examines the meaning the Seine has in each of them.

The second part of the book is dedicated to contemporary issues and literary works. The studies explain the way teachers work with their students and the experimental ways they introduce geography, topography and other disciplines linked to space and place in general. Dominique Dehais and Luc Perrot describe a four-day walking tour with students of the first and second year at ENSA Normandie. The role of the students is to visualize the landscape, and the images they describe represent their perception of reality. Dehais and Perrot conclude by evoking the importance of an architect in the production of a habitat. Sonia Anton and Alexandra Seha's study "Études des *Eaux mauvaise*" (Study of *E. m.*) describes another experiment that was participated in by emerging writers. The specific method and rules were assigned, the objective of which was to find out how the Seine is currently represented through students' texts.

The third part of the book is Carmen Andrei's "Représentations littéraires du Danube" (Literary representations of the Danube), which works with texts dating from Antiquity, proposing exogenic and endog-enic testimonies from various authors. Since the Danube is completely different from the Seine in the geographical and geomorphological sense, the section mainly discusses the differences in its historical background and transnational flow. The goal is to initiate comparison between the Seine and other rivers and to present what could constitute geocritical analysis of a river as an object. It also presents the Danube as a witness of individual and collective memory.

In summary, *Le territoire littéraire de la Seine, géocritique d'un fleuve* interprets the theme of the Seine in literary works from an interdisciplinary approach. Although not much has been written to date about literary interpretations of the Seine, Anton's collection represents an important contribution and she invites readers to continue further in this field of research. The book proves that reading literature from a geocritical perspective is instrumental in revealing aspects that have not yet attracted the attention of researchers.

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TIBOR ŽILKA — ANNA ZELENKOVÁ — KRISZTIÁN BENYOVSZKY: Stereotypes and Myths. Intertextuality in Central European Imagological Reflections

The book under review is an outstanding work on the Czech-Slovak-Hungarian cultural relations from the 18th to the 21st century and their representation not only in fiction and film, but also in the graphic novel and theater productions. Due to this wide chronological stretch and intermedial focus, *Stereotypes and Myths. Intertextuality in Central European Imagological Reflections* opens Slovakia up for an English-speaking reader as an area in Central Europe – seemingly well-known yet hiding many controversies and surprises – from an imagological perspective. The authors provide a comparatist look at the interaction of Slavic (Slovak) and non-Slavic cultures through the study of ethnic stereotypes and myths while drawing on the theory of intertextuality and intermediality, which is the book's biggest advantage and value.

The volume consists of an introduction, seven chapters, and a conclusion. The expres-

sion is clear throughout and easy to follow, except for the few stylistic and editorial flaws which, nonetheless, do not obscure comprehension and do not detract from the overall positive impression made by the text. The book chapters, though thematically diverse and rich with examples, can be grouped into five sections in view of the dominant themes they address: 1) the representation of the Slovak national character in the literature of their neighbors, Czechs and Hungarians; 2) the Western (English) literary perspective on the Slavic world; 3) the reception of the Faustian myth in Central Europe; 4) the study of film adaptation, which partially overlaps with the Faustian theme in Slovakia; and 5) the history of (Central) European comparative literary theory in the 20th century.

The introduction "From Intertextuality to Imagology" provides a short history of the Nitra School, which gathered several prominent personalities and made this small Slovak city one of the few academic centers in the former Communist Bloc to achieve international acclaim in the West. As stated in the introduction, the group's origins date back to the Prague Spring of 1968. Stimulated by the information theory and communication theory of the time, Slovak literary scholars gradually developed the expression theory of the text, which found its support among the foreign circles of literary theoreticians. By the second half of the 1970s, due to its international scope and the cooperation between Anton Popovič (1933–1984) and his international colleagues: the American-Dutch translator James S. Holmes (1924–1986), as well as Hungarian (István Sőtér and Imre Dénes), Czech (Jiří Levý), and Canadian (Milan V. Dimić) critics, Slovak scholarship excelled in the field of *translation theory* and the *theory of metatext*. In the late 1980s, under the leadership of Tibor Žilka, the Nitra School standardized its terminology, appropriating instead of "metatext" the term "intertextuality", which was understood as "manifestation of secondary communication, which aris-

es when a work of art or its parts become the impetus for the creation of another work of art or become part of other texts" (10). Extending this definition to include different individual media and types of art was the natural development of the study of *intertextuality* into that of *intermediality*, i.e. "the relationship of a particular literary text to at least one other media product or work of art generated primarily by a non-linguistic sign system" (10).

In endowing this approach with imagological insights, the authors of *Stereotypes and Myths* follow in the footsteps of the Nitra School, on the one hand, and expand the comparatist horizon in exploring the cultures of Central Europe. Chapter 1, "The Film Adaptation of a Literary Work", focuses on presenting the contemporary state of the art regarding the adaptation theory. The chapter provides a substantial theoretical background, rich classification, and source material, which in itself may serve as a reference directory for further studies of the film adaptations of Slovak classics and contemporary fiction.

The analysis of ethnic otherness oriented toward the search and development of mutual dialogue is provided in two chapters focusing on the mutual representation of Slovaks, Hungarians, and Czechs in works of literature. Chapter 2, "The Ours and the Foreign in Literature (Fiction) (Slovak-Hungarian Relations)", analyzes literary sources from the early 19th century to the present. Contemporary Slovak and Hungarian fiction, which appears to the reader through the lens of an "ours"–"foreign" dichotomy, not only describes the ethnic images the neighboring nations have of each other but also gives reasons for their formation in a certain way and the transformations they went through over the decades or centuries. Therefore, the reader gets a unique insight into the contemporary representation of Slovaks and Hungarians in their national literatures with a substantial list of primary sources. Unsurprisingly, both Slovaks and Hungarians are represented in their national fiction as "for-

eign" unless "Hungarian fiction […] assumes the right to absorb the territory of Slovakia into its own world" (51); then, a Slovak writer becomes part of the Hungarian space.

