić writing itself is the foreign language, the stock that requires a constant recreation: "For every story, for every play, for every new creation, I have to learn a new language: I have to find the narrator's voice, I have to decide on my figure's specific verbal characteristics and I have to learn and keep the rhythm and flow of the whole" (2008). From his last novel, titled *Herkunft* (2019; ... *Where You Come From*, 2021), I would emphasize two critical gestures. When a man returns home for a visit, in the cemetery of a small Bosnian village in the mountains his uncle states: you come from here. The man starts to wonder: what does it mean "from here"? The geographical location of his maternity hospital? The country borders that were in existence during the pains? The family tree of the parents? The genes, ancestors, the dialect? "Origin is construct, ergo curse." Later,

in an age in which family roots once again work as signs of differentiation, in which, as country borders are strengthened, discrimination is becoming programmatic, he almost considers the issue of origin destructive. The novel's thought-provoking, even moving motif with a poetic significance is the conversation between the emigrated son and his grandma who suffers from dementia. The rhythm of the temporal planes, of pasts and presents, of memories and impressions billowing in the mind of the old woman becomes the tender and at once ironic model of fiction-making itself.

The motto of this article is from the staggering novel of Ismet Prcić, refugee from Tuzla, creates the traumatic novelistic poetics of the Bosnian community with spatial and temporal distortions, with accumulating planes of experience, and with the superimposition of shocks. In America, in English.

IN BETWEEN CULTURES

The story of those Francophone Arab writers (Kateb Yacine, Assia Djebar, member of the French Academy, Rachid Bourdjedra, Kamel Daoud, Boualem Sansal), to whom sociologist Kaoutar Harchi dedicated a collection of papers in 2016, is also rather thought-provoking. The collection's title, *I Have Only One Language, and It Is Not Mine*, is a Derrida-quote. And the subtitle, *The writers try*, characterizes the position of the artists working in a space between the inherited and the acquired culture. Their works are created in a double space. On the one hand, the culture based on the Quran and the traditionalism that conforms to the family's expectations, the mothers' Berber, dzayri/dārja, Maghrebi regional languages, and, on the other hand, the more educated generation of the fathers, the men who partook in a French education, and their self-awakening, respectively, stretch them between two poles. Their own paths, different from their ancestors', are thwarted in their countries of origin by the contemporary orthodoxy that forces Arabia upon them. The postcolonial medium of Tunisia and Algeria forces a return to Islam and a united Arabization as a counter-reaction to the 130 years of French oppression. Further difficulties arise from the rather unjust or even inimical approach France shows towards them. The consequence of the critical radicalization of the intellectuals with double attachments is an attitude of exclusion from both the emitting and the receiving culture. Assia Djebar's advancement into the Academy was shamefully obstructed by several members of the French Academy. Kamel Daoud, the one who, out of respect, continued and actualized the work of Albert Camus, has also become a stranger in his own homeland. According to Harchi, the homeland is not the place of writing and neither that of the "whole" life, but has rather become the place of an interrupted, divided life: *a life between* Oran and Paris. Perhaps an even more perplexing event than the Algerian reactions is that the French edition of his novel *Meursault, contre-enquête* (Éditions barzakh, Alger 2013; Actes Sud, Paris, 2014) was depoliticized, as if the conservative French general opinion and mentality would not predominate in the Europe of the 20th–21st centuries, but rather in a previous age. The Arabic language and belonging are an inherited facility, the French culture is an acquired and honored value, and the fact that the intellectuals suffer and stick by this duality is a respectable intellectual and moral plus. The universal issue for the artists creating

in a double cultural space can be found in the relationship between the emitting and the receiving social milieux, between the inherited and the chosen cultures. The results of Harchi's wide-ranging investigations surpass the topic of concrete analyses.

