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## 1 Introduction



# Introduction

## 1 Preliminary remarks

### 1.1 Kurze Vorbemerkung

Als ich 2013 gefragt wurde, ob die Abteilung für Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft an der Universität Wien bereit wäre, den XXI. Weltkongress der AILC/ICLA auszurichten, war meine Präsentation beim Pariser Kongress von dem Bewusstsein begleitet, dass uns nur relativ wenig Zeit und vor allem geringe personelle Ressourcen zur Verfügung stehen würden. Die intensive Anbahnung des Kongresses selbst und auch seine Durchführung gelangen jedoch erfreulich gut. Eine Art zu bezahlender Preis war der, dass für die sich üblicherweise anschließende Publikation der proceedings, die bisher fast immer eine längere Zeit beanspruchte, eine Reihe von Problemen auftraten. Zunächst erwies es sich wegen der großen Zahl an Teilnehmer:innen sinnvoll, die Organisatoren von Workshops zum Publizieren separater, thematisch schwerpunkthafter Sammelbände zu ermutigen, die deshalb auch rascher fertig vorliegen konnten. Umgekehrt führte dies freilich dazu, dass der Verbleib jener Papiere, die es zu einer druckreifen Version brachten, schwer zu überblicken war, von der Implementierung des peer review-Verfahrens abgesehen. Dennoch gelang dies, wenn auch in einer längeren Frist, wofür ich allen Kolleg:innen, die dabei halfen, herzlich danken möchte. Für die Publikation jener Papiere, die von den vielen vorgetragenen bei uns eingereicht wurden, konnten wir den De Gruyter Verlag gewinnen, der sowohl eine online-Version im Open-Access-Modus als auch eine fünfbändige Printversion hergestellt hat. Die Distribution auf fünf Teile machte es möglich, dass meine Kolleg:innen Norbert Bachleitner (inzwischen im Ruhestand), Paul Ferstl, Daniel Syrový und Gianna Zocco (inzwischen in Berlin) jeweils einen Band herausgeben konnten. Ich selbst behielt die Verantwortung für den Band 1, der das Korpus nun – nachdem wir generell deutlich länger benötigt hatten als geplant – noch einmal mit einem etwas schmerzlichen Zeitabstand einleitet und zugleich abschließt. Ohne zu sehr in Details zu gehen, seien die Ursachen für die unbeabsichtigte Verzögerung mit den Stichworten genannt: Finanzen natürlich, Lehr- und Verwaltungslast, Personalwechsel- und -ausfälle, Krankheit, was alles ich nur erwähne, um eindeutig zu machen, dass weder der Verlag noch die Autor:innen, die teilweise seit einigen Jahren auf die Drucklegung ihres Beitrags warten, eine Schuld trifft. Ich bitte sehr herzlich um Verständnis, freue mich aber umso mehr, dass die Vielstimmigkeit der Komparatistik, die auf

dem Wiener AILC/ICLA-Kongress zu hören war, nun wenigstens in einer repräsentativen Auswahl nachlesbar ist.

Wien, Frühjahr 2023

## 1.2 Brief preliminary remark

When I was asked in 2013 whether the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Vienna would be prepared to host the XXI World Congress of the AILC/ICLA, my presentation at the Paris Congress was accompanied by the awareness that we would have relatively little time and, above all, few human resources at our disposal. However, the intensive preparation of the congress itself and also its realisation worked out exceedingly well. The price to be paid was that a number of problems arose surrounding the subsequent publication of the proceedings, which also previously had almost always been a longer process. First of all, because of the large number of participants, it made sense to encourage the organisers of workshops to publish separate, thematically focused volumes, which could therefore be completed more quickly. Conversely, this meant that it was difficult to keep track of the whereabouts of those papers that made it to a print-ready version, apart from the implementation of the peer review process. Nevertheless, this was achieved, albeit over a longer period of time, for which I would like to thank all the colleagues who helped. For the publication of those papers that were submitted to us out of the many that were presented, we were able to win De Gruyter, who produced both an online version in open access mode and a five-volume print version. The distribution into five parts made it possible for my colleagues Norbert Bachleitner (now emeritus), Paul Ferstl, Daniel Syrový and Gianna Zocco (now in Berlin) to publish one volume each. I myself retained responsibility for volume 1, which now – after we had generally taken considerably longer than planned – introduces and at the same time concludes the corpus with a somewhat painful time gap. Without going into too much detail, the reasons for the unintentional delay are outlined in the following key words: finance, of course, teaching and administrative overload, staff changes and absences, illness, all of which I mention only to make it clear that neither the publisher nor the authors, some of whom have been waiting for several years for their contributions to be printed, are to blame. I sincerely ask for their understanding, but I am all the more pleased that the polyphony of comparative literature heard at the Vienna AILC/ICLA Congress can eventually be read in a representative selection.

Vienna, spring 2023

### 1.3 Petite remarque préliminaire

Lorsque l'on m'a demandé en 2013 si le département de Littérature comparée de l'Université de Vienne était prêt à accueillir le XXI<sup>e</sup> Congrès mondial de l'AILC/ICLA, ma présentation au Congrès de Paris était accompagnée de la conscience que nous ne disposerions que de relativement peu de temps et surtout de peu de ressources en personnel. Cependant, la préparation intensive du congrès lui-même et sa réalisation se sont bien déroulées. Une forme de prix à payer a été le délai de la publication des actes; si, comme c'était jusqu'à présent presque la norme, elle a pris beaucoup de temps, elle a été en outre confrontée à une série de problèmes. Tout d'abord, en raison du grand nombre de participante-s, il s'est avéré judicieux d'encourager les organisateurs/organisatrices d'ateliers à publier des recueils séparés, axés sur des thèmes précis, qui pouvaient donc être achevés plus rapidement. Inversement, il était difficile de dépister et obtenir les documents qui étaient prêts à être publiés, en dehors de la mise en œuvre de la procédure d'évaluation par les pairs. Néanmoins, nous y sommes parvenus, bien que dans un délai plus long, et je tiens à remercier tou-te-s les collègues qui nous ont aidés. Pour la publication des articles qui nous ont été soumis, nous avons pu compter sur la maison d'édition De Gruyter, qui a produit à la fois une version en ligne en accès libre et une version imprimée en cinq volumes. La répartition en cinq parties a permis à mes collègues Norbert Bachleitner (désormais émérite), Paul Ferstl, Daniel Syrový et Gianna Zocco (entre-temps à Berlin) d'éditer chacun-e un volume. J'ai moi-même conservé la responsabilité du tome 1 qui, après avoir pris beaucoup plus de temps que prévu, ouvre et clôt le corpus avec un décalage un peu douloureux. Sans trop entrer dans les détails, les causes de ce retard involontaire sont les suivantes: les finances, bien sûr, surcharge d'enseignement et de tâches administratives, rotation et absences du personnel, maladie, facteurs, que je mentionne uniquement pour bien montrer que ni la maison d'édition ni les auteurs, dont certain-e-s attendent depuis plusieurs années l'impression de leur contribution, n'en sont responsables. Je les remercie de leur compréhension, mais je me réjouis encore davantage que la polyphonie de la littérature comparée, qui a été entendue lors du congrès AILC/ICLA de Vienne, puisse finalement être lue dans une sélection représentative.

