

INTERFACE

—JOURNAL OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES



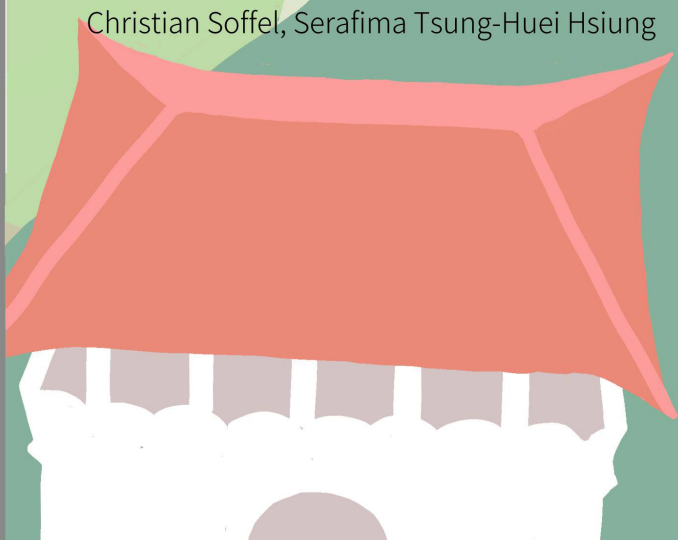
Poetry and Transculturality in Asia and Europe – The Material World

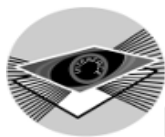
Guest Editors:

Christian Soffel, Serafima Tsung-Huei Hsiung

12

Summer
2020





INTERFACE

—JOURNAL OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

ISSN: 2519-1268

Issue 12, Summer 2020

Published on June 30, 2020

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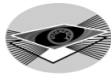
The Journal is published three times a year (February, June, October) by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, National Taiwan University.

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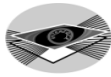
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EDITORIAL:

Poetry and Transculturality in Asia and Europe

—The Material World

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The main focus of *INTERFACE* issue 12 is “Poetry and Transculturality in Asia and Europe —The Material World”, which is a continuation of the general theme in *INTERFACE* issue 10. The foundation to both journal volumes was laid during the International Symposium “Poetry and Transculturality in Asia and Europe”, held in Taipei at Taiwan University in February 2019, organized jointly with the Center for Advanced Studies “Russian Poetry in Transition” (FOR 2603) at Trier University. In addition to exploring the function and value of poetic language (prose is not excluded) as the main expression of transcultural activities, the articles in issue 12 examine in depth the emerging tendency of exophonic writing and multilingualism in the field of current poetry. The new challenge in this issue is to discuss the reproducible relationship between language/words and external things or—in other words—the material world.

As a special language activity, poetry often operates on the boundary of language possibilities, trying to accept the language norms and expanding it by including elements from other languages or even language systems. As for the relationship between words in a certain language and the material world, this will inevitably bring the subject into this relationship, thereby forming a close interlocking relationship between language, material and subject. Nevertheless, this connection is not rigid, but a continuous process of decomposition and reconstruction.

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As for the theoretical part, the discussions held in this issue include Wolfgang Iser's concept of transculturality, Vygotsky's thinking and speech, Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, and Jan Baudouin de Courtenay's phoneme theory. Overall, the articles in this issue have academic depth, length, and breadth.

The issue begins with two articles focusing on the work of the Yōko Tawada. The first contribution explores the poetics of "exophony" by Yoko Tawada, a bilingual Japanese writer (Japanese and German), who chose a foreign language (German) as her literary medium. Tawada's poetics of "exophony" is to liberate language from its fixed meaning and form a new literary creativity. In addition, this "exophony" writing needs additional and almost simultaneous translations between "external speeches", which Tawada calls a self-translation process (Japanese-German). According to this view, Tawada equates her writing activities with translation. The other author tackles the famous Japanese poet from the perspective of "liminality", putting her into contrast to the American-born Japanese poet Arthur Binard, who serves as example to elaborate on the characteristics of Tawada's verse.

The next paper examines orientalism of Gabriele D'Annunzio, an Italian writer and poet in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. D'Annunzio expresses his orientalism in a short story titled *Mandarina* displaying "Eastern" exoticism in a space filled with Japanese artifacts and erotic desires. However, it turns out that D'Annunzio's orientalism is a fictional East imagined by the West, which is exactly the orientalism under the concept of "Western social superiority" described by Said.