The authorship of the younger generation living and creating in the interspace between two cultures – similarly to Nina Yargekov and the Tunisian-Swedish Jonas Hassen Khemiri – has been defined by the cultural identity configured in this new space. The French writer who spoke the Hungarian language of her ancestors excellently, still decided to speak in the language of her education, just as Khemiri did in Sweden, or as those young Yugoslavs did at the turn of the millennium, who fled from the war to Germany, Finland, or the United States. The decision of those who are bilingual by birth is influenced by the environment and the circumstances, whereas in the case of those who become exiles and get into diasporas, the language will be the one that they have the opportunity not only to acquire but also to learn thoroughly. In the thematic focus of the English- and German-language prose of Aleksandar Hemon and Saša Stanišić, respectively, two authors who changed languages, the sensibility towards those life situations that are defined by duality is perceptible.

KIŠ, VON HORVÁTH, ADY

A non-finalized biotext-collage sheds light with a unique complexity onto the issues arising. *Apatrid* (Kiš 1992; Miočinović 1992), the unpublished narrative written by Danilo Kiš (1935–1989), together with the versions found in his legacy, was posthumously published in 1992 by his widow, Mirjana Miočinović. Ödön von Horváth¹ (1901–1938) came to Kiš's attention with the French edition of his dramatic pieces. He recognized in Horváth an emblematic person, story, and a central-European life related to his own. On one of the typed papers of his legacy the following title is written: *APATRID*. Under it between brackets reads the following: *DUH JE NAŠA DOMOVINA* (The spirit is our home).

Apatrid is the story of Egon von Németh, a text consisting of 15 short chapters. Based on the context, the name change is understood without any special commentary.

I am the typical mixture of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire: at once Hungarian, Croatian, Slovak, German, Czech, and if I were to further rummage among my ancestors, and if I were to send my blood for analysis – science today is quite fashionable among nationalists –, in it, like in a river-bed, I could trace the blood of Aromanians, Armenians, and maybe even that of Gypsies and Jews, too. [...] I have been bilingual since birth; until I turned eighteen I wrote in Hungarian and German, and then, after I translated a Hungarian poet's poetry collection into German, I decided to go with the German, as it is the closest to me. Gentlemen, I am a German writer; the world at large is my home. (Kiš 1992, 5)

This quote, which in the Kiš-text is placed between quotation marks, according to the narrator is an excerpt from a 1934 interview with von Németh (or von Horváth). “Egon von Németh consciously strips his works of the autobiographical elements” (9), “he considered his parents and his extraction an irrelevant circumstance, a mere coincidence” (5).

The first sentence of *Apatrid* is: “On 28 May 1938 he arrived to Paris”. Right after this a strange motif is finely wedged in, which is not even unexpected from the narrator who freely moves between the real and the fictional biographies. “The room” of the traveler lodged in the

Latin quarter was populated by ghosts, around them hotel sheets were hovering, still as shroud. One of the ghost-couples seemed familiar, and the picture of the poet and his lover came into the mind of the homeless gentleman, as he saw them in an album: Leda in a hat as big as a mill-wheel, which adumbrates her face as if her eyes were covered by a veil, but the shade is not enough to cover the barely noticeable cramp of the years and of the sensuality that gathers around her mouth; the poet wounded by love and illness, with eyes bulging of Grave’s disease, eyes in which, like in some Gypsy musician’s, the fire is still burning. (5)

The motif neither for the Endre Ady-translating Kiš, nor for us is cryptic, while to his readers of other languages, and to his Serbian publisher it remains undiscovered. When he is inquiring from the Spanish porter after a guest from around 1910 by name, and the porter looks at him uncomprehendingly, “the stateless gentleman once more becomes certain of how unsurpassable the limits separating the world truly are, and to how great an extent the language is the only home for man” (5).

However, to the question of which language it is, the monolingual and the multilingual homeless figures evoked in the fiction of the 20th century would have different answers. The story’s dramatic punch line is that on that aforementioned day Ödön von Horváth suffered a tragic event in Paris. As a grotesque epilogue, half a century later Danilo Kiš also meets his death in Paris, the city of his self-exile. The last, voluntary exile was preceded by forceful expatriations and repatriations. The seven-year-old boy is rescued from the 1942 pogrom in Novi Sad and brought to Hungary by his family, and 1947, after his father is dragged away to Auschwitz, Red Cross helps the boy with his mother and sister to get back to Cetinje, to the mother’s family. Ödön von Horváth until he is 11 years old, Kiš till he turns 12, speak and write better in Hungarian than in Serbian. The career and creative work of both is the model for a writer’s choice of language determined by historical circumstances: the Hungarian-Serbian Danilo Kiš becomes a Serbian writer, Ödön von Horváth a German dramatist, the Croatian Penz turns into a Spanish prose writer, the German Steiner becomes an English theoretician.