Vienne, printemps 2023

## 2 Thematic introduction

Literature consists of language, written or spoken, and of languages. The double aspect of language as a communication system, in the case of fiction additionally defined by an aesthetic component, and as an idiom, of which there are an esti-

mated 7,000 worldwide, shapes the activity of comparative literature in particular. One could explain that, within the broad field of national and international literary studies, it is precisely comparative literature, which is principally and habitually concerned with the multilingualism of the world. The name of the subject “Comparative Literature” can easily be found in 50 different languages and 50 (very roughly estimated; sometimes this value is undercut, not infrequently it rises to over 100) seems to approximately correspond to the number of languages that actively produce literature in a more emphatic sense and on an international scale. Such an approach, then, still excludes so-called ‘small languages’, endangered languages, emergent literary languages and those in which orality plays a traditional and major role. In short: the subject area of our discipline is potentially multilingual, and is necessarily so as soon as one dedicates oneself to the field of literary translation. At the same time, however, science is dependent on communication, which must guarantee understanding in several senses: not only through the transfer of texts between languages, but also insofar as the possibility of intersubjectively comprehensible hypothesis formation, discussion and securing of results is concerned. Moreover, in regards to working on the text before speaking of interlingual translation, there is already the confrontation with language as material, with its structures, its semantics, its metaphors and the fact that all processes of interpretation are already intrinsic translations.

The brief preliminary remarks have been written and discarded at least ten times in the past years. It seems that since 2016, the summer of which saw the 21st AICL/ICLA Congress, the time gap has grown almost exponentially. The Covid pandemic and, since 2022, the ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine are just two eventful, long-lasting caesurae that separate us from a seemingly more carefree time. In addition, there have been, and still are, worrying political polarisations in many states, regardless of their constitution or legislative periods that were or are far from enabling internal and external détente. This global climate has, it can be regrettably observed, not only impaired the organisation of international literary studies as far as the physical meeting is concerned, but has also led to an antagonism between states and, subsidiarily, their cultural systems, which is bringing about the opposite of what worldwide organisations aim to achieve. Traditional factors of tension such as the in-/exclusion of states or ethnic groups that are not generally recognised are the order of the day and also affect the possibilities of cooperation. Beyond these recent deteriorations in the conditions for a comparative literature that is thinking of the future, however, one must concede that even in the last ten to twenty years, an initially subliminal, but now clearly discernible, division of the world into blocs has become noticeable in the humanities. The participation of colleagues from the so-called Global South in congresses in the Northern Hemisphere has always been a financial problem, but not only financial. The

theoretical premises and thematic priorities are by no means always the same in South America, Africa and South Asia as in the so-called Western world. And the fact that fundamental cultural differences, which are precisely the motive for the committed work of a comparative literature aimed at mutual understanding, exist between the West and the Islamic cultural sphere or also a large part of the East Asian domain, is not a new experience. In the meantime, however, an alienation is also becoming visible between the Eastern European sphere, mainly represented by Russia as an important traditional location of literary studies, and the Western sphere of discourse, which is conflated with the academic world of the USA. Whilst the status quo is regrettably shifting from silently working side by side to intentional non-communication, central Europe may undergo some intrinsic tension. This is why literary studies takes a constructive approach to the problem, where, for example, the field of discourse of “Mitteleuropa” (stretching from the domain of the German language across the Baltic and Western Slavonic countries to the Balkans) is activated openly and respectfully, incidentally also under linguistic aspects. The community of the world’s comparatists, as they gathered in 2016, could at least claim to have invited people to the University of Vienna in the spirit of maximum tolerance.

The AILC/ICLA is officially and intentionally bilingual. Nevertheless, it turned out that the overwhelming majority of contributions in Vienna were in English, followed by the national language German, and French. On the subsequent occasion of a middle-sized conference in Vienna (cf. *Begegnungen zentraleuropäischer Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Achim Hölter, Stephan-Immanuel Teichgräber, Paul Ferstl, Berlin 2021) we also experimented with the option of having presentations given live in many European languages, which requires preparatory translation and makes discussions complex. Nevertheless, in a subject that counts linguistic diversity among its contents, the signal was a deliberate one, to not simply contribute to the reduction of the languages in the sciences. On the other hand, this does not change the fact that English dominates in a still growing part of the global scientific world, which is also the case in this volume. The call for papers was published in the three languages mentioned above and is reproduced here verbatim in order to reflect the scope of the framework topic very briefly.

## 2.1 Die vielen Sprachen der Literaturwissenschaft

Der Ursprung der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft liegt im Vergleich literarischer Texte aus verschiedenen Sprachkulturen. Auch heute noch, nach zahlreichen Wandlungen des komparatistischen Paradigmas und Erweiterungen des

Arbeitsgebietes der Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft, ist die Überquerung von Sprachgrenzen eine essentielle Operation des Faches.

Erstmals soll ein Kongress der International Comparative Literature Association nun unter das Leitthema „Sprache“ gestellt werden. Dabei wird die „Sprache“ in vielfältigen Zusammenhängen und Bedeutungen in den Vordergrund treten: als „nationales“ Idiom, in dem ein literarischer Text zunächst verfasst wird, als Ausgangs- bzw. Zielsprache im Prozess der literarischen Übersetzung, als Menge all jener Sprachen, deren literarische Manifestation in der Summe die „Weltliteratur“ bilden, aber auch als Kanon jener Sprachen, auf den sich der gegenwärtige Markt der Weltliteratur real konzentriert. Sprache, ob mündlich oder schriftlich, ist aber nicht nur das selbstverständliche Medium aller Objekte der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft, sondern ebenso auch die notwendige Metasprache des wissenschaftlichen Diskurses, der poetologischen Terminologie. Die Vielsprachigkeit der Komparatistik selbst ist dabei zugleich Chance und Problem, eine Chance, insofern die Buntheit und Vielgestaltigkeit der Weltliteratur seit ihren antiken Anfängen stets auch den Reiz und Mehrwert komparatistischer Lektüre ausgemacht hat, ein Problem, insofern die vergleichsweise geringe Sprachauswahl, die auch den polyglottesten Komparatisten zu Gebote steht, den Diskurs stärker bestimmt, als im Alltag einer zunehmend englischsprachigen Wissenskultur bewusst wird.

Sprache wird für diesen Kongress auch im weiteren Sinn betrachtet: als Sprachverwendung sozialer oder ethnischer Trägergruppen der Literatur, als Sprache von Themen und Diskursen und als eigenes Sujet der Literatur, als Ausdruck zentraler Probleme und Ideen, die in den Literaturen der Welt auf vergleichbare Weise verhandelt werden, schließlich auch metaphorisch, als Sprache der Stile und Formen, so dass der unendliche, stets neu zu entziffernde Code, das internationale Zeichensystem der Literatur einerseits immer wieder den Mythos der babylonischen Sprachverwirrung reproduziert, andererseits einer vielsprachlich verfassten Menschheit, ihrer Literatur und der Wissenschaft von dieser Literatur eine dauerhafte Aufgabe stellt.

