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# The Centrality of Latin America and TransArea Studies: Europe, Asia, and the East of the Old World

There are good reasons to posit the thesis that all the literatures of the world converge in Latin America. There is no other continent – not Europe, not Africa, not Asia or Oceania – where literary traditions from the most diverse cultural areas collide, concentrate, confront, and mutually stimulate each other in such an intensive way as in Latin America. Latin America is like a burning lens under which the cultures of the world certainly do not live together without conflict – especially when we think of the islands of the Caribbean, a relatively small space. In this sense, Latin America is a space of conviviality.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly connected to the long history of European colonialism, the region's literary and cultural relations were particularly intensified by the most diverse literatures of Europe. But over the course of the past decades, the relations of the literatures of Latin America, with its diverse indigenous cultures and its innumerable literary filiations from Asia, Africa, or Oceania, have increasingly become the focus of literary analyses. The *expresión americana*, to use a term coined by the Cuban poet José Lezama Lima,<sup>2</sup> who is open to all literatures, has multiplied and diversified, especially since the second half of the 20th century.

In the course of more than five centuries, the main research areas of scholarly (literary) interest were oriented towards the various colonial languages and, above all, towards the globalized idioms of Western Europe. For in the various phases of accelerated globalization<sup>3</sup> – which were closely connected to the colonial spread of Spanish and Portuguese, but also of Latin in the first phase and with the globalization of French and English later on – the literatures of Western Europe were illuminated the glow of particularly active and intensive literary relations, so that the references to other literatures of Europe and especially Eastern Europe remained in the shadows of this interest. The initiative of this edition

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1 See on this concept Ottmar Ette: *ZusammenLebensWissen. List, Last und Lust literarischer Konvivenz im globalen Maßstab (ÜberLebenswissen III)*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos 2010; also Ottmar Ette: *Konvivenz. Literatur und Leben nach dem Paradies*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos 2012.

2 See the volume of essays by José Lezama Lima: *La expresión americana*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial 1969.

3 See the model of the four different phases of accelerated globalization in Ottmar Ette: *TransArea. A Literary History of Globalization*. Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter 2012.

to examine the manifold relations between the literatures of Latin America and those of Eastern Europe to shed light on those supposed *shadow areas* mentioned above is therefore a very welcome pursuit.

To give adequate weight to the relations between Latin America and Eastern Europe, it is of course necessary to integrate them into a panorama of the literatures of the world that is as comprehensive as possible. The following reflections are dedicated to this task. A specific look at the history of Eastern European and Latin American relations can be found at the end of this opening contribution. Before continuing, however, we must understand that the literatures of the world today have long ceased to be oriented around the ideas, assessments, and conceptualizations that Goethe gave the neologism “world literature” almost two hundred years ago. For a literary system oriented around a single center can no longer be recognized in the multiform and multilogical literatures of the world: It has long failed to do justice to the highly complex literary relations that have since emerged. We therefore urgently need a different understanding of the literatures of the world based on concepts of movement that place all references under the sign of an all-encompassing mobility.

Let us first note: the literatures of the world are polylogical. The very concept of literatures of the world aims at the fact that forms of production, reception and distribution of literature on a planetary scale do not draw from a single *source*, are not reducible to a single tradition – such as the occidental – but refer back to the most diverse range of cultural areas, time periods, and linguistic regions. Against this background, the concept of the literatures of the world – in contrast to Goethe's concept of world literature – does not aim at an understanding that is dialogical at best, mediating between Occident and Orient, between West and non-West, but at a polylogical comprehension and experience of a knowledge that can never be reduced to a single logic.

From today's perspective, world literature, with which Goethe so vehemently and persistently opposed the concept of National Literature, can be described as an epoch that has long passed its historical peak and is now characterized by new horizons (of writing, reading, and theory) both in terms of its *historical becoming* (historisch Gewordensein) and in its *becoming history* (Historisch-Gewordensein), which can no longer be aligned to a single point of view, to a single meridian of a single literature that spans the world. *TransArea Studies*, which operate between different cultural areas, are no longer based on spatial history, but on the *history of movement*. They are committed to the poetics of movement. In this context, Transarea Studies, which are as much oriented towards cultural studies as they are towards Literary Studies, are not only concerned with representing global reality as accurately as possible, but at the same time (and perhaps far more so) with capturing and presenting *lived*, but also *livable* realities on a global scale as

polylogically and polyphonically as possible. Both within and outside of the dimensions of comparison, transfer, and interconnection,<sup>4</sup> a transareal constellation of knowledge and science is concerned with a poetics of movement capable of grasping fundamentally complex<sup>5</sup> processes in their diverse and contradictory life contexts in an equally transdisciplinary and multi-perspectival manner.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, it is about a reorientation of methods of analysis in literary studies, which must be aligned with the poetics of movement.

When a transareal perspective is applied, relationships do not give rise to an *other* that can be clearly separated from one's own self, because they are not committed to any logic of alterization or gesture of discrimination between supposed centers and supposed peripheries. They are particularly interested in South-South relations, which are often of a transtropical nature, but at the same time they try to reflect on the ties back to *the* North, which can be grasped in the history of movement. Thus, we can sketch a multi-perspective history of globalization, which also includes North-North relations. In doing so, it is also important for *TransArea* Studies to include relations of Latin American literatures to cultural areas which were not prominently involved in the phases of accelerated globalization.

For a number of years now, there has been a multitude of studies that examine not only Arab-American, but to no lesser extent American-African, American-European, or American-Asian relations, whose mobile webs transareally configure both the hemispheric space of the Americas and individual nations or nation-states.<sup>7</sup> In the future, it will be essential to make such *TransArea* Studies fruitful for a new, transareally interconnected panorama of the literatures of Latin America as well as

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4 See Michael Werner/Bénédicte Zimmermann: Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. The Approach of the "Histoire croisée" and the Challenge of the Transnational. In: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (Göttingen) 28 (2002), p. 607–636.

5 On the concept of the fundamental-complex system, see Friedrich Cramer: *Chaos und Ordnung*. Die komplexe Struktur des Lebendigen. Frankfurt am Main, Leipzig: Insel Verlag 1996, p. 223.