The topic of the next article is multilingualism in modern Russian poetry, in which the author formulates a typology of the Russian multilingual poetry; it consists of "situational", "intertextual", "creational-performative" and "cultural-identical" types of poetic form. At the end of the paper, the author draws a challenging conclusion: unlike America and Europe, Russian multilingual poetry rarely involves socio-political and identity issues. In most cases, Russian multilingualism is limited to aesthetics and cultural reference area.

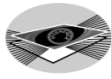
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The final article can be regarded as an important part of completing the transcultural topic in this issue. The paper examines the contemporary sinophone classicist poetry by Chang Yi-Jen (Zhang Yiren), a recent Taiwan literary historian and poet. Contemporary sinophone classicist poetry has not received enough academic attention so far, and this article just fills this shortcoming. The author uses the transcultural perspective to analyze Chang's poetry, which not only helps to understand contemporary sinophone classicist poetry, but also enriches the discussion about transculturality.

From exophony writing, orientalism, multilingualism to contemporary sinophone classicist poetry, all articles are good at showing the discourses of transcultural perspectives (whether positive or negative). They verified that cultures penetrate each other on various levels and time periods, far beyond people's imagination. As for the relationship between translation and text, in addition to transcending language boundaries through translation, literary text is also given a new written body.

We would like to express our thanks to the editor and the editorial board of *INTERFACE* for their continuous support and the wonderful atmosphere of creative cooperation generated by all people who have contributed to the completion of this volume.

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The Concept of Translation in Yoko Tawada's Early

Work

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Abstract

Yoko Tawada chose a foreign language as her literary medium and enjoyed its foreignness, which simultaneously alienates her from her mother tongue. By writing in another language, she gained a distance from her mother tongue, but at the same time a new literary creativity was formed for her. Her poetics of "exophony," with which she tries to liberate a language from its fixed meaning and to revive it, is presented in her early work as a translation process. The idea of considering "exophonic" writing as "translation" is understandable because it involves a constant process of self-translation. The following article attempts to shed light on Tawada's concept of translation in her early work, especially in her first work *nur da wo du bist da ist nichts* (*Nothing only where you are*, 1987).

Keywords: exophony, translation, Yoko Tawada, L. Vygotsky, inner speech, W. Benjamin

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The Concept of Translation in Yoko Tawada's Early

Work

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1 Introduction: “Translation” as a writing strategy

“Exophony,” literary writing outside the mother tongue, is one of the key concepts that characterise so-called transnational or transcultural literature in the present. Wright defines “exophony” as follows:

Exophony describes the phenomenon where a writer adopts a literary language other than his or her mother tongue, entirely replacing or complementing his or her native language as a vehicle of literary expression).

(Wright, 2013, p. 2)

The adopted language is usually acquired as an adult. According to Ivanovic (2010), the term “exophonic” means “that the author, by adapting another language, tries at the same time to express the distance to the literary community within which he moves with it” (Ivanovic, 2010, p. 172), and the function of “exophonic” texts is explained as follows:

Exophonic texts are determined by secondariness in the relationship between language and speaker, which is made conscious in the writing itself; they articulate a *different* way of speaking, namely — in analogy to the concept of polyphony according to Bakhtin — the emergence of the voice (phonē) from the writing.

(Ivanovic, 2010, p. 172)

Suga (2007, p. 28) underlines the polyphony of the “exophonic” texts and speaks of “omniphony”: “Omniphony means a state of language in which many other languages of the world resonate”.¹

¹ Suga is not thinking of Mihail Bakhtin, but of Edouard Glissant's concept of “echos-monde” when he speaks of “Omniphony”.

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In the field of German studies, the term “exophony” was first introduced at the conference organised by the Goethe-Institut in Dakar in 2002 (cf. Lufhofer, 2011, p. 3). Until then, literature written by authors whose first or native language was not German was referred to as “literature of foreigners” or “migrant literature”. However, these have a colonialist aftertaste and presuppose “cultural or linguistic blocks separated from each other in various ways and are rather helpless in the face of a hybridity of cultures and languages or a transculturality that is recognised throughout today” (Lufhofer, 2011, p. 3).