## KONGRESS-SEKTIONEN MIT THEMENVORSCHLÄGEN

### A. Die Künste als universeller Code

Sprachen von Form und Genre

Stilsprachen

Sprachen der Metaebene – Zitat, Intertextualität und Metareferenz

Vergleich der Künste: Kunst als universelle Sprache

Sprache und Literatur – allgemeine Semiotik

Verschiedene Medien, verschiedene Ausdrucksformen

### B. Sprache – Essenz der Weltliteratur

Der Turm von Babel: Mythen über die Sprache



Sprachen als Thema der Literatur

Sprachen der Welt – Sprachen der Weltliteratur – Weltsprache?

Nation und Sprache

„Translationale“ Literatur

Große Sprachen, kleine Sprachen

Vergleich der Sprachen – ein historischer Impuls der Komparatistik

Sprache und Regionalismus

Sprache der Macht – Sprache des Widerstands

Literarische Übersetzung – Geschichte, Methoden, Märkte

C. Vielfalt der Kulturen, Vielfalt der Idiome

Sprache und Kultur

Kulturelle Bilder und ihre sprachliche Darstellung

Die Sprachen der „Anderen“

Sprache und Identität

Mehrsprachigkeit als traditionelles Phänomen

Mehrsprachigkeit als zeitgenössisches Phänomen

Mehrsprachigkeit als Problem oder Chance

Wer spricht? Komparatistik und die Sozialwissenschaften

Hybridität und Komparatistik

Kulturelle Grenzen überschreiten

D. Die Sprache der Thematologie

Terminologie und Methodologie der Thematologie

Bedeutung – Textinterpretation im komparatistischen Zusammenhang

Renaissance der Metaphorologie

Sprache der Geschlechter – Sprache der Gender

Sprachen der Emotion

Engagierte Sprache – internationale Ökokritik

E. Komparatist(inn)en bei der Arbeit – professionelle Kommunikation

Die Codes der Literaturwissenschaft

Bewertung der Literatur – Sprache der Literaturkritik

Komparatistik als Sprechakt

Verhandlungssache: Der Metadiskurs der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung

Digital humanities

Analytische Philosophie und Logik im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs

Mündlicher und schriftlicher Diskurs

Die vielsprachige Bibliothek der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft

Das Wörterbuch der Komparatistik: Internationale Terminologie

## 2.2 The Many Languages of Comparative Literature

The comparison of literary texts from different cultural spheres and in different languages was at the origin of comparative literature. Even as comparatist paradigms have changed and developed, and as comparative criticism has expanded considerably, the crossing of borders between languages has remained essential to the discipline.

For the first time, the theme of a congress organised by the International Comparative Literature Association will be “language” – language in all its meanings and various contexts: as a “national” idiom, the basis of literary texts, as source-language and target-language in literary translation, as the set of languages forming “world literature” in its literary manifestation (and as the canon of languages “world literature” is actually concentrating on). Language – both written and spoken – is not just the self-evident medium of all objects of comparative literature, but also the indispensable meta-language of scientific discourse and poetological terminology. The multilingualism of Comparative Literature is both a challenge and an opportunity: from its beginnings, the polymorph diversity of world literature has constituted the attraction and value of comparatist reading; on the other hand, even the most accomplished polyglot comparatist can master only a relatively small range of languages. This fact conditions the discourse more than might be apparent in a culture of knowledge increasingly influenced by the English language.

The congress will also focus on language in its broadest sense: the usage of language by social and ethnic groups as vectors of literature, the language of themes and discourses, language as a literary subject, language as the expression of central problems and ideas negotiated in the various literatures of the world, and even in its metaphorical sense, as “languages” of styles and forms. As an infinite code with constant need for decryption, the international sign system of literature perpetually reproduces the myth of the confusion of tongues and sets new tasks for a multilingual humanity: its literature and its criticism.

### CONGRESS SECTIONS WITH SUGGESTED TOPICS

#### A. The arts as universal code

Languages of form and genre

Languages of style

Language in the second degree – quotation, intertextuality and metareference

Comparing the arts: art as a universal language

Language and literature – general semiotics

Different media, different expressions

#### B. Language – The essence of world literature

The Tower of Babel: myths about language

Languages as a literary topic

Languages of the world – languages of world literature – world language?

Nation and language

‘Translational’ literature

‘Major’ vs. ‘minor’ languages

The comparison of languages – one origin of literary comparatism

Expressing regionalism

The language of power – the language of resistance

Literary translation: histories, methods, markets

C. Many cultures, many idioms

Language and culture

Cultural images and their linguistic representation

The language of the ‘others’

Language and identity

Multilingualism as a traditional phenomenon

Multilingualism as a contemporary phenomenon

Multilingualism – problem or opportunity

Who is speaking? Comparatism and the social sciences

Hybridity and comparatism

Crossing cultural borders

D. The language of thematics

How to speak about themes? Terminology of thematics

Meaning – interpreting texts in a comparatist framework

The renaissance of metaphor studies

Language of the sexes – languages of gender

The languages of emotion

The language of concern – international ecocriticism

E. Comparatists at work – professional communication

The knowledge of literary criticism and its various codes

The evaluation of literature – the language of criticism

Comparatism as a verbal procedure – how to compare with words?

Speaking about: The meta discourse of literary historiography

Digital humanities

Analytical philosophy and logics in the critical discourse

Spoken and written discourse

The multilingual library of comparative literature

The comparatist’s dictionary: International terminology

## 2.3 La littérature comparée : multiples langues, multiples langages

La comparaison des textes littéraires de différentes cultures et diverses langues est sans nul doute l'origine de la littérature comparée, s'affirmant comme discipline universitaire à part entière. Même si l'on a connu de nombreuses mutations du paradigme comparatiste, même si le travail sur le texte littéraire s'est souvent et profondément transformé, il n'en demeure pas moins que la traversée des frontières reste l'une des opérations magistrales et essentielles du comparatisme.

Pour la première fois, les langues et les langages constituent le thème central du congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée, en entendant les langues/les langages dans les sens les plus divers de ces deux mots et en les replaçant dans les contextes les plus variés : par exemple en tant que langues « nationales », utilisées lors de la rédaction originale des textes littéraires ; en les considérant comme langues sources et langues cibles dans l'opération de la traduction littéraire ; en les regardant en tant que somme ou bouquet des langues dont les diverses concrétisations littéraires constituent la « littérature mondiale », et enfin en les embrassant comme « canon de langues », qui reflète le « marché » réel de la littérature mondiale. Du même coup, l'ensemble des langues et des langages – écrit(e)s ou parlé(e)s – n'apparaît pas seulement comme le médium évident de tous les objets d'étude du comparatisme ; cet ensemble représente aussi l'indispensable métalangage du discours critique et de la terminologie poétologique. Le multilinguisme de notre discipline pose sans doute un problème, mais en même temps, il offre également une chance. Une chance, parce que la diversité de la littérature mondiale a toujours été un aspect riche et satisfaisant de l'acte de lecture, et ceci de l'Antiquité jusqu'à nos jours. Un problème sans doute aussi, du fait que le comparatiste le plus brillant et le plus polyglotte ne maîtrise tout de même qu'un nombre d'idiomes plutôt limité. Voilà qui caractérise au plus haut point le discours courant, même si le phénomène est peut-être obscurci par le fait que l'anglais est devenu la lingua franca de toutes les cultures, de toutes les connaissances, dans le monde d'aujourd'hui.