6 See Ottmar Ette in his article *Zukünfte der Romanistik im Lichte der TransArea Studien* (The Future of Romance Studies in the Light of TransArea Studies) on the significance of such an epistemological reorientation, not only in terms of subject history, but also on the specific relationality of the cultures and literatures of Romania. In: Dieter Lamping (ed.): *Geisteswissenschaft heute. Die Sicht der Fächer*. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag 2015, p. 93–116.

7 See among others Marianne Braig/Ottmar Ette/Dieter Ingenschay/Günther Maihold (eds.): *Grenzen der Macht – Macht der Grenzen. Lateinamerika im globalen Kontext*. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert 2005; Peter Birle/ Marianne Braig/ Ottmar Ette/Dieter Ingenschay (eds.): *Hemisphärische Konstruktionen der Amerikas*. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert 2006; Ottmar Ette/Friederike Pannewick (eds.): *ArabAmericas. Literary Entanglements of the American Hemisphere and the Arab*

the literatures of the world, to simultaneously elaborate the centrality of Latin American literatures.

Especially in such a strongly vectorized area of transcultural overlap as Latin America, Transarea Philology can perform pioneering work that will contribute to critically questioning and, where necessary, disposing of the national literary, in part racist legacies of the national philologies founded in the 19th century.<sup>8</sup> TransArea Studies draws on the knowledge stored in the literatures of the world, among other sources. This knowledge can very well serve as a corrective to disciplinarily limited patterns of perception and raise awareness of issues to be worked out transdisciplinarily. If literature is, as Roland Barthes observed, “*toujours en avance sur tout*,”<sup>9</sup> i.e. always ahead of everything – including the sciences – is it not therefore a treasure trove of experiences and insights that have yet to be discovered and illuminated scientifically?

The following considerations aim to focus on the transareal interconnections of the literatures of the colonial world of America as well as the emerging Latin America and to think about Latin America between Africa, Europe, Asia, and Oce-

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*World*. Madrid, Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana Vervuert 2006; Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger/ Tiago de Oliveira Pinto (eds.): *AfricAmericas. Itineraries, Dialogues, and Sounds*. Madrid, Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana Vervuert 2008; Ottmar Ette (ed.): *Caribbean(s) on the Move – Archipiélagos literarios del Caribe. A TransArea Symposium*. Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford: Peter Lang Verlag 2008; Ottmar Ette/ Dieter Ingenschay/Günther Maihold (eds.): *EuropAmerikas. Transatlantic Relations*. Frankfurt am Main, Madrid: Vervuert Iberoamericana 2008; Ottmar Ette/ Horst Nitschack (eds.): *Trans\*Chile. Cultura – Historia – Itinerarios – Literatura – Educación. Un acercamiento transareal*. Madrid, Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana Vervuert 2010; Ottmar Ette/Gesine Müller (eds.): *Caleidoscopios coloniales. Transferencias culturales en el Caribe del siglo XIX. Kaléidoscopes coloniaux. Transferts culturels dans les Caraïbes au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Madrid, Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana Vervuert 2010; Ottmar Ette/Werner Mackenbach/ Gesine Müller/ Alexandra Ortiz Wallner (eds.): *Trans(it)Areas. Convivencias en Centroamérica y el Caribe. Un simposio transareal*. Berlin: edition tranvía Verlag Walter Frey 2011; Ottmar Ette/Gesine Müller (eds.): *Worldwide. Archipels de la mondialisation. Archipiélagos de la globalización. A TransArea Symposium*. Madrid, Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana Vervuert 2012; Ottmar Ette/ Werner Mackenbach/ Horst Nitschack (eds.): *TransPacífico. Conexiones y convivencias en AsiaAméricas. Un simposio transareal*. Berlin: Walter Frey/tranvía 2013; and Ottmar Ette/ Gesine Müller (eds.): *Paisajes vitales. Conflictos, catástrofes y convivencias en Centroamérica y el Caribe. Un simposio transareal*. Berlin: Walter Frey/tranvía 2014; Ottmar Ette/Gesine Müller (eds.): *Paisajes sumergidos Paisajes invisibles. Formas y normas de convivencia en las literaturas y culturas del Caribe. Un simposio transareal*. Berlin: Walter Frey/tranvía 2015.

<sup>8</sup> See Markus Messling/Ottmar Ette (eds.): *Wort – Macht – Stamm. Rassismus und Determinismus in der Philologie (18./19. Jahrhundert)*. München: Wilhelm Fink 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Roland Barthes: *Comment vivre ensemble. Simulations romanesques de quelques espaces quotidiens*. Notes de cours et de séminaires au Collège de France, 1976–1977. Texte établi, annoté et présenté par Claude Coste. Paris: Seuil IMEC 2002, p. 167.

ania, but also with a view to Eastern Europe, in order for a new understanding of transareal relations to develop through foundational scholarly research. These case studies attempt to show dimensions of the relations addressed above.

## I

Most visitors to the *Mezquita Catedral* of Córdoba pass by the *Capilla de las Animas del Purgatorio* carelessly. Part of a mighty Christian cathedral built within one of the most magnificent mosques of the Islamic world in a show of force and self-assured violence full of victorious pride, the chapel was acquired by a certain Don Gómez Suárez de Figueroa in 1613.<sup>10</sup> When the Spanish nobleman, who was born in the Andes of South America, died in 1616, he was buried in this chapel according to his wishes. An inscription still points us to this man and the name under which he enjoys great fame to this day:

El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, varón insigne, digno de perpetua memoria. Ilustre en sangre. Perito en letras. Valiente en armas. Hijo de Garcilaso de la Vega. De las Casas de los duques de Feria e Infantado y de Elisabeth Palla, hermana de Huayna Capac, último emperador de las Indias. Comentó La Florida. Tradujo a León Hebreo y compuso los Comentarios Reales. Vivió en Córdoba con mucha religión. Murió ejemplar. Dotó esta capilla. Enterróse en ella. Vinculó sus bienes al sufragio de las Animas del Purgatorio. [Son Patronos perpetuos los señores Deán y Cabildo de esta Santa Iglesia. Falleció a 22 de abril de 1616. Rueguen a Dios por su ánima.]<sup>11</sup>

The nobleman who is buried here and who had the ornate lattice at the entrance to his chapel decorated with the insignia of his Inca ancestors is thus none other than the author of those great literary works discussed here. His additional inter- and transcultural translation work<sup>12</sup> is most famously preserved in his translation of the *Dialoghi* of the poet and physician Leone Ebreo or Leo Hebraeus alias Je-

10 Here I draw (in an abbreviated form) on the subchapter “Interior Views from Outside” of my book *Viellögische Philologie. Die Literaturen der Welt und das Beispiel einer transarealen peruanischen Literatur*. Berlin: Walter Frey/ tranvía 2013.