Yoko Tawada, who was born in Tokyo in 1960 and has lived in Germany since 1982, also took part in the Dakar conference and heard for the first time about the concept of “exophony” (cf. Tawada, 2003a, pp. 3-13). Since then, she became aware of this concept in her writing and subsequently wrote a volume of essays on this subject. She deliberately chose a foreign language as her literary medium and since then has enjoyed its foreignness, which simultaneously alienates her from her mother tongue. By writing in another language, she gained a distance from her mother tongue, but at the same time a new literary creativity was formed for her.

Before she got to know the concept of “exophony,” she had often tried to explain her writing strategy with the term “translation”. The idea is not necessarily original, because “exophony” and “translation” are closely related, as Suga (2007, p.27) claims: “exophonic writing, imaginably, involves a constant process of self-translation”. The “self-translation” as “exophonic” writing of course does not mean that Tawada would first write a text in Japanese and then translate it into German. In the first phase of her literary activity in Germany, she wrote her texts exclusively in Japanese, but her Japanese was already alienated by the German language. Tawada’s “self-translation” at the time took place on a completely different level, as she impressively describes her own language situation immediately after her migration to Germany:

Six months have passed, and in those months I never spoke Japanese. It seemed to me that Japanese had gone out of my life. I

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could no longer find suitable Japanese expressions for the objects and my feelings. It goes without saying that I cannot find suitable German expressions, because German is after all a foreign language for me. But now my mother tongue left me and I became afraid. It was as if the writings had gradually become unreadable in the fog. At that time I felt something, thought and decided without language. [...] Then I began to »translate« this speechless life into German or Japanese. The Japanese language, which I had mastered earlier, died once and was reborn in another body.

(Tawada, 1999a, pp. 11-12)

What she means here with the expression “to »translate« this speechless life into German or Japanese” can probably be better understood with the term “inner speech” by Vygotsky. In his book *Thinking and speech* (1934) he writes:

This outline of the characteristics of inner speech leaves no doubt concerning the validity of our basic thesis, the thesis that *inner speech is an entirely unique, independent, and distinctive speech function*, that it is completely different from external speech. This justifies the view that inner speech is an internal plane of verbal thinking which mediates the dynamic relationship between thought and word. After all that we have said about the nature of inner speech, about its structure and its function, there is no question that the movement from inner to external speech is incomparable to the direct translation of one language to another. The movement from inner to external speech is not a simple unification of silent speech with sound, a simple vocalization of inner speech. This movement requires a complete restructuring of speech. It requires a transformation from one distinctive and unique syntax to another, a transformation of the sense and sound structure of inner speech into the structural forms of external speech. External speech is not inner speech plus sound any more than inner speech is external speech minus sound. The transition from inner to external speech is complex and dynamic. It is the transformation of a predicative, idiomatic

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speech into the syntax of a differentiated speech which is comprehensible to others.

(Vygotsky, 1987, pp. 279-280)

In the first phase in Germany, Tawada felt, thought and made decisions without “external speech”. She calls the transition from the inner to the external speech, which was very laborious for her, “translation”. For Tawada, the inner speech seems to play a certain role in the translation on the level of the external speech (Japanese-German or German-Japanese) when she reads Paul Celan’s volume of poetry *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle* (*From threshold to threshold*, 1955) in Japanese translation (by Mitsuo Iiyoshi, 1990) and asserts: “The original’s encounter with its translation takes place during the composition of the text and not later” (Tawada, 1996a, p. 129). In a dialogue with the writer Natsuki Ikezawa, Tawada (2003b, p.148) says that language itself is already a translation of our amorphous, pre-linguistic thoughts, but she does not know whether these unformed thoughts can then be called “the original”. She further explains that perhaps it is precisely the act of translating our thoughts into language that enables us to imagine an amorphous “original” from which we translate.