L'intention qui sous-tend la piste ici proposée est aussi de thématiser les langues et les langages dans un sens plus vaste : Entendons par là la pratique linguistique des groupes sociaux ou ethniques variés : quelle est leur langue ? Entendons encore par là les langages des thèmes et des discours : comment se disent-ils et se parlent-ils ? Entendons toujours par là la langue comme sujet propre de la littérature : le mode d'expression des idées et des problèmes centraux que traitent les littératures diverses. S'y ajouterait aussi, entendu métaphoriquement, la question du langage des styles et des formes littéraires, dont le code perpétuel doit

être toujours déchiffré à nouveau, et ceci alors même que la littérature internationale reproduit sans cesse le mythe – babélien – de la confusion des langages. Pourtant ce défi représente en même temps l'objectif le plus élevé de la littérature, de son analyse critique : comprendre l'humanité, embrasser l'humain dans la multiplicité de ses langages.

## SECTIONS DU CONGRÈS AVEC DES SUGGESTIONS THÉMATIQUES

### A. Les arts comme code universel

Les langages des formes et des genres

Le langage du style

Le langage au second degré : citation, intertextualité et métaréférence

Les arts comparés : l'art comme langage universel

Langage et littérature – la sémiotique en général

Différences des médias, différences des expressions

### B. Langue et langage – l'essence de la littérature mondiale

La Tour de Babel : des mythes métalinguistiques

Langues et langages comme sujets littéraires

Les langues du monde, les langages du monde littéraire, une langue mondiale

Nation et langue

La littérature « translationale »

Langues « majeures », langues « mineures »

Comparaison des langues – une origine de la littérature comparée

L'expression du régionalisme

Langue/langage du pouvoir – langue/langage de la résistance

La traduction littéraire : histoire, méthodes, marchés

### C. Plusieurs cultures, plusieurs idiomes

Langue et culture

Les images des cultures et leur représentation linguistique

La langue/ le langage des « autres »

Langage et identité

Le multilinguisme : phénomène historique/traditionnel

Le multilinguisme contemporain

Le multilinguisme : problème ou chance ?

Qui parle ? Comparatisme et sciences sociales

L'hybridité et le comparatisme

Franchir les frontières culturelles

### D. Le langage de la thématique

Comment parler de la thématique ? Terminologie des études thématologiques

Texte et signification – l'interprétation dans le contexte comparatiste  
 La renaissance de la métaphorologie  
 Langage du sexe – langage du genre  
 Les langages de l'émotion  
 Le langage engagé – l'éco-critique internationale/les humanités environnementales  
  
 E. Les comparatistes au travail – la communication professionnelle  
 Les codes divers de la critique littéraire  
 L'évaluation de la littérature – le langage de la critique littéraire  
 Le comparatisme parlé – comment comparer avec des mots ?  
 « À propos de » : le métadiscours de l'historiographie littéraire  
 Les humanités numériques  
 La philosophie analytique et la logique dans le discours critique  
 Discours oral et discours écrit  
 La bibliothèque polyglotte de la littérature comparée  
 Le dictionnaire comparatiste : terminologies internationales

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Of course, not all aspects of the call were taken up equally. Nevertheless, as expected, it turned out that the field of literary translation in particular and that of translation phenomena in general are being dealt with intensively, as is multilingualism as a topic of literary studies, for example in the form of plurilingual texts (with a possible special case for the topic of linguistic geniuses, which appears again and again in texts, more often, by the way, than real persons mastering dozens of idioms in our discipline's reality), admittedly less so as a problem. In this context, it is recognisable that both the question of the conception of scientific language per se and that of the concrete idiom – one might also say: the question of the hegemony of English – will be a decisive topic for future debates. This issue is reflected in the discourse on world literature, which for some is a phenomenon fulfilled in the concert of many different voices, but for others is a canon of texts whose cultural background is multicultural, but which only find a hearing through the filter of a powerful world language and its literary market. The observation of international exchange in the form of translations is an urgent desideratum, for mercantile conditions are changing rapidly. Future conferences may look at other aspects of linguistic transfer in literature or in literary adaptations: the transfer of opera libretti or comics, the dubbing and subtitling of films, even through to sign language as a transfer medium for texts, all in international comparison, and certainly the growing possibilities of automated literary translation and its consequences.

This volume also focuses on lexicography and how many languages comparative studies can count among the active ones. What cannot yet be determined

through the indexing of real existing books, and possibly also web pages, is how formalistic terminology will develop in the coming decades, whether it will be reduced, whether it will become more transparent thanks to universally available IT and AI solutions, how precision can prevail, or even whether or not a more culturally diverse, quasi fairer multiplicity will emerge – perhaps only, but certainly at the very least in the field of ethnogeographically typical terms and genres. World literature actually also implies world languages – how will the canon of the most widely spoken languages develop globally and how will literary markets possibly coalesce? The fact that literary studies also speaks different languages, regardless of national idioms, is closely linked to the methodological landscape. Here, in the idiosyncratic language use of some approaches, there is also a tendency towards exclusivity as well as exclusion. The humanities have almost never subordinated their use of language to the postulate of global comprehensibility; the language of literary studies strives far more often for elegance, playfulness and impression-making than for accuracy, which can often only be achieved at the price of sobriety, even monotony. A literary science based on analytical philosophy would plead for the greatest possible neutrality, a position that tends not to be shared by the majority of the participants in the discourse.

One aspect that still played a subordinate role at the time of the congress has rapidly come to the fore in the very last few years, namely the use of language from the point of view of critical race theory and gender theory. Whether, and how, ethnic criteria or gender issues are spoken and written about in academic discourse, orally or in writing, situationally or systematically, is the subject of lively debate in many countries. There is no question that these open disputes are also reflected in literary texts that have recently been created or are in the process of being created. And not only there, but also, more recently, in the field of translation, as the handling of details that are today understood as linguistic taboos, but are integral parts of textual originals, does not seem to have been clarified at all in editing and publishing. This, then, poses a difficulty regarding how translators should currently behave towards older texts that do not everywhere conform to the written or supposed norms of the present, not to mention the latest contemporary texts on which comprehensive expectations of the language use of today's authors rest. One last point should be mentioned in this context: thematology. Since narratives, poetry, drama and all other forms of literature reflect reality in some way, literary studies with an interest in thematology and/or cultural studies must capture in language the content of all cultural representations, be they texts, graphic novels, films or otherwise. It follows that a plethora of linguistic conventions of earlier epochs or other cultures must be treated with philological or humane respect on the one hand, but that on the other hand a correct, as well as sensitive, handling of the texts is called for whenever and wherever

general categories are mentioned, particularly those comprising human beings. This means that presumably lexicographical and lexicological work on ethnic, professional or personal categories, just like images, clichés and prejudices, will be given great weight in the discourse on materials, motifs and topoi. Will keywords be renamed, will they be relativised in inverted commas; how far does the social debate about fair language penetrate? If this topic had been so flagrant a few years ago, we would probably have devoted a lively section to it in Vienna.