11 Cited in Remedios Mataix: Inca Garcilaso de la Vega: apunte biográfico. In: <[http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/bib\\_autor/incagarcilaso/pcuartonivel.jsp?conten=autor](http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/bib_autor/incagarcilaso/pcuartonivel.jsp?conten=autor)>.

12 See Mercedes López-Baralt: *El Inca Garcilaso: traductor de culturas*. Madrid, Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana Vervuert 2011; Susana Jakfalvi-Leiva: *Traducción, escritura y violencia colonizadora: un estudio de la obra del Inca Garcilaso*. Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs 1984; Margarita Zamora: *Languages, authority, and indigenous history in the Comentarios reales de los Incas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988.

huda ben Isaak Abravanel. Thus, in a crowded space at the tomb of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, we find the presence of Inca, Islamic, Christian, and Jewish traces, references to Peru and Florida, Italy and Spain, to the last Inca ruler and to souls in purgatory, to the representatives of the Catholic Church and of secular power, to the insignia of the sword and the pen. A truly indefatigable pen, which always – for the last time in the text carved here in stone – sought to measure out the complex vectors of a life that, like no other, was lived thinking and interrelating the old and new worlds in all the different strands of their traditions.

The biographies proudly listed in this inscription at the entrance to the *Capilla de las Animas* resolutely opposes any attempt to reduce the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega to a single cultural origin by including a genealogical reference to the author's Spanish father, the conquistador Sebastián Garcilaso de la Vega, and to his Inca mother, the *ñusta* or princess Isabel Chimu Ocllo, niece of the Inca Túpac Yupanqui and granddaughter of the Inca Huayna Cápac. In the context of thought proposed here, it should be less about the designation of the man born in 1539 in Cuzco as “primer mestizo de personalidad y ascendencia universales que parió América”,<sup>13</sup> which has long since become canonical, than about the fact that even in his final resting place, the vectors of his life are stretched out within a field of forces between religions, empires, cultures and languages<sup>14</sup> in a constantly renewed movement.<sup>15</sup>

Garcilaso de la Vega el Inca, who spent the first two decades of his life in his native city of Cuzco and, after the death of his father in 1560, a total of fifty-six years in Montilla in Andalusia and in Córdoba, presented this field of forces in the *Proemio al lector* with which he prefaced his famous and extremely influential<sup>16</sup> *Comentarios reales*. Here, his pride in his dual descent is as evident as his astute assessment of the balance of power and forces in which criticism of Span-

13 Luis Alberto Sánchez: La literatura en el Virreynato. In (ed.): *Historia del Perú*. Vol. VI: *Perú colonial*. Lima: Editorial Mejía Baca 1980, p. 353.

14 See Sabine Fritz: Reclamar el derecho a hablar. El poder de la traducción en las crónicas de Guamán Poma de Ayala y del Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. In: Feierstein, Liliana Ruth/ Gerling, Vera Elisabeth (eds.): *Traducción y poder. Sobre marginados, infieles, hermeneutas y exiliados*. Frankfurt am Main, Madrid: Iberoamericana Vervuert 2008, p. 101–120.

15 See Bernard Lavalle: El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. In: Luis Iñigo Madrigal (ed.): *Historia de la Literatura Hispanoamericana*. Vol. I: *Epoca colonial*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra 1982, p. 135–143; and Sylvia L Hilton: Introducción. In: Garcilaso de la Vega: *La Florida del Inca*. Madrid: Historia 16 1996, p. 7–52.

16 See Alejandro González Acosta: Dos visiones de la integración americana: “Comentarios reales” del Inca Garcilaso de la Vega y “Crónica mexicana” de Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc. In: *América Latina. Historia y destino. Homenaje a Leopoldo Zea*. Vol. III. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México 1993, p. 49–62; or Amalia Iniesta Cámara: Inca Garcilaso de la Vega y

ish historians could not be overstated. His argumentation is therefore one of caution and perseverance at the same time:

Aunque ha habido españoles curiosos que han escrito las repúblicas del Nuevo Mundo, como la de México y la del Perú, y la de otros reinos de aquella gentilidad, no ha sido con la relación entera que de ellos se pudiera dar, que lo he notado particularmente en las cosas que del Perú he visto escritas, de las cuales, como natural de la ciudad del Cozco, que fue otra Roma en aquel imperio, tengo más larga y clara noticia que la que hasta ahora los escritores han dado. Verdad es que tocan muchas cosas de las muy grandes que aquella república tuvo: pero escribenlas tan cortamente, que aun las muy notorias para mí (de la manera que las dicen) las entiendo mal. Por lo cual, forzado del amor natural de patria, me ofrecí al trabajo de escribir estos *Comentarios*, donde clara y distintamente se verán las cosas que en aquella república había antes de los españoles, así en los ritos de su vana religión, como en el gobierno que en paz y en guerra sus reyes tuvieron, y todo lo demás que de aquellos indios se puede decir, desde lo más ínfimo del ejercicio de los vasallos, hasta lo más alto de la corona real. Escribimos solamente del imperio de los Incas, sin entrar en otras monarquías, porque no tengo la noticia de ellas que de ésta. En el discurso de la historia protestamos la verdad de ella, y que no diremos cosa grande, que no sea autorizándola con los mismos historiadores españoles que la tocaron en parte o en todo: que mi intención no es contradecirles, sino servirles de comento y glosa, y de intérprete en muchos vocablos indios que como extranjeros en aquella lengua interpretaron fuera de la propiedad de ella, según que largamente se verá en el discurso de la Historia, la cual ofrezco a la piedad del que la leyere, no con pretensión de otro interés más que de servir a la república cristiana, para que se den gracias a Nuestro Señor Jesucristo y a la Virgen María su Madre, por cuyos méritos e intercesión se dignó la Eterna Majestad de sacar del abismo de la idolatría tantas y tan grandes naciones, y reducirlas al gremio de su Iglesia católica romana, Madre y Señora nuestra. Espero que se recibirá con la misma intención que yo le ofrezco, porque es la correspondencia que mi voluntad merece, aunque la obra no la merezca. Otros dos libros se quedan escribiendo de los sucesos que entre los españoles en aquella mi tierra pasaron, hasta el año de 1560 que yo salí de ella: deseamos verlos ya acabados, para hacer de ellos la misma ofrenda que de éstos. Nuestro Señor, etc.<sup>17</sup>