The following article attempts to shed light on Tawada’s concept of translation in her early work (i.e. in the works before her encounter with the concept of “exophony”), especially in her first work *nur da wo du bist da ist nichts / anata no iru tokoro dake nani mo nai* あなたのいるところだけなにもない (Nothing only where you are, 1987). In this book, the Japanese original text is printed parallel to the German translation by Peter Pörtner. The book is bilingual, but Tawada as author was not yet bilingual. We had to wait another four years until she herself wrote a German text. However, she was no longer monolingual and was able to check Pörtner’s translation. At that time she was in the middle of the process of moving out of her mother tongue. The following is a detailed analysis of the texts that address this process. The term “translation” is not necessarily understood as a translation of the Japanese language into German or vice versa, so the comparison of the so-called partner texts (two versions of the same work written by the author herself in

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both Japanese and German) is not the main concern.²

2 The relationship between Tawada and her mother tongue

Tawada's first book begins with the poem *Der Plan* (*Keikaku* 計画, *The Plan*), if we read it in Japanese. In this book, as already mentioned, every text is printed in both German and Japanese: German from left to right, Japanese from top to bottom and from right to left. So we should turn the pages of the book in two different ways. If we read the texts in German, we turn the pages from the German point of view as usual, but if we read them in Japanese, we start to turn the pages from the back. That is why all pages in this book are numbered twice.

The poem *Der Plan* can be read as a parable of “exophony”. It is primarily about the liberation from the mother tongue and from the ego bound in the mother tongue.

Mutter hatte
auf meinen Teppich
Suppe verschüttet.
Verärgert wischte ich
am kommenden Tag
und den Tagen danach
mit einem Lappen
die Bohnenreste und die Reste vom Fisch
von meinem Teppich.
Genauso wie Mutter
die von der Großmutter verschüttete Suppe
ihr ganzes Leben lang
weggewischt hatte.

2 Matsunaga (2002) compared the partner texts from the 1990s in detail in her essay on the problem of self-translation in Tawada's work. Matsunaga understands exophonic writing, like Suga, as a constant process of self-translation: “Since Tawada always jumps between two languages, ‘translating’ is a permanent writing process for her” (p. 534). With the expression “between two languages” Matsunaga means between Japanese and German

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Eines Tages
warf ich den Lappen weg
und brach mir einen Weg durch das Gelächter
das um mich aufkochte.

1. Laß den Blumenstrauß im Ohrloch überfließen
und singe in Richtung des Leuchturms.
2. Ruf die Ameisen herbei und laß sie ein Dreieck bilden.
3. Wirf ein gekochtes Ei in den Sternenhimmel.

(Mother had
spilled soup
on my carpet.
Angrily, I wiped
the next day
and the days after
with a cloth
the rests of beans and fish
off my carpet.
Just like mother
had wiped off
the soup spilled by the grandmother
all her life.
One day
I threw away the rag
and set out through the laughter
that boiled up around me.

1. Let the bouquet overflow in the ear hole
and sing towards the lighthouse.
2. Gather the ants and let them form a triangle.
3. Throw a boiled egg into the starry sky.)

(Tawada, 1987, p. 121/8)

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The mother tongue is represented for the lyrical ego as a stain “auf meinem Teppich (on my carpet),” i.e. as a kind of (birth-)mark inherited from the mother. In the same way the mother had inherited the language of the grandmother. While the mother has remained with her mother tongue “ihr ganzes Leben lang (all her life),” the ego wants to leave its mother tongue. Plans No. 1, 2 and 3 can then be understood as a poetic practice that the ego intends to exercise exophonically.

In an interview with the journalist Lerke von Saalfeld, Tawada explains why people want to be freed from their mother tongue at all:

[...] you become very cowardly in the mother tongue. If you live only in your mother tongue, you are very helpless. First of all, you have no means to fight against the language, the language dominates you, you can't do anything about it. If you know another language, then the distance between yourself and the mother tongue is noticeable. You are not quite under the power of language. That is a liberation, and only then you can become courageous.

(Saalfeld, 1998, p. 188)

In this interview Tawada also speaks of the “ethnological” glasses (Saalfeld, 1998, p. 189), i.e. language as glasses through which we see

In the poem *Der Plan*, the poetess originally writes that the mother spilled “misoshiru 味噌汁 (miso soup)” on the “tatami 畳”. These Japanese attributes show that the stain (i.e. the language) is supposed to be Japanese. In the German translation, however, the mother spilled “Suppe (soup)” on the “Teppich (carpet),” so that German readers who do not understand Japanese may think that the stain is German. Whether it is Japanese or German is irrelevant here, because this is the mother tongue par excellence.³

3 Pörtner's translation is quite free, but Tawada herself agrees with his translation. In an essay she argues against the criticism that the translation is wrong. She writes, “In Germany ‘tatami’ can be used as a foreign word, but the word associates young generation with the alternative interior, and it does not seem like the everyday life of a child still living with his parents” (Tawada, 2006, pp. 169-170).