### 3 Conference Report

On the occasion of its Paris meeting in 2013, the general assembly of the ICLA decided that the next congress was to take place at the University of Vienna, Austria.<sup>1</sup> Among the local researchers and teachers in the field of comparatism, an organisational team was created with Achim Hermann Hölder as chair and Norbert Bachleitner and Christine Ivanovic as vice-chairs. Paul Ferstl, who also coordinated the programme, and Constanze Prasek acted as senior assistants. Naturally, the organising committee has to thank many other colleagues and helpers for their passionate support. The XXIst Congress of the ICLA took place from 21 to 27 July 2016 at Vienna University. More than 1,500 international participants engaged with the main topic, “The many languages of comparative literature / La littérature comparée – multiples langues, multiples langages / Die vielen Sprachen der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft,” in numerous workshops and lectures. Due to then-current political developments, some Turkish colleagues were unable to attend. The ICLA presidency delivered a note of protest to the Turkish ambassador in Vienna. For the first time, the theme of a congress organised by the International Comparative Literature Association involved “language” in all its meanings, embedded in various contexts: as a “national” idiom forming the basis of a literary text, as source and target language in literary translation, as the set of languages forming “world literature” in its literary manifestation, as the canon of languages “world literature” is actually concentrating on, and finally as terminology – a transnational tool-kit more vital than ever to a multilingual scientific community. Paradoxically enough, the ever-growing dominance of English made itself felt even in the AILC/ICLA biotope. Among the 383 single papers presented at the congress, forty-nine were delivered in German, sixty-four in French, and 271 in English. The congress also focused on language in its broadest sense: the language usage of social and ethnic groups as vectors of liter-

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1 As published in: *Recherche littéraire – Literary Research* 33, 2017, 255–260.



ature, the language of themes and discourses, language as a literary subject, language as the expression of central problems and ideas negotiated in various literatures of the world, and even language in its metaphorical sense, as “languages” of styles and forms.

The opening ceremony was held on 21 July, with words of greetings offered by Heinz W. Engl (Rector of the University of Vienna), Achim Hermann Hölter (Chair of the Organising Committee of ICLA 2016), Hans Bertens (President of the ICLA), Matthias Meyer (Dean of the Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies, University of Vienna), Antje Wischmann (Deputy Head of the Department of European and Comparative Literature and Language Studies, University of Vienna), and Frank La Rue (UNESCO Assistant Director General, Head of the Communication and Information sector). The latter presented the Memory of the World Programme (MoW) and suggested a possible collaboration between ICLA and UNESCO MoW. These aspects were discussed further during the special panel entitled “How Can Comparative Literature and the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme Cooperate?” (26 July). During this session, statements were made by Hans W. Bertens (President, ICLA), Lothar Jordan (Vice-President, Memory of the World International Advisory Committee; Chair of the MoW Sub-Committee on Education and Research), Dietrich Schuller (Austrian National Commission for UNESCO, Chair of the Austrian MoW Committee, Member of the MoW International Advisory Committee), David Sutton (Reading, UK), Galina Alexeeva (Leo Tolstoy Museum Estate Yasnaya Polyana, Russian Federation; Chair of the ICLM [International Committee for Literary Museums] in ICOM), Achim Hermann Hölter (University of Vienna, Austria), and Jan Bos (National Library, The Hague, Netherlands; Chair of the MoW Register Sub-Committee). An address was subsequently delivered by Abdulla El Reyes (Abu Dhabi, UAE, President of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme). It was followed by a concluding panel discussion with Hans W. Bertens, Achim Hermann Hölter, Abdulla El Reyes, Jan Bos, and Lothar Jordan.

As the general theme allowed for a broad variety of approaches, participants could take part in one (or several) of a total of 125 group sections in the form of seminars and round tables, or choose to present their paper in one of the five major streams of the overall “language” topic. As had to be expected with this relatively novel approach, the praxeological section “Comparatists at Work/Professional Communication” was, with eighteen papers, the least frequented. The “Language of Thematics” section, which doubtlessly foregrounded one of the traditional strongholds of comparatism, comprised forty-nine papers. The “Arts as Universal Code” section, quite astonishingly, gathered no less than eighty-seven scholars, who explored questions related to Comparative Arts/Interart Studies, intermediality, and adjacent subjects. The two groups dealing with language itself (“Language – The Essence of World Literature”) and the interconnection between

multilingualism and multiculturalism (“Many Cultures, Many Idioms”) each attracted more than a hundred contributors (112 and 117 papers, respectively).

Five round table discussions further elaborated on particular topics from the five main panels. The underlying aim of the organisers was to make these five axes clearly visible and productive throughout the congress. Haun Saussy, Christine A. Knoop, Achim Hermann Hölder, and Marc-Mathieu Münch contributed to the discussion on “The Current Interest in Comparative Arts/Interart Studies” (Panel A: The Arts as Universal Code), which was hosted by Gerald Gillespie on 26 July. Hans W. Bertens, Ipshita Chanda, Adams Bodom, Sandra Bermann, and Achim Hermann Hölder (discussion leader) exchanged their views in the panel entitled “On Terminology, Dictionaries, and the Languages of Comparatism” (Panel B: Language—the Essence of World Literature) on 23 July. Dorothy Figueira on 22 July moderated a debate on the question “Has Comparatism Turned into World Wide Cultural Studies?” (Panel C: Many Cultures, Many Idioms), in which Isabel Capeloa Gil and Zhang Longxi participated. Takayuki Yokota-Murakami, Achim Hermann Hölder, and Gianna Zocco exchanged views on “Current Trends in Thematic Studies” (Panel D: The Language of Thematics) in a session led by Hendrik Birus on 25 July. Finally, Steven Sondrup and Cho Sung-Won shared their thoughts on “Comparative Literature and the ‘Practice Turn’” (Panel E: Comparatists at Work) with Achim Hermann Hölder on 26 July.

All in all, the 125 group sections focused on a wide range of topics examined in some 1,063 papers. Each of the five largest seminars deserving particular mention hosted between nineteen and twenty-five lectures and contributions, namely “Productivity of Plagiarism” presented by Larissa Polubojarinova, Charlotte Krauss, and Christine Baron; “Comparison and Intermediality” organised by Massimo Fusillo and Marina Grishakova; “Sprache der Migration. Migration der Sprache” devised by Sandro M. Moraldo and William Franke; “Interferenzen” prepared by Sebastian Donat, Martin Sexl, Monika Raic, and Martin Fritz; and lastly “South Asian Pathways” organised by Chandra Mohan for the Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI).