Chapter 3, "The Ours and the Foreign in Formation of the Image of a Tinker (Slovak-Czech Relations)", uncovers the history of the neighboring cultures, which would interpret Czech literature as "more developed" and Slovak as "foreign" in the light of 19th-century cultural discourse. The chapter traces the development of the image of a tinker into a stereotype analyzing a broad selection of fictions and dramatic genres, also reaching out to folklore and journalism to provide cultural context.

The Western view on the Slavs is the next thematic section of the book. Its historic and theoretical perspective is presented in Chapter 4, "Slavic Myths in the Context of the Study of East-West Relations". The history of the field known as East-West studies is presented through the ideas of Paul Van Tieghem, Victor Zhirmunsky, and Franca Sinopoli, who approached Westcentrism in literature studies critically, suggesting an intracultural look on Europe, on the one hand, and Czech and a Slovak comparatists (Jiří Polívka, Jan Máchal, Matija Murko, René Wellek, Karel Krejčí, Frank Wollman, Václav Černý, Slavomír Wollman, and Dionýz Ďurišin) advocating the "unity of Slavonic national literatures and the significance of maintaining contacts with the world literature development" (79), on the other. The history of ideas concerning the role of Slavic literatures in world/European literature unfolds against a rich socio-political and cultural background of the Central European area.

The following two chapters make an extremely interesting thematic bloc in the monograph. The authors rightly note that since the late 16th century the Faustian myth has been elaborated by different national literatures in their specific ways, which exhibited the features of a cultural epoch these post-texts were created in. Chapter 5, "The Faustian Myth and Its Forms",

reflects upon its Czech-Slovak-Hungarian reception, which took place within the third phase of the Faustian theme reception, defined by André Dabezies as "triumphal freedom". It is focused on the postmodern face of Doctor Faust, including the film adaptation of Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto* (1981, dir. István Szabó), the film *Faust* (1994, dir. Jan Švankmajer), the drama *Nebo, peklo, Kocúrkovo* (1995) by Karol Horák, and the puppet show *Faust* (dir. Marek Zakostelecký) performed in Nitra. In analyzing and comparing these texts of culture, the author not only identifies the texts from the perspective of postmodern poetics but also contextualizes them in the previous cultural epochs, which accentuates the postmodern lack of one dominant image of Doctor Faust. The variety of postmodern interpretations is also reinforced by the choice of texts for analysis, which are two films and two theatre productions. Going further back in time to the 19th century, Chapter 6, "The Intertextual Aspect of the Faustian Theme in Nineteenth-Century Slovak and Czech Literature" (an earlier version of which appeared in *World Literature Studies*, 4/2020) attempts to "specify the 'interliterary network' of Central European cultural tradition from the perspective of 'minor national literatures'" (102). It examines the Slovak heroic poem in prose *Faustiáda* by Jonáš Záborský and the Czech poem *Doktor Faust* by Šebestián Hněvkovský. Both chapters in a way illustrate Oswald Spengler's idea that "Faustian aspirations are the key to all creative activities and personalities of post-Medieval Western civilization" (Fitzsimmons, Lorna, ed. *A Life of Faust*: *The Faust Theme in Literature and Music. A Reader*, 2008, 1).

In Chapter 7, "Central European Ethnic Stereotypes in the Popular Culture", the author analyzes three literary texts aimed at British readers. These are Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Scandal in Bohemia* (1891) featuring the Czech royalty, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) picturing the Slovaks as servants of evil, and Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934) presenting

a passionate Hungarian aristocrat. Bearing the features of "unified" exoticism, these characters, created by some of the most popular British writers, suggest much about the stereotypes and prejudice English popular fiction instilled in its readership about Central Europeans as a single mass of people rather than representatives of different nations. This chapter seems particularly inspiring for further study of Western stereotyping of "the Slavic stranger" in the numerous film adaptations of the above literary texts, following the theoretical basis found in Chapter 1.

Despite being targeted to an academic (professional) audience, this collection may be interesting to a less scholarly reader curious about the cultures of Central Europe. While literary historians, cultural comparatists, or theorists will find it insightful in terms of literary/intermedial comparative studies in Czechoslovakia and later Slovakia, the wider readership will be fascinated to learn about the ways certain ethnic stereotypes were shaped by some national literatures, spread out in foreign lands, and have remained fixed in contemporary culture by media other than fiction, especially if it concerns the works of popular culture. Given its focus on imagology in Central Europe, the book could have benefited from further discussion of recent comparative work in the region, including the issues of the journal *World Literature Studies* edited by Charles Sabatos and Róbert Gáfrik on frontier Orientalism (1/2018) and by Anton Pokrivčák and Miloš Zelenka on images of remote countries (2/2019). Nevertheless, *Stereotypes and Myths. Intertextuality in Central European Imagological Reflections* can be highly recommended to connoisseurs from the fields of comparative Slavic studies, Central European area studies, and world literature.

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JANA HORÁKOVÁ — MARIKA KUPKOVÁ — MONIKA SZÜCSOVÁ (eds.):
The Black Box Book: Archives and Curatorship in the Age of Transformation of Art Institutions