For a fraction of a second, the small hotel room in Paris creates a metonymic connection between the three dramatic fates of *Apatrid*: between the fates of Ady, von Horváth, and Kiš. The facts that can also be found in the writers’ biographies, here interweave as virtual plaits. For a long time Kiš suppressed the effects of personal and historical traumas with unusual artistic energy. Later, in his prose, however, the resigned personal tone, the metaphoric language, the autobiographical motifs are replaced by variations on the historical fiction. The central questions are the state of exile, the totalitarian repression, the scandal of the Eastern European persecutions. The fictional processes are enriched by historical documents in such works as *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (1976) and *The Encyclopedia of the Dead* (1983). Thus the personal experiences are placed into universal perspectives: they become narratable as human fates-situation.

DOPPELSICHT

For the diseases, experience of alienation and stateless to arise, forced exile is not a prerequisite. However, the dramatic nature of this reft can serve as a measure for the realization that, in many, the sense of bereavement actually develops at home. It is not a spatial, not a linguistic issue, not a consequent, but an antecedent. The negative experience of an age nurses its own poetics. The poor-quality black-and-white amateur photos one can see in W.G. Sebald's novels are not of artistic or illustrative nature, but they become the tools of a creative strategy through their capturing the general disposition of the age. His title *Austerlitz* (2001) features the surname of his novel's character, Jacques Austerlitz, but in his text the term also gains meaning as a placename. The Parisian Gare d'Austerlitz in 1943 was turned into a camp for the Jews to be deported. Jacques arrives to England as a German-Jewish refugee child, and becomes an architectural historian.

The remarkable Scottish author Ali Smith attests to a special receptivity towards all those issues that define the fiction of the previously mentioned writers. In the powerful first scene of her novel titled *Autumn* (2016) "an old old man washes up on a shore". [...] "Seems the self you get left with on the shore, in the end, is the self that you were when you went" (1). Daniel Gluck leaves the continent as a young refugee, and becomes an art historian. But it seems like Smith's fiction continues to hide one of *The Seasonal Quartet's* main symbols and characters, Gluck (or as I consider, Daniel Glück) volume by volume, to shelter him from English politics, which opposes immigration. Smith's poetic orientation, susceptible to critical confrontations, is motivated by an ideology dominating the contemporary world: the danger of the growing tendency for exclusion.

The cited texts and authors represent various generations, situations, languages, and approaches. Sebald needed to spatially distance himself from Germany, to place himself outside, in order to see more clearly all that which his sensibility, his intellectual critical attitude predestined him for. Anselm Kiefer's motivations are similar in nature. It was not an existential pressure that dislodged them; and the same is true for Danilo Kiš, who in his mid-life moved from Yugoslavia to France. The decisive moment can be found in the rejection of the ruling ideologies, furthermore, in the inner need for distance, which allow for the writer to face his own story, to face history, and also the distortions of the present. This is the acquisition of that *Doppelsicht*, which ensures the radical conduct for our art, and the benefit of a critical double vision in fiction.

Following the intentions of the generation that lived through historical traumas, contemporary poetics is also defined by the narrative variants of confronting and facing oneself. The personal addresses mobilize the factual and fictional formal stock of the genres of autobiography and biography. The emotional and intellectual heritage, and sometimes the mapping of the threads of family history provide one with a new approach to taking stock. Self-examination, remembrance, reflection, situation analysis often follow the manner of reckoning. On the other pole, contrary to this approach, personal involvement turns towards the language of discretion, quiescing, indirection. The authors and their portrait-reconstructions, redefinitions are usual-

ly dramatically tuned. Personal aptitudes, however, make possible the employment of irony, self-irony, and humor, as Stanišić's *Herkunft* pictures it in the fiction/dementia parallel. The impossibility of reminiscence and of the remembering reconstruction attests to the imagination's freedom and sovereignty.