The *Proemio* has been quoted here in its entirety because in these lines, a mobile, constantly changing position of the ego and its relationship to the objects depicted is unfolded in the most condensed form. This is a complexity that could not be adequately rendered by any history of transfer or *histoire croisée*. These lines again point to the central thesis of the present work. For the numerous biographies of this *first-person* figure interspersed throughout the text make it possible

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José Carlos Mariátegui: dos fundadores de la peruanidad. In: *Revista del Centro de Letras Hispanoamericanas* (Mar del Plata) V, 6–8 (1996), p. 149–160; Edgar Montiel, El Inca Garcilaso y la independencia de las Américas. In: *Cuadernos Americanos* (México) 131 (2010), p. 113–132.

17 Garcilaso de la Vega el Inca: *Comentarios reales de los Incas*. 2 vols. Prólogo, edición y cronología Aurelio Miró Quesada. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho 1985, here vol. 1, p. 5.



to trace not only a life path leading from America to Europe, but far more the oscillations that cause and enable a multi-perspective presentation of the objects.

In doing so, the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega succeeds, by constantly maintaining the connection between writing and life, in re-presenting the history he has drafted from the perspective of an experienced and lived history in such a way that the first-person character's own knowledge of life enters an intimate relationship with abstract forms of knowledge and representation that are thus *subtracted* from a direct, empirical knowledge of the objects. Consequently, it is about much more than the transareal life course of an outstanding author crossing the most diverse cultural areas, the most diverse cultures, and languages. The *Comentarios reales*, of course, cannot be detached or abstracted from the trans-cultural life knowledge of this staged self.

At the same time, however, this knowledge of life is also a knowledge of survival, since the staged author knows himself to be in a power structure in Spain that has opened its gates to him as an offspring of noble Spanish origin, but which at the same time threatens him with a unilateral worldview and an inquisitorial orthodoxy, the monolingualism of which is very much blended into the discursivity of the book's preface. The basis of this knowledge of survival is the unrestricted inscription of the ego in a salvific-historical context, insofar as the sole beatifying religion of the Roman Catholic Church is said to have saved so many great nations and their citizens, and thus also the ego itself, from the abyss of superstition and idolatry.<sup>18</sup>

The unrestricted commitment to this Christian history of salvation, which was also reflected in the purchase of the *Capilla de las Animas* in the mosque of Córdoba that was converted into a Christian cathedral, at the same time also enables a multiplicity of movements, which between Spain and *aquella mi tierra*, between *los españoles* and the indigenous population of Peru, does not manifest itself in a fixed intermediate position, but is expressed in constant figures of movement. It is no coincidence that the name of the *Capilla de las Animas* already refers to souls in purgatory and thus to Purgatory itself, that Christian space of movement situated *between* the fixed points of heaven and hell. The oscillation between the world of Spain, in which the narrator's self has been moving for many decades and in which the explicitly addressed readership of the text is also situated, and the *New World*, which Peru appears as a part of, makes it possible to speak of an *amor natural de patria*, a love of the fatherland, in which the object

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<sup>18</sup> See David A. Brading: The Incas and the Renaissance: The Royal Commentaries of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. In: *Journal of Latin American Studies* (Cambridge) XVIII, 1 (1986), p. 1–23; Sabine MacCormack: *Religion in the Andes: vision and imagination in early colonial Peru*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1991, p. 332–382.



of this love is grasped from different perspectives at the same time: After all, in terms of the history of movement, this concept can be applied just as much to the viceroyalty of Peru as to the prehispanic empire of the Incas, but at the same time also to Spain, the land of Garcilaso de la Vega's father which created a transatlantic empire through the conquest of the Inca Tawantinsuyo.

This multi-logical and transareal understanding of one's own history as well as one's own stories is also evident in the designation of one's own birthplace, "la ciudad del Cozco, que fue otra Roma en aquel imperio," which puts prehispanic Cuzco on par with the "eternal city" of Rome.<sup>19</sup> The procedure of a literal blending of the two cities not only refers to their respective religious significance, but also establishes the relationship between the Incan empire and Roman antiquity, consequently equalizing old world and new world antiquity. The claim to historical dignity associated with this gesture creates a movement of constant oscillation across comparison and transfer in which one's own origins appear in their otherness under the double light of ancient and contemporary Rome, without becoming the Other. Cuzco, as an urban space, does not become a space of one's own *or* of the other, but a *space of movement* of one's own as other and at the same time of the other as one's own, whereby the lexeme *otra* can never be stopped in its movement. It stands neither for a fixed identity nor for a fixed alterity.

## II

Our second case study takes us out of the colonial period and into that exciting era which can be understood as transitional period towards an independent Latin America. With his novel *El Periquillo Sarniento*,<sup>20</sup> first published in 1816 in a censored and therefore still incomplete format, José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi presented a narrative text known for being the first novel written in Latin America by a Latin American. While this founding text of the Hispano-American novel has always been called "la novela de la independencia mexicana"<sup>21</sup> in Hispano-America, as its creation coincided with the formation of the Mexican nation,

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19 See Sabine MacCormack: The Inca and Rome. In: José Anadón (ed.): *Inca Garcilaso de la Vega: An American Humanist. A Tribute to José Durand*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame 1998, p. 8–31; and: *On the wings of time: Rome, the Incas, Spain, and Peru*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2007.

20 José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi: *El Periquillo Sarniento*. Prólogo de Jefferson Rea Spell. México: Editorial Porrúa<sup>20</sup> 1992.

21 For example, Noël Salomon: La crítica del sistema colonial de la Nueva España en "El Periquillo Sarniento". In: *Cuadernos Americanos* (México) XXI, 138 (1965), p. 179. See also Luis Iñigo

we should focus our attention primarily on the fact that this literary-historical text is the first novel written by a Latin American in Latin America. This text, which in literary-historical terms is written in the tradition of the Spanish picaresque novel, is a literary form re-semantized within new cultural, social, and political contexts, and its transatlantic foundation between Europe and America has been in the spotlight from the beginning. This by no means implies that this great novel was limited solely to European-American relationship webs.