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After the lyrical ego has left its mother tongue, however, it does not immediately become creative, but first of all “mute,” as the second poem *Absturz und Wiedergeburt* (Tsuiraku to saisei 墜落と再生, Crash and rebirth) is supposed to show. The poem consists of two parts. As the title suggests, the first part deals with the “Absturz (crash)” and the second part with the “Wiedergeburt (rebirth)”. At the beginning of the first part a “Dolmetscherin (female interpreter)” (Tawada, 1987, p. 119/10) waits for a new beginning, but in vain.⁴

In der Muttersprache stumm sein

Aus dem Ei schlüpft ein Flugzeug
Die Blicke der Einzelteile
sammeln sich in der Sekunde des Starts

Namenlose Dinge beginnen ein namenloses Tun
Wann?

Am Ende der Rollbahn hebt es kräftig den Kopf
der Maschinenleib sticht in den Himmel
Das Lächeln zerbricht
ein Lied kann man noch nicht hören
Durch verstreute Flüge
hängt noch keine Brücke

(Being mute in the mother tongue

An airplane hatches from the egg
The gaze of the single parts
gather in the moment of the start

Nameless things begin a nameless doing
When?

4 In Tawada's works, a translator or interpreter often appears, but her translation always fails, as we find a typical example in the novel *The wound in the alphabet* (*Arufabetto no kizuguchi* アルファベットの傷口, 1993). On the subject of the failed translation in Tawada, see Matsunaga (2002, pp. 534-540).

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At the end of the runway, it lifts its head strongly
the machine body stings into the sky
The smile breaks
a song is not yet heard
Through scattered flights
no bridge is hanging yet)

(Tawada, 1987, p. 118/11)

Things and their actions are “namenlos (nameless)” because the interpreter has not yet acquired a new language after leaving her mother tongue in order to be able to give them new names. An interpreter is usually a person who translates (übersetzen) what is said in one language into another. The word “übersetzen,” spelled the same way, means, as a separable verb, to carry from one shore to another. This is why it is referred to as a “Brücke (bridge)”⁵ In this context, the line “hängt noch keine Brücke (no bridge is hanging yet)” means that the interpreter cannot yet translate. The repeated expression “noch (yet) + negative word” such as “noch nicht (not yet)” and “noch keine (none yet)” implies the expectation that a bridge is about to hang. But still the attempt of the interpreter fails at first. She breaks into tears and the plane crashes.

Sie übersetzt „Ufer“ mit „Gott“
Sie übersetzt „Herz“ mit „Stadt“
Sie übersetzt „Warum“ mit „Frau“
In den Tränen der schluchzenden Dolmetscherin
wird der Maschinenleib kühl

Zerbrechenschlingernsinkenstürzenfallenwirbelnuntergehenuntergehen

(She translates “riverbank” into “God”.
She translates “heart” into “city”

5 We could also remember that “exophony” is actually a spatial concept (“ex” means “outside”). This is probably why Tawada always has a spatial idea when she speaks of “translation”. For example, she compares the word “tüchtig” with its English equivalent “competitive” and says, “There is probably an ocean between the two words” (Tawada, 2002a, p. 127; Tawada, 2013, p. 68).

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She translates “why” into “woman”
In the tears of the sobbing interpreter
the body of the aircraft becomes cool

Breakleanstumblefallturngoingdownanddown)

(Tawada, 1987, p. 118/11)

Fifteen years later, in her prose *Wörter, die in der Asche schlafen* (*Words sleeping in ashes*, 2002), Tawada once again mentions the problem of namelessness. Here she tells about the German swearwords that have to do with animals such as “Ziege (goat)” or “Kuh (cow),” and says:

A living animal was caught and thrown into the fire. But how did the animal get caught? It had a keen sense of hearing. It could run like the wind when it wanted to. But it had a name and by name it was caught. The name, the net. The name was then used as a swearword and the animal was forgotten. The nameless animal sleeps in ashes like a word that has never been said. I will call its nameless name to wake it up, because it is not dead yet.