POETICS OF DISLOCATION

Similarly to the generations of writers entering the stage in the first decades of the third millennium, in whom critical thinking towards the previous era and the present has strengthened, interest in *Exilliteratur*, in the older and newer versions of exile writing has grown considerably with the scholars, too. In Zvonko Taneški's dislocational poetic project (2021) what is at the forefront is the base motifs of the theme of migration, such as the perspectives connected to repositioning, and the sameness of ex-Yugoslav migrant writers and characters who are disconnected from their environment. In the literature of exile, the homeland is not an object to be possessed, but the complex imagery of constant deprivation. The "homeland-on-the-move" is not a closing-in, but our repeated opening-up towards others (Biti 2016, 63). The indeterminacy defining the place for writers that have multiple ties, the imaginative and sensitive excess – "literatures-without-a-fixed-abode", "Niemand's- und Nirgenland" (Ette 2005, 241), or what I call a "portable homeland" – are inaccessible outside the transcultural context. Contemporary fiction is shaped by the narrative models of persecution, exclusion, endangerment, and flight. This library is extended worldwide by the writers' imagination, the exiles' position of remembering, the desire for self-knowing, the intention of self-documentation, the re-interpretation of ancestry and of the historical past, the conception of one's own critical relation to the old and the new language, environment, life. The topic is developed on a large scale, and it deserves constant attention thanks to the various versions in which it can appear. The new Library of Babel is growing with unprecedented speed, and the issues it raises have extended into universal ones. This phenomenon gives a new task to linguistic, poetic, and historical scholarship, too. The authors who have two or more places of belonging cannot be categorized under one nation's literature, as they are by definition the members and inheritors of several cultures. Their works do not connect to a single area or language, they are rather born in the field of cultural interconnections. This position merges, connects, doubles, it maneuvers the imaginary heritage in light of the other language, and it summarizes in fiction the newly acquired human and artistic experiences for those, as well, to whom this perspective is unknown. The collaboration between the practice of translation and the artistic presence becomes effective as a new factor in the national context. The novels that are translated and authored back into the mother tongue pose challenges for both agents of the process: the translator and the author.

SUPRANATIONAL HISTORY

Wolfgang Iser (1993), in his theory of fiction, talks about the irrealization of the real and the realization of the imaginary as prerequisites for the act of fiction-making. The most important stage of the process is the understanding of the yet unformed

world, the possibility to experience the events and, furthermore, their turning into events that are possible to experience, I would add. What is then that the authors mentioned, and the contemporary novels make possible for us to experience? A search for one's place, questions connected to one's self-image, one's own phylogeny, review, transfer, integration. One or more languages and cultures brought with us, an acquired language and culture. The collective of more traditions, more viewpoints that open the perspective towards the already known and the newly learned. In summary, those issues of existence that are of a more general scope than the autobiographical fiction or non-autobiographical one of the personal fates, and step out of the framework of the national literature.

Novelistic fiction appears in a different constellation in Milan Kundera's *Les Testaments trahis* (1993; *Testaments Betrayed* 1995). His statement has consequences for cultural history and for the history of genres: "It is as if in the course of its journey the history of the novel kept waking the different parts of Europe, one after the other, confirming them in their specificity and at the same time integrating them into a common European consciousness" (n.p.). The novel surpasses the national borders, a consequence of its transnational character – even despite its special distinctive features it cannot be reduced by the various national literary histories.

I speak of the European novel not only to distinguish it from, say, the Chinese novel but also to point out that its history is transnational; that the French novel, the English novel, the Hungarian novel, are in no position to create autonomous histories of their own but are all part of a common, supranational history that provides the only context capable of revealing both the direction of the novels evolution and the value of particular works. (1995, n.p.)