Nevertheless, the *novela picaresca* format is a highly creative choice, especially regarding the relations between Spain and New Spain, and between Europe and America. Indeed, *El Periquillo Sarniento* opens up in a special way to the question of the transareality of the American literatures of the world that is addressed here. For it was in full awareness of the Berlin debate on the New World that had flared up decades earlier<sup>22</sup> and in which none other than the great representatives of the Neo-Spanish Enlightenment such as Francisco Javier Clavijero or Fray Servando Teresa de Mier y Guerra had vehemently intervened and sided against Cornelius de Pauw, Guillaume-Thomas Raynal and other European philosophers that José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi's picaresque unfolded a transareal model of movement to realize the movement-historical concision of his own Enlightenment writing.

From this perspective, it would undoubtedly be revealing to relate the proliferation of paratextual elements (such as various prefaces, dedications, reader's notes, titling, interpolated texts, etc.) in Lizardi's novel to that in Clavijero's *Historia antigua de México* and to highlight the importance of the New Spanish Enlightenment to this novel. While the paratextual elaboration in *El Periquillo Sarniento* may be much more artful, one can observe in both texts the author's at times almost obsessively recurring attempt to situate himself within certain European discursive traditions and at the same time to intervene transatlantically in the American-European dispute. Lizardi was writing at a time of radical asymme-

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Madrigal: José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi. In: Luis Iñigo Madrigal (ed.): *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana*. Vol. 2: *Del neoclasicismo al modernismo*. Madrid: Cátedra 1987, p. 143, where the "primera novela propiamente hispanoamericana" is mentioned.

<sup>22</sup> See Ottmar Ette: Von Rousseau und Diderot zu Pernety und de Pauw: Die Berliner Debatte um die Neue Welt. In: Hans-Otto Dill (ed.): *Jean-Jacques Rousseau zwischen Aufklärung und Moderne*. Akten der Rousseau-Konferenz der Leibniz-Sozietät der Wissenschaften zu Berlin am 13. Dezember 2012 anlässlich seines 300. Geburtstag am 28. Juni 2012 im Rathaus Berlin-Mitte. Berlin: Leibniz-Sozietät der Wissenschaften (= *Sitzungsberichte der Leibniz-Sozietät der Wissenschaften* 117) 2013, p. 111–130.

try<sup>23</sup> in literary relations between the old and new worlds, and he was acutely aware of this fact of highly unequal relations in transatlantic exchange. And yet – or perhaps because of it – he succeeded in arguably becoming the first writer in American literary history to make a living from his writing.

At this point, however, I would like to direct our attention to another question connected to the first emergence of a utopian concept in the literatures of Latin America that sheds light on transpacific relations, which should be pointed out with regards to the colonial period already. For the staging of utopian forms of writing occurs after the protagonist, Periquillo Sarniento, has spent a long time in the Philippines and chooses to return with the Spanish galleon from Manila to Acapulco. During this crossing, which is historically never without danger, there is a shipwreck in which Periquillo, as the sole survivor, is washed up by divine decree (*divina providencia*) on the beach of an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.<sup>24</sup> The morning after the shipwreck, the sun rises beautifully, and he hears human voices. Helpful people provide him with food; and an interpreter is soon found who assures him that he has been very lucky not to have been displaced to the nearby (and real) Ladrone Islands, where he would surely have been enslaved immediately. Periquillo quickly learns the local language;<sup>25</sup> but when he is asked about his profession, i.e. how he supports himself, the *Pícaro* falsely states that he is a nobleman and therefore does not have to work. This is the beginning of the socio-critical examination of feudalistic neo-Spanish society from the perspective of this island in the middle of the Pacific.

Periquillo's interlocutor, a "Chinese and Asian,"<sup>26</sup> quickly makes it clear to him that no-good nobles are not tolerated on the island, as they would only harm the community. Everything on the island, on the other hand, is oriented around the law of usefulness to society. The Chinese islander takes on the role of a common-sense scholar who easily sees through Periquillo's lies.<sup>27</sup> On the island, everything is subordinated to the common good, everyone wears the signs of his profession and his status, so that one can always recognize with whom one is speaking: everything on this island is rationally constituted, and all parts of society are transparent for the state.

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23 See Ottmar Ette: Asymmetrie der Beziehungen. Zehn Thesen zum Dialog der Literaturen Lateinamerikas und Europas. In: Birgit Scharlau (ed.): *Lateinamerika denken. Kulturtheoretische Grenzgänge zwischen Moderne und Postmoderne*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag 1994, p. 297–326.

24 José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi: *El Periquillo Sarniento*, p. 358.

25 Ibid., p. 360.

26 Ibid., p. 361.

27 Ibid., p. 368.

The punishments on the island are draconian,<sup>28</sup> but this harshness is justified in detail. Theft, for example, is punished by cutting off the thief's hand.<sup>29</sup> The island unfolds a counter-image to New Spanish society, and the Chinese man appears as the representative of a much more just community, which is, of course, implicitly oriented towards Western values. These are projected – as in Thomas More – onto the foreign, in this case *Chinese* society, which is captured on the island as in a world fractal.<sup>30</sup> Transpacific relations take the place of transatlantic relations.

Finally, the Chinese man accompanies Periquillo Sarniento on his way home to New Spain and continues his relentless criticism of the society there. But let us leave him at this point and note that a clearly structured, hierarchical, and transparent *Chinese* society, oriented around the common good at all levels and representing ideas of the European as well as the colonial Spanish Enlightenment, advances to become a distant utopian mirror of the society of New Spain, which is deeply marred by injustice. The Chinese man's island, on the other hand, appears as just, transparent in its social order, merciless in its punishments, but at the same time oriented toward the collective good of its inhabitants.

Regardless of whether we understand the late 18th century in Europe as the golden age of utopias or as the crisis period of literary utopias, it is striking that the Mexican writer oriented himself only towards a spatial, but not a temporal projection and its literary filiation, and in doing so, inserted all those elements that range from shipwreck and island situation to static city and social order to strictly regulated forms of work and rigorous forms of punishment, maintaining a strong conformity with the genre. He thus placed his own utopian design in a close intertextual and architextual relationship to the canonical model of Thomas More.