The first keynote lecture was delivered by Dame Marina Warner (Birkbeck, University of London, UK) on 21 July, as part of the opening ceremony with the introduction and chair by Sowon Park (University of California Santa Barbara, CA/US). It focused on “Magical Writing: Oracles, Curses, & Further Preventive Measures.” Marina Warner also offered a workshop on “Orienting Wonder” on 22 July. On 22 July, Joep Leerssen (Academy Professor of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) was invited by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften) to present a keynote lecture entitled “Behind Gutenberg’s Back: World Literature beyond Print Culture.” This event took place in the ceremonial hall of the Academy. Leerssen was welcomed

and introduced on behalf of the Academy by Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (University of Vienna, Austria). A panel discussion on 23 July, “Theory, World Literature and the Politics of Translation,” placed in conversation Emily Apter (New York University, NY, US) and David Damrosch (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, US). This session, introduced by Christian Moser (University of Bonn, Germany), was organised and hosted by the German Comparative Literature Association in collaboration with the Swiss Comparative Literature Association. Christian Moser chaired this keynote presentation together with Markus Winkler (Université de Genève, Switzerland). Further, two distinguished literary guests presented their work during plenary sessions. On 25 July, the famous Austrian author Christoph Ransmayr, who was decorated with both the “Prix Jean Monnet de littérature européenne” and the “Prix du meilleur livre étranger” in 2015, read from the English translation of his “Atlas of an Anxious Man” (Simon Pare). On 26 July, in a session entitled “In jeder Sprache sitzen andere Augen,” Nobel prize laureate Herta Müller, who had already been invited to the Seoul ICLA congress in 2010, talked about language with journalist Angelika Klammer. This conversation included readings from her novel *Atemschaukel* and a presentation of hitherto unpublished poetic collages. Herta Müller’s talk was translated live by Caterina Grasl from the Department of English, University of Vienna.

Further distinguished lectures were given by the following: Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (University of Vienna, Austria), “The Confluence of Ethnic Voices in Urban America: John Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer* and Henry Roth, *Call It Sleep*”; E.V. Ramakrishnan (Comparative Literature Association of India, Kolkata, India), “From Reception to Resistance: The Many Languages of Indian Modernism”; Vladimir Biti (University of Vienna, Austria), Past Empire(s), Post-Empire(s), and the Narratives of Disaster: Joseph Roth’s *The Radetzky March* and Ivo Andrić’s *The Bridge over the Drina*; Isabel Capeloa Gil (Universidade Catolica Portuguesa, Lisbon, Portugal), “From peripheral to alternative and back: Contemporary meanings of modernity”; Hendrik Birus (Jacobs University Bremen, Germany), “Zur Übersetzbarkeit literarischer Namen”; and finally, Peter V. Zima (Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt, Austria), “Krise und Kritik der Sprache in vielen Sprachen” (replaced in this volume by: “Ähnlichkeit und Differenz in der Komparatistik. Der Vergleich als Begriffsbestimmung”). An exhibition by publishers and service providers who specialised in literary studies was also held in conjunction with the congress. Organised in the courtyard of the main university building, this event sought to promote the exchange of information on recent publications in the field of comparative literature. Another exhibition in Vienna University Library displayed dictionaries of critical terminology in dozens of languages, translations of Thomas Mann’s novel *Der Zauberberg* in numerous world languages, publications by the members of the Viennese Department of Comparative Literature, selected copies and a complete list of PhD

and MA theses by local students, and, last but not least, almost all of the published proceedings of previous ICLA congresses.

Throughout the whole week of the conference, the “ICLA on stage” initiative – organised by members of the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Vienna – enabled participants to read and listen to texts written in the many languages of literature in the courtyard of the main building of the university.

The numerous events and lectures of this congress could not have been put together without the financial support of a number of generous sponsors, nor without the devoted and indefatigable help of eighty student volunteers from the Comparative Literature BA and MA Course of Studies.

The closing ceremony, which took place on 27 July, included a farewell speech by the outgoing president Hans Bertens and words of welcome by the new president Zhang Longxi. Looking ahead to future developments, a Chinese delegation took this opportunity to introduce the city of Shenzhen, which was to host the XXIIInd Congress of the ICLA in 2019.

## 4 Languages of World Literature

Regarding the compilation of the contributions in this 1st volume, it should be noted that they represent an attempt to approximately map the thematic affinities in five groups, with “Towards a New World Literature” corresponding to a workshop organised by Gisela Brinker-Gabler (†). All sections are simply arranged alphabetically in themselves, except the keynotes, which begin with Marina Warner’s opening lecture, and Mária Bátorová’s section, whose papers are arranged in the order chosen by the organiser.

The vast field of “Languages and World Literature” is surrounded by six cornerstones in the form of substantial keynotes, and looks into the act of writing and the various functions of speech acts, how literary language can deal with fate, danger and trauma both past and present, and how the many voices and languages of multi-lingual modern societies shape the literatures of the world. What are the limits and possibilities of literary translation, how does literature speak the many languages of today, and how can we reconsider “modernism” and literary history in a changing world? Going back to the very roots of literature, into the depths of ancient myths, spells, prophecies and curses, Marina Warner looks into the functions and the reception of magical writing, spanning an arc into contemporary literature and the literary use of these speech acts by writers of today, in order to comment on the present world. “What’s in a name?” could have been an alternative title to Hendrik Birus’ keynote on the translatability of literary names. Proper nouns,

though untranslatable by definition, are often highly suggestive, carrying a certain sound, hidden resonances and allusions as well as actual meanings for the respective native reader. By differentiating between embodied names, talking names (abundant especially in Shakespeare's comedies and always a welcome challenge for translators) and suggestive names, Birus shows the whole range of the possibilities and limits of translatability. The headline "Languages and World Literature" indicates the constant struggle to find a language for a changing world, for things falling apart and the breakup of alleged certainties. Vladimir Biti looks into these "narratives of disaster" with the example of two substantial novels from East-Central Europe: Joseph Roth's *Radetzkymarsch* and Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge over the Drina*, both dealing with historical turning points, the disintegration of Empires and families, trying to provide answers to collective as well as personal trauma. Isabel Capeloa Gil discusses various contemporary meanings and attempts of (re-)defining modernity, arguing in favour of the "peripheral" view of questioning supposed certainties from a shifting standpoint, illustrated by examples from modern Iberian literature (Fernando Pessoa and Amadeo Souza Cardoso). The Eurocentric definition of modernity gives way to a moving peripheral view that can reflect the heterogeneity and polyphony of the world. Scholars of comparative literature are used to the question "What do you compare?" Joep Leersen reminds us that literature does not always have to come in the form of printed texts, and encourages the comparatists of today to broaden their horizon by taking non-printed and non-written forms into account. To think outside the box here means to think outside the book. E.V. Ramakrishnan uses examples from four of the many literary languages of India to explain how, in the course of British colonisation, the contact with Western literary criticism and its assimilation into the existing Indian traditions led to the development of new literary genres and new scientific terms in India, redefining the view of Indian authors on literature, and shaping modernist Indian literature up to the present day. The background of many works of North-American literature in the first decades of the twentieth century is formed by immigration, migration, the co-existence and melting of diverse ethnic voices. Waldemar Zacharasiewicz takes the example of two modernist New York novels, John Dos Passos' great panorama *Manhattan Transfer* and Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, set in the Lower East Side, to demonstrate the literary strategies, which make audible the many different human voices of New York in literature. Finally, Peter V. Zima looks into the potential of "comparison" itself and the theoretical significance of comparative literature, showing comparison as a tool to develop and refine definitions of literary, philosophical and linguistic phenomena and terms in an intercultural context.