(Tawada, 2002b, p. 30)⁶

The text is in the book *Überseetzungen*, and this title is a pun on “Übersetzungen (translations)”. In both words, only one letter is different, but this makes the word “Zunge (tongue)” appear, which means “language”.⁷ In the text quoted above, an animal sleeps in ashes, which in turn is an associative play on words with the swearword “Arschloch (asshole)”. To the first-person narrator, the word “Arsch” sounds like “Asche” (Tawada, 2002b, p. 29), and a “Loch (hole)” reminds her of an oven (p. 30). She now has a pictorial image that an animal whose name was used as a swearword is sleeping in the ashes in an oven because it is now nameless. It needs a new name to be awakened.

6 We can also see here that according to Tawada, the act of naming has a magical power. She also writes about this in the poem *Gebet (Kito 祈祷, Prayer)* in her first book. In this animistic-shamanistic poem a kind of glossolalia is shown, whose creativity leads the conventionalized language to rebirth. Cf. Tawada (1987, p. 99/30).

7 The book *Überseetzungen* consists of three parts, each called “Euro-Asian tongues”, “South African tongues” and “North American tongues”. For Japan as an island state, all foreign languages are “Overseas tongues (Übersee-zungen)”. In this neologism we can also recognize a fish (“Seezunge”, sole). This gives the impression that a language is a living being.

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Just as the sleeping animal with its “nameless names” is called and awakened, “the voice counts the voiceless breath” in the second part of the poem *Absturz und Wiedergeburt* (*Crash and rebirth*), so that the world may be revived:

Da die Stimme den stimmlosen Atem zählt
als verfolgte sie eine Erinnerung
fließt ein lauwarmes Wasser
zwischen der feuchten Erde und dem Körper der Frau
Die Sonne erscheint in den Wolken
färbt das Wasser rot
wärmt das Fleisch
Die Frau bemerkt daß sie liegt

auf der großen Erde die mit toten Dingen
verstopft ist öffnet die Dolmetscherin ihre Lider
Die Geschichte hat noch nicht begonnen

(As the voice counts the voiceless breath
as if she was chasing a memory
a lukewarm water flows
between the damp earth and a woman's body
The sun appears in the clouds
colours the water red
warms the flesh
The woman notices that she is lying

on the great earth which is filled with dead things
the interpreter opens her eyelids
The story has not yet begun)

(Tawada, 1987, p. 119/10)

What once died and was reborn in this poem are mother tongue and the ego bound up with it. All terms like “Frau (woman),” “Erde (earth)” and “Sonne (sun)” are connected with fertility. After her rebirth the inter-

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preter must now revive dead things with their nameless names to tell a new story. The activity of the interpreter is presented here as something poetic and creative. Thus “translating” is “exophonic” writing per se.

But here, we have to pay attention to the fact that Tawada still wrote this poem in the Japanese language. After putting her mother tongue into question, she did not immediately switch to the German language. In reality she didn’t leave her mother tongue, but the relationship between her and her mother tongue had changed in contrast to before. In other words, the status of the mother tongue had changed for the poetess since she had lived in the foreign language environment. This structuralist idea can be seen very clearly in her poem *Die zweite Person Ich* (*The second person I*), which was published in 2011:

Als ich dich noch siezte,
sagte ich ich und meinte damit
mich.

Seit gestern duze ich dich,
weiß aber noch nicht,
wie ich mich umbenennen soll.

(When I used to call you “Sie,”
I said I and meant
me.

Since yesterday, I’ve been using the “du” form,
but I don’t know yet
what I’m going to call myself.)

(Tawada, 2011, p. 8)

As is known, German has both a formal and a familiar form of “you” (“Sie” and “du”). Tawada thinks that if the relationship between “you” and “me” has changed, i.e. when someone is no longer called “Sie” but “du,” not only “you” but also “I” must be called different. So the

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relationship between the poet and the Japanese language should also be different after she had contact with the German language. This relationship only becomes different again