This in no way implies that Fernández de Lizardi's text is a literary "imitation" of the genre's founding utopian text or plagiarizes it. On the one hand, Periquillo's stay on the island of Sancheofú – a clear and direct allusion to Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Sancho's Island – is, according to current knowledge, the first literary utopia within Latin American literary history and therefore per se an epoch-making innovation that cannot be emphasized strongly enough as a literary achievement on the part of the author. On the other hand, the projection of utopia from Hispano-America to the West, i.e. to the *Far East*, also represents a fundamental innovation, indeed a break with the European tradition, insofar as America no longer provided European authors with a blank canvas for

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 375.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 378 f.

<sup>30</sup> See Ottmar Ette: *WeltFraktale. Wege durch die Literaturen der Welt*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler Verlag 2017.

their own projections.<sup>31</sup> Asia and the Pacific region also moved into the focus of the prospective Latin Americans, even if they could not yet be referred to as such, since this designation only emerged as part of Panlatinism, which developed under French hegemony from the mid-nineteenth century onward.

Fernández de Lizardi's decision in favor of the specifically utopian and thus against the still young uchronic tradition, which had a high revolutionary potency both in literary history and regarding the historicization of political-social counter-designs, must not be misinterpreted from today's perspective as ideologically regressive just because it was presumably oriented around a static image of history. It certainly cannot be denied that a static vision of history, as can often be observed within the literary-philosophical tradition that followed the *Utopia* of 1516, is also present in the *Utopia* chapter of *Periquillo Sarniento*. However, we must not interpret this aesthetically convincing solution as a sign of any kind of backward-looking ideological orientation on the part of the New Spanish-Mexican author; rather, we must understand the cognitive potentials that a utopia, paradoxically related to a transareal space of movement, held within Fernández de Lizardi's social project. China was now held up as a utopian counter-image on the horizon of the emerging Latin American literature of the early 19th century.

### III

Our third case study comes from the end of this turbulent 19th century in Latin America and is in a sense extraterritorial. At this point I could have chosen the Cuban national hero José Martí, whose complex multi-relatedness within Latin American and global historical references I have addressed in detail elsewhere.<sup>32</sup> But the sample text briefly analyzed below illuminates the same historical situation of the declining Spanish colonial empire from a different perspective.

Let us therefore return once again to the Philippines, where *Periquillo Sarniento* had taken us. At the end of the 19th century, the Spanish colonial empire still existed in this archipelago, but it was caught up in the worldwide developments we can understand as the third phase of accelerated globalization. At the same time, we turn to a writer of whom it can be said without exaggeration that

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<sup>31</sup> See Horacio Cerutti Guldberg: *Utopía y América latina*. In: Horacio Cerutti Guldberg: *Presagio y tópica del descubrimiento*. México: CCYDEL 1991, p. 21–33. It is surprising that in this work, which was presented in Mexico, the Fernández de Lizardi's utopian vision is not mentioned.

<sup>32</sup> See Ottmar Ette: *José Martí. Part II: Denker der Globalisierung*. Berlin, Boston: Verlag Walter de Gruyter (Series *mimesis*, Vol. 100) 2023.

in his writing, Spanish reached its zenith as a literary language in the Philippines and at the same time became extinct. So let us consider a well-traveled author named José Rizal and a novel that is one of the outstanding creations of a national literature which subsequently abandoned the Spanish language in the 20th century and adopted English instead – along with Tagalog, of course.

With the collapse of Spain's continental colonial empire in the Americas, many of the centuries-old threads in the global weave of the former Iberian world power were severed, particularly regarding relations between the Philippines and Mexico. For centuries, the Spanish galleon that connected Manila with the New Spanish port of Acapulco provided an extremely important link in the cultural exchange between the Americas and the Asian world: the Philippines were, so to speak, an Asian outpost of Spain's American colonies. Far beyond the spread of Namban art from Japan and the global dissemination of Asian screens, which took on an artistic quality of their own in the Spanish Americas,<sup>33</sup> this transpacific connection through the Philippines we briefly learned about in *Peri-quillo Sarniento* was of inestimable importance to global trade relations in the Spanish Empire. All of these trade and cultural relations came to an end with the decline of Spain and the rise of the United States as a neocolonial hegemonic power.

The life and work of José Protacio Mercado Rizal y Alonso Realonda, who was born on June 19, 1861 in Calamba on Luzón in the Spanish Philippines and executed by Spanish soldiers on December 30, 1896 as a pioneer of the revolution, may serve as evidence of the impressive literary and cultural wealth of these transpacific relations. The Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea,<sup>34</sup> for example, was right to associate him with José Martí, born in Havana in 1853, whose eventful life and wide-ranging work was certainly no less restless and multifaceted than that of the author of *Filipinas dentro de cien años*. Both became great national heroes of their respective archipelagos. José Martí was killed in 1895 in the war he started against Spanish troops, who also executed José Rizal, one of the leaders of the Philippine insurgency. These murders and these wars, of course, did not prevent the downfall of the Spanish colonial power. José Rizal spent time in Spain, France and the USA, but also in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, in Hong Kong, Japan, England and Belgium, before he unsuccessfully applied to be allowed to accompany the Spanish troops transferred to Cuba as a doctor in 1895. This re-

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33 See Ottmar Ette: Magic Screens. Biombos, Namban Art, the Art of Globalization and Education between China, Japan, India, Spanish America and Europe in the 17th and 18th Centuries. In: *European Review* (Cambridge) XXIV, 2 (May 2016), p. 285–296.

34 See Leopoldo Zea: Prólogo. In: José Rizal: *Noli me tangere*. Estudio y Cronología Margara Rusotto. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho 1976, p. ix–xxx.

quest was denied. Like Martí, Rizal fought against the Spanish colonial power and embodied the transareal dimension of an anti-colonial struggle that was at the same time a struggle against the emerging imperialism of the rapidly expanding United States, the power that – thanks to its superior *New Steel Navy* fleet – would annex both island worlds as spoils of war in different ways a few years after the deaths of the two authors.

Under the Spanish colonial authorities, Rizal's genealogy was viewed under racist auspices, and therefore problematic. Born into a wealthy family as the seventh of eleven children, Rizal was officially considered a Chinese mestizo, since he was a fifth-generation descendant of a Chinese merchant who had immigrated from Fujian Province and his mother was a Spanish-Filipino mestizo. His criticism of the Spanish colonial power, his launch of a Masonic lodge, his political proposals aimed at radical reforms, and above all his book publications critical of colonialism brought him into open conflict with the Spanish colonial power.