Both the single and workshop papers are briefly characterised following the arrangement explained above: How can a new, global literature reflect new,

global forms of war? How do new military technologies, long-distance warfare and especially the drone's "view from above" influence the technologies of writing and the writer's view? On the example of Thomas Lehr's *September*, Kevin Powers' *The Yellow Birds* and David Mitchell's *The Bone Clocks*, Dana Bönisch discusses the poetics of war. A changing world demands new theoretical approaches to scientific literary description and analysis. Gisela Brinker-Gabler (†) develops "translocal constellation" as a tool to analyse mobility and migration in contemporary literature, exemplified by Emine Sevgi Özdamar's story *The Courtyard in the Mirror* and Teju Cole's novel *Open City*. On the way "towards a new world literature", writers reflect migration, the melting of voices and the search for an appropriate language. These challenges on the larger scale go hand in hand with an increasing interest for the individual roots and the reaffirmation of identity. Italy with its many diverse regions offers particularly good examples of strong local cultural identities. Giovanni Dettori analyses the Sardinian novel *Bellas Mariposas* by Sergio Atzeni as one of these individual voices in modern Italian literature. The literatures of migration from modern East-Central Europe are still very much influenced by the epochal turn caused by the end of socialism, leading to shattered identities and hybrid, displaced existences. On the basis of three texts, *Why is the Child Cooking in the Polenta?* by Aglaja Veteranyi, *The Black Madonna of Derby* and *Sweetest Enemy* by Joanna Czechowska, Cristina Şandru explores the nuances between exile writing and diasporic writing. Elke Segelcke examines the literary and essayistic work of the Turkish-German author Zafer Şenocak and his poetics, focusing on the problems of literary and cultural translatability in texts that do not respond to traditional literary interpretations based on the categories of national/world literature. She concludes on the ongoing importance of cultural communication and mediation in the face of "negative hermeneutics".

Mária Bátorová contributed two essays. Her first text focuses on the author as a creating individual, defining the parameters of authorship as a category, in contrast to the postmodern 'disappearance' of the author. In her second essay, she discusses intertextual relations between Norwegian art (Edvard Munch) and Slovak literature (Jozef Čiger Hronský), introducing the latter to the critical discourse on modernity. What is next in line after modernism and postmodernism? Krištof Anetta shares his thoughts on new paradigms in literary theory and presents the American "New Sincerity" as a possible way to return from the ironic distance of postmodernism to an engagement with the realities of existence. Are we back on the road to a realistic literature? And how could literary theory and literary education benefit from a "neo-sincere" approach that brings literature back into the public sphere? The categories of author, text and reader come together in the work of the prominent Hungarian author Péter Esterházy, which Livia Paszmár shows to be of genuine intertextuality, a literary trait that

made his work interesting and accessible for reception in other languages. With the example of Orhan Pamuk's novel *The Museum Of Innocence*, Monika Schmitz-Emans illuminates the cultural and literary interdependencies between the concepts of 'author' and 'collector', how storytelling can be seen as collecting, and collecting as a creative act with an inner poetics of its own, both serving the process of remembrance. Using the prose works of Schnitzler and Zweig, Katarína Zechelová explores the overlapping boundaries between communication and "non-communication", between speech act and silence on the theoretical basis of studies by Dionýz Ďurišin und Mária Bátorová. Tibor Žilka follows the traces of different forms of metafictional writing in Slovak Prose from the end of the 1990s to the present, giving an overview on (post)modern literature in Slovakia with a special focus on examples from Alexandra Salmela and Pavel Vilikovský.

John M. Kopper focuses on the "conundrum of temporal and spatial displacement" in emigrant literature, using the example of two texts on Russian emigrants in France from different eras: Nina Berberova's *Poslednie i pervye* (1930) and Andrei Makine's *La Vie d'un homme inconnu* (2009), both dealing with the emigrants', often futile, approaches to make their exile a temporary home, while constantly fearing to lose both their language and cultural identity. From a didactical background, Arndt Kremer introduces Herder's and Wilhelm von Humboldt's humanistic and intercultural philosophies of language as positive role models for modern multilingualism, especially in schools, where the idea of language as a world view can give equal voices and values to all languages in a modern world of linguistic diversity. From the language of philosophy to the philosophies of language: Katie Lally reads the works of Clarice Lispector and Stefan Zweig through the lens of their respective literary reception of Baruch Spinoza, gaining valuable insights into their world of thought in challenging and changing times. Stefania Rutigliano highlights the various aspects of multilingualism in Carlo Michelstaedter's work, especially in *Persuasion and Rhetoric*, and his critical reflections on „the language of persuasion“, individual identity and the crisis of language and communication in Western culture. Back to where it all began: Eva Miriam Simon returns to one of the founding fathers of modern comparative literature and his famous comparative text, August Wilhelm Schlegel's *La Comparaison entre la Phèdre de Racine et celle d'Euripide*, and examines the extent to which Schlegel does justice to his own premises on literary criticism in this text. The wish to overcome linguistic barriers by creating one universal language has occupied humans throughout time. Gerhard F. Strasser presents early Jesuit ideas that are based on numerical combinations rather than on linguistic or philosophical systems, among them Athanasius Kircher's *Polygraphia* from 1663, and the approach of J.J. Becher, who exchanged the numbers for newly invented graphic characters (1661), trying to leave all traditional signs behind.



Karim Abuawad looks into the language of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, exploring the destructive functions of metaphorical writing on the idea of national identity, as well as its potential for being a tool of literary resistance, where the metaphor itself erodes the narrative from within, finally disappearing into nothing. Andrés Claro's article examines how the dominant figurations of the poetic image synthesise the characteristic metaphysical-temporal configurations of the real. The examination of three poems by authors who are classics in their respective traditions (Horace, Tu Fu, and Ezra Pound) opens the way to a reflection on how their primary poetic concepts (analogical metaphor in classical poetics, correlative parallelism in Chinese poetics, and the fragmentation-juxtaposition of montage in contemporary poetics) project characteristic metaphysical-temporal configurations, i.e. the comparison and substitutive referral from the sense-image to the idea in classical ontology, the Tao or process of correlative unfolding in the Chinese tradition, and that conception of interruption amidst simultaneity which increasingly defines contemporary representation. One of the most common forms of intertextual reference is the quotation from a foreign language. Ana González-Rivas dedicates her essay to the surprisingly frequent use of Latin quotations in Gothic literature, examining the degree to which this stylistic device contributes to the meaning of the story, and why authors knowingly chose (sometimes cryptic) quotations from a „dead“ language to add weight and atmosphere to their stories. A whole spectrum of intertextuality and its different functions can be found in the work of Roberto Bolaño, which may be seen as a “manual for the use of literature”, as shown by Zofia Grzesiak, with a special focus on the blending roles of author and reader, literature and life. The language of love is the focus of Alicia Hostein's reading of *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (1781) and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), with the aim of identifying and explaining the dialectic of the two reciprocally dependent categories of “love” and “passion” in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Ekaterina Kondratyeva follows the traces of the originally American avant-garde movement of „language poetry“ into French literature, finding strategies towards a universal discourse and a new humanism in the works of Hédi Bouraoui, Valérie Rouzeau and Céline Zins. Ya-huei Lin re-reads the transcendental writings of Henry David Thoreau and others in the light of current ecological problems and mankind's language-based relationship with nature, deriving a concrete call for responsible action from literature. In Jorge Luis Borges' famous story “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius” the reader enters an alternative universe of ambiguity and uncertainty, where the usual structure of language does not exist. Bill Richardson suggests that the lack of resolution and the impossibility of knowledge or understanding are the point of the story, it being a tale about the nature of language itself, where the answer to all questions remains unreachable in the centre of the labyrinth.