Gérard Genette is another representative of a situation similar to Kundera's. In an answer to a 1987 interview question asking on whom he would ground the open poetics resting on virtual literature, he gives a row of non-French names (Vladimir Nabokov, John Barth, John Hawkes, Julio Cortázar, Donald Barthelme, Italo Calvino). He claims that we certainly cannot continue to talk about "French" literature, as literature has become world literature.²

CONCLUSION

How do national literatures become international ones, asks David Murphy (2011, 408). The issue is the consequence of processes that turned the research of certain national literatures into international studies. The initiative originated not from literary studies or from a set of comparative criteria, but from the realization that in the 20th century the abandonments, the changes of place, the separations, the repositionings have become more pronounced than ever. The turn of the millennium further accelerated and intensified the movement. Relocation and settlement affect not only the cultures of those continents that were formed by immigrants or the cultures of colonial empires, but they greatly influence European cultures too. The subject of Francophony or Germanophony is not only the study of the works of authors that are French or German by origin, but also that of writers coming from various regions, creating in French or German respectively. Thus it takes into consideration all

those values that writers, after they appropriated their own culture, end up creating in a chosen language. According to a very important criteria of the entry discussing the American multicultural literature, the works of writers coming from different continents have changed the image of American literature exactly through their representations of their own cultural environments (Dickstein, Giles, and Blair 2021).

In this constellation, the effect's the autor's region of origin and his heritage shows the intellectual legacy in an unexpected refraction both for the abandoned and for the new environment. Though those who change languages are lost to the literature of their native language, they will still have a place in their national culture. They will have a place both in the culture from which they took their own imaginary stock, and in the host culture, in whose language they recount this experience. The tradition of genres stands above the national category, especially in the case of the genre that is impossible to categorize poetically: the novel. The ontological predisposition and the aptitude are capable of saturating the form of „transcendental homelessness” with a new meaning, which continuously extends and concretizes the genre with autobiographical, historical, generational, documentary and other variants. The literary works internationally acknowledged surpass the confines of the place of origin, of the native language, and of the nationality, and continue their journey in various new contexts. The influence of the author, of the original and the host media on the work's interpretation and evaluation changes considerably. This is the scope of the transliterary system that is established beyond nations and literatures.

Translated by Noémi Albert

NOTES

- ¹ In the manuscript plans of *Enciklopedija mrtvih* (*The Encyclopedia of the Dead*) the title “Ödön von Horváth” was featured as a separate chapter, which was ultimately excluded from the finished book.
- ² “Je n'ai qu'une certitude : on ne peut plus parler de littérature « française », la littérature est désormais mondiale” (Genette and Salgas [1987] 2021).

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Fiction: heritage, choice, creation

Multilingualism. Authors between cultures. Danilo Kiš. Ödön von Horváth. Endre Ady. Doppelsicht. Poetics of dislocation today. Transnational history of literature.

Fiction as heritage, choice and creation is not a literary-theoretical thesis, but a conclusion based on a rich corpus of narrative prose. This article aims to systemize different fictional works of migrant literature and problematizes the writing of bi- and multilingual authors. Polyglots, just as those who come to a new cultural milieu, are faced with a choice. Their native language, as the sum of their historical, cultural, intellectual, literary, and imaginary experiences, becomes the heritage that they take with themselves. For writers who inherited more than one language, choosing a language is a matter of free will, whereas the fiction of those who switch languages later usually cannot be traced back to open artistic choice, but rather to a consequence of historical coercion. Regarding this latter category of writers, multiple studies and investigations prove the connection between age and the importance

of the acquired linguistic erudition. Younger authors base their literary careers on the newly acquired language, and the authorship of this generation living and creating in the interspace between two cultures has been defined by the cultural identity configured in this new space. The novel crosses national borders, as a consequence of its transnational character – despite its special distinctive features, it cannot be reduced to various national literary histories. The influence of the author, as well as the original and the host media, on the work's interpretation and evaluation changes considerably. This is the scope of the transliterary system that is established beyond nations and literatures.

Beáta Thomka, DSc.
Professor emerita of literature studies
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Pécs
Hungary
thomkabeata@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6906-8378>