Certainly, José Rizal's most famous work to date is his novel *Noli me tangere*, published in Spanish in Berlin in 1887. It is remarkable that Martí's only novel, *Amistad funesta*, also first appeared as a book in Berlin (albeit posthumously in 1911, in the tenth volume of the *Obras Completas*). But this coincidence draws attention less to similarities between the two authors than to how problematic Spanish-language publishing structures were in the remaining colonies at the time.

It is no coincidence that José Rizal, who also knew how to read and express himself in German, French, English and Latin, had learned a highly imperfect Spanish in his childhood in addition to his mother tongue, Tagalog, which forced him to constantly hone his expressive abilities against a multilingual background, unlike an author who had learned Spanish as his mother tongue. Blending different languages into one another, the translingual work makes the Filipino author a writer without a fixed abode whose entire oeuvre can only be adequately grasped from a transareal perspective. Against this background, it is important to emphasize that neither Martí nor Rizal, despite their restless struggles for their homeland, limited themselves to a preoccupation with *their* Caribbean or Philippine archipelago. The space for experimentation and movement present in their thinking and their travels was unmistakably transareal and transarchipelagic, in that on their paths and in their thinking – to use the *excipit* of Martí's *Nuestra América* – “las islas dolorosas del mar,”<sup>35</sup> that is, the pain-filled islands of the sea, are always interwoven with a global dimension.

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35 José Martí, *Nuestra América*. In: José Martí: *Obras Completas*. Vol. 6. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales 1975, p. 23.



It is no coincidence that the first of the novel's sixty-three chapters, which was published in Spanish in the capital of what was then the German Empire and quickly became famous in the Philippines but was soon banned by the Spanish colonial administration after official and academic reviews, begins with the depiction of a large dinner. The importance of such feasts in the Asian region is legendary. This one is spiced with a great deal of *couleur locale* and is meant to demonstrate to the reading public, who is addressed directly, how such forms of sociability took place in the "Perla del Oriente,"<sup>36</sup> in the Pearl of the Orient.

In this undoubtedly costumbristic prelude to *Noli me tangere*, from the very beginning a *soundscape* is very consciously integrated into the only briefly evoked tropical river landscape and its only rudimentarily developed cityscape with the "acordes de la orquesta" and the "significativo *clin-clan* de la vajilla y de los cubiertos,"<sup>37</sup> which in turn is supplemented by a landscape of the most diverse scents, a specific *smellscape*. The synesthetic dimension is clearly marked from the beginning. Hospitality is marked by the orchestration of globalized sensory stimuli and table manners, so that local color is translocalized, as it were, against the backdrop of a worldwide circulation of goods and habits: The Philippines can thus be experienced sensuously in literary terms within global connections.

In this novel, which is translingual and contains various sprinklings of different languages, the house plays an important role as a fractal *pattern*.<sup>38</sup> The house, with its characteristic *intérieur* of the time, its famous banquets, its owner's ostentatious consumption, and the people who meet here, concentrates the tense world of the colonial Spanish Philippines as if under a burning mirror. The fractal structure of this house, which unites a highly heterogeneous totality as if in a *modèle réduit* (Lévi-Strauss), shines from the beginning as a representation of the entire novel. As if in a fractal *mise en abyme*, Rizal's novel sketches that worldwide colonial and, at least in perspective, postcolonial space of the movement of cultures that expresses itself in the archipelago and even more so in the globally networked island world of the Philippines. Asian, European, and Latin American cultures are introduced into one another and aesthetically condensed within the sight of this house. We also find such a fractal condensation in the concluding case study, which will lead us to relations with Eastern Europe.

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36 José Rizal: *Noli me tangere* Prólogo Leopoldo Zea. Edición y cronología Margara Russotto. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho 1976, p. 8.

37 Ibid.

38 See on the fractal pattern of the island house Ottmar Ette: Von Inseln, Grenzen und Vektoren, p. 161–167, and the book *WeltFraktale. Wege durch die Literaturen der Welt* mentioned above, on the concept of the *literatures of the world*.

## IV

At this point, for reasons of time and space, I unfortunately cannot bring the presence of Africa and the Arab world, which I have researched in other contexts, into this investigation. At this point, however, I would like not only to venture into the 20th and early 21st centuries, but also to point out the fractal dimension of Latin American writing in both the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking worlds of Latin America. In this context, it seems appropriate to me at the end of our short overview to expand our image, looking toward this Lusophone world as well as Eastern Europe, and at the same time to show in a final case study how important aspects of the relationship of Latin American literatures to Eastern Europe can be shaped.

Let's start with a simple fact. The Universidade Federal do Paraná in Curitiba, Brazil, is the seat of the only Polish Studies program in all Latin America, and for good reason. Located on a plateau with the *Mata Atlântica* sloping steeply to the sea, for a long time the city was the destination of a massive migration from different regions and countries of Europe, but from Eastern Europe and Poland in particular. Even today, the large proportion of European and Eastern European populations is recognizable in the cityscape and decoratively staged in the so-called “fairy tale forest” of the city park. It is therefore not surprising that Brazilian writer Dalton Trevisan, one of the most distinguished narrators in the Portuguese language who was born in Curitiba on June 14, 1925, and awarded the prestigious *Prémio Camões* in 2012, devoted himself to the topic of Polish immigration to his native city and presented the novel *A Polaquinha* in 1985. In Trevisan's narrative world, which is often set in Curitiba as a model, as if in the form of a *modèle réduit*, the image of a young woman emerges in everyday or colloquial language based on the art of dialogue. She tries to find her way in life as an attractive blond migrant in a patriarchal world dominated by men, which is anything but easy for her.