Julia Bacskai-Atkari compares two literary adaptations of the biblical story of Cain with a focus on the use of language between the two brothers: In Byron's *Cain* they are alienated beyond the prospect of reconciliation and unable to find a common language, while in Christoph Ransmayr's novel *Der fliegende Berg* they reconnect, also linguistically, during a dangerous trip in the Tibetan mountains. Fausto De Michele looks into the polysystematic theory of world literature as introduced by Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury, and the role and definition of translations as re-writings, building a system of their own within the polysystem, which also includes cinematic adaptations of literature. Michaela Frey focuses on various forms and functions of translation in J.M. Coetzee's novel *Foe* (including the concept of cultural translation), and the inherent possibilities of (mis)understanding, raising questions of authorship and shedding a light also on the marginalised positions and "the Other" that become visible in the gaps of translation. The work of the German contemporary poet Uljana Wolf, who explores the linguistic borders between different countries and cultures, is presented by Katrin Gunkel as an example for translingual and transcultural poetry in a modern globalised world. The literary influence of the writers of the *nouveau roman* (especially Alain Robbe-Grillet) on the writings of Julio Cortázar and Italo Calvino are at the centre of Jèssica Pujol Duran's comparative analysis of Cortázar's *Historias de cronopios y famas* (1962), 62: *Modelo para armar* (1968), and Calvino's *Le cosmico-miche* (1968). Haun Saussy explores the shifting borders between languages and the uncertain linguistic identities in the realities of an ever-moving world, where individual speech is, to varying degrees, always mingling with other languages, creating a hybrid pattern of cross-linguistic word borrowing. What does that mean for the possibilities of translation? Barbara Seidl is also moving through "translingual borderlands", focusing especially on the metaphor of 'silence' in Anna Kazumi Stahl's *Flores de un solo día* and Shirley Geok-lin Lim's *Among the White Moon Faces* as a signal of untranslatability, which marks the empty space in the contact zone between a monolingual language system and the cultural heterogeneity of today. Miloš Zelenka emphasises the contribution of Czech-Slovak comparative literature to the current debate on world literature, focusing on the works of Dionýz Ďurišin and Frank Wollman, whose theories and definitions of world literature as an aesthetic reception of texts through translations (i.e. a way of reading) have been taken up and developed further by Western comparatists to the current day.

Other contributions to this volume are first of all the summarised minutes of five round tables, each of which brought together between three and five scholars on a current framework topic. *The Arts as Universal Code* (A) was chaired by Gerald Gillespie, *Language: The Essence of World Literature* (B) and *Comparative Literature and the Practical Turn* (E) by Achim Hölter, *Has Comparatism Turned into*

*Worldwide Cultural Studies?* (C) by Dorothy Figueira, and *The Language of The-matics* (D) by Hendrik Birus. A special workshop was dedicated to the cooperation of comparative studies in general and the AILC/ICLA in particular with UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme. It was attended by Dietrich Schüller, Galina Alekseeva, Lothar Jordan, Jan Bos, David Sutton and Achim Hölter. The more detailed contributions of the latter four are printed in updated form in this volume.

Five longer, mostly service-oriented contributions are offered as an annex. First, there is a short reflection on the future of comparative literature in Europe. The documentation by Volker Michel and Jakob Jung presents a current web-based service for research and study in our discipline: [avldigital.de](http://avldigital.de). This is followed by two bibliographies framed with systematic reflections, both based on the book exhibition that accompanied the Congress of Vienna in the University Library. One, in keeping with the overall theme of the conference, is about the lexicography of general and comparative literature, worldwide and in many languages, whilst the second is about Thomas Mann's famous novel *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*) as a paradigm of translation into numerous world languages. This, partly documentary, final section is rounded off by a brief overview of papers from the 2016 congress that were published elsewhere.

## 5 Acknowledgements

This is the place to say thanks. To my colleagues from the former executive council of the AILC/ICLA and especially Hans Bertens as outgoing president and Zhang Longxi as then newly elected president as well as John Burt Foster as secretary. To the outgoing Dean of the Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies, Matthias Meyer, and Heinz Engl, Rector of the University of Vienna, for their hospitality, to Vienna University Library and the City of Vienna, to the Federal Chancellery of the Austrian Republic and the Austrian Academy of Sciences, to UNESCO and the Academia Europaea, the Leopold Museum (and Stefan Kutzenberger for the guided visit) and the Austrian National Library, to the Universities of Salzburg, Graz, and Innsbruck, the German and Swiss Comparative Literature Association, to Erste Foundation for substantial support, and many others that cannot be named here. Thanks to the Event Management of our university, particularly to Gerry Schneider and Ulla Schröttner-Berning.

As for talks and lectures, we enjoyed a wonderful keynote by Marina Warner at the opening, and a stirring address by the first UNESCO representative Frank La Rue. We listened to an excellent keynote lecture by Joep Leerssen in the beautiful baroque building of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and an enthralling

talk between Emily Apter and David Damrosch. Furthermore, numerous distinguished lectures, mentioned above, delivered by Vladimir Biti, who also represented our partner, the Academia Europaea, Hendrik Birus, Isabel Capeloa Gil, E.V. Ramakrishnan, Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, and Peter Zima. All of this in addition to another emphatic address by UNESCO MoW president Abdulla Al Raisi. Plus, literary lectures by one of the most famous Austrian novelists, Christoph Ransmayr, and Nobel Prize Bearer Herta Müller, chaired by Angelika Klammer and translated by Caterina Grasl.

I would also like to include a word of mourning, for Gisela Brinker-Gabler, who passed away on June 6, 2019, and Steven Sondrup, former president of the AILC/ICLA, who left us on November 10, 2020. Both will never be forgotten in the community of Comparative Literature.

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The organising team helped to plan panels, sessions and round tables, set up the social programme and dealt with all questions and problems big and small during the conference. Special thanks go out to the two vice-chairs of the organising team, my colleagues Norbert Bachleitner and Christine Ivanovic, the two senior assistants Constanze Prasek and Paul Ferstl, who untiringly did an excellent job as programme coordinators, to Christine Hermann for the department office and to Ariella Sobel for the department library. Many thanks to Antje Wischmann for her presentation of our Department of European and Comparative Languages and Literature at the opening of the congress, and thanks to Katharina Widholm and Pol Edinger for the library exhibition, to Andrea Kreuter and also to Katharina Edtstadler for helping organise the publishers' exhibition. The organising team also included Julia Danielczyk, Ernst Grabovski, Eva Hölter, Mikko Kajander, Stefan Kutzenberger, Carola Leitner, Sophie Mayr, Maria-Teresa Medeiros Lichem, Daniel Syrový, Stephan-Immanuel Teichgräber, Herbert van Uffelen, and Gianna Zocco. All of them were vital in making this conference happen.

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