The author of *A Polaquinha* shows us the reasons for the character's struggles in his dialogical novel. As the son of prosperous Italian immigrants, Trevisan knew the patriarchal world of Curitiba and that of the immigrants very well, and understood how to situate his “*little Polish girl*,” doubly marginalized in her working world as a migrant and a woman,<sup>39</sup> in the realistically rendered Paraná – a state dominated by male sexual fantasies – in such a way that her entire subal-

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39 Wilma de Lara Bueno: *Curitiba, uma cidade bem-amanhecida. Vivência e trabalho das mulheres polonesas no final do século XIX e nas primeiras décadas do século XX*. Dissertação de Mestrado, Setor de Ciências Humanas, Letras e Artes. Curitiba: Universidade Federal do Paraná 1996.

tern position as a blond sexual object becomes visible in a sometimes frighteningly crude manner. Together with all kinds of transgressions and broken taboos in his portrayals, such intense literary close-ups earned<sup>40</sup> the author, who became known as an explorer of gender relations and is probably the city's most famous son, the nickname “vampire of Curitiba”.<sup>41</sup>

Trained as a lawyer at the Universidade Federal of Curitiba, the author practiced his learned profession alongside his writing for seven years. Through his cleverly staged colloquial expressions, he becomes the discreet advocate of a woman who has been degraded to a feminine object of lust and made socially invisible, who tries to go her own way against all odds and through her biographical traversal of Curitiba society sheds a significant light on the conditions of life and love in the provincial Brazilian town. For the literary portrayal of love relationships always sheds a general light on the prevailing social conditions.<sup>42</sup>

Although the world of *Polaquinha* is set in Curitiba, it stands as a model for the social relations and perversions of a bourgeois world eroded by *machismo* that bears the watermark of a relationship between Latin America and Eastern Europe in the form of the brutal economic and sexual exploitation of the migrant woman. Consequently, we can speak of a scale of generalization in this novel's diegesis and its protagonist that goes far beyond Curitiba and Brazil, meaning that one must speak of a clear core of subaltern asymmetry with regard to the “little Polish woman”.

The misogynistic process of sexual objectification of the character of the blond Polish woman is clear from the first pages of the novel. Thus, after only a few lines at the beginning of this narrative text, the following statement is made:

Eu no pijama de pelúcia. Ele, calça de lã e japona marrom. Começou a me abraçar e beijar. Afastou o lençol, já debaixo das cobertas – corpo a corpo. Ficou excitado. Uma bolina – então se dizia bolina – tão gostosa. Tirou para fora, era a primeira vez. Não cheguei a ver. Me fez pegar: grande, todo se mexia. Com medo, mas queria – como é que podia caber? Não, agora me lembro, o pijama azul de seda com bolinha. No meio das pernas, aquele volume palpitando. Pediu que me virasse. Baixou a calça do pijama, entre as coxas – tão quente, me queimou a pele, até hoje a cicatriz. Eu queria, mas ele só encostava.<sup>43</sup>

40 See Rosângela Nascimento Vernizi: *Erotismo e transgressão: a representação feminina em A Polaquinha de Dalton Trevisan*. Curitiba: Universidade Federal do Paraná 2006 <<https://acervodigital.ufpr.br>>

41 See Leo Gilson Ribeiro: O vampiro de almas. In: Trevisan Dalton: *A gueerra conjugal*. 10°. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record 1995.

42 See Ottmar Ette: *LiebeLesen. Potsdamer Vorlesungen zu einem großen Gefühl und dessen Aneignung*. Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter (Series Aula, 2) 2020.

43 Dalton Trevisan: *A Polaquinha*. Rio de Janeiro: Record 1985, p. 6.

The body of the young woman becomes the site of the most diverse dreams and nightmares for different male sexual partners. For the pretty Polish woman herself, her body becomes a place where the experiences of attractive *body-having* and painful *body-being* are entangled in the face of the dominance of the male, phallogocentric principle, which is already expressed with repulsive clarity in the above-mentioned opening passage. Dalton Trevisan explores the absurdities of a life of dependence as deeply as he does the abysses of a female power of seduction, whose magical attraction is only the flipside of an absolutely subaltern positionality and dependence. The eroticism of some scenes alone provides a view of the perversity of a life lived in the deepest dependency, which can undoubtedly be extended and transferred to the relations between Brazil and Poland, between Latin America and Eastern Europe in the reading of this novel as a *world fractal*.

For in the writing of the Brazilian author, which is in this respect comparable to the otherwise completely different narrative literature of João Guimarães Rosa,<sup>44</sup> Curitiba is certainly a *world fractal* that forms the city-island in Brazil – which can also be understood as an island<sup>45</sup> – into the model of an entire world and its reciprocal relations. *En miniature*, this constellation configures the relations as they exist between the East of Europe and the East of Latin America. This fractal dimension and the universalization associated with it open up the interpretation proposed here, which conceives Trevisan's story of *Polaquinha* as a parable of the dependent situation of the woman and the migrant in a male-dominated society. The Brazilian author has endowed this parable of the suffering as well as the transgression of this role with a semantics that casts a special light on the relations between the *little Pole's* country of origin and the patriarchal society of Latin America. The diminutive *Polaquinha* is also negatively semanticized against this background.

But we could go one step further and ask about the transferability of Trevisan's insights to the level of literary relations between Eastern Europe and Latin America. For it seems important to me to relate the story of this young woman who works in the hospital to the position that Eastern European literatures occupy in relation to the literatures and cultures of Latin America. There is no doubt that there were and are literary relations here, but these relations have largely flown under the radar of research, except in a few illustrious cases. In other words, as a staging of the protagonist's subaltern positionality, *A Polaqui-*

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44 See Ottmar Ette: Sagenhafte WeltFraktale. João Guimarães Rosa, "Sagarana" und die Literaturen der Welt. In: Ette, Ottmar/Soethe, Paulo Astor (eds.): *Guimarães Rosa und Meyer-Clason. Literatur, Demokratie, ZusammenLebenswissen*. Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter 2020, p. 25–52.

45 See Heike Muranyi: *Brasilien als insularer Raum. Literarische Bewegungsfiguren im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: Walter Frey/tranvía 2013.

*nha* sheds a significant light on the asymmetrical relationality through which Poland and Eastern Europe are linked to Latin America on a literary level as well.

It is highly gratifying that this volume responds to the lack of resonance these networks of relations have found in literary and cultural studies research and thus to this highly asymmetrical situation and aims to break new ground in this field. The problem of a fundamental asymmetry, as implied in Dalton Trevisan's title diminutive, will be impossible to ignore. For it goes without saying that the current literatures of the world still carry within them that asymmetry of relations which historically brought about the emergence of a system of world literature: The literatures of the world are not a *creatio ex nihilo*, nor a theoretical, well-balanced construction created at the drawing board. Rather, they have a prehistory marked by sharp asymmetries of power, which at times still seem to be expressed in the relations between Latin America and Eastern Europe. The 21st century will most certainly see a shift take place in this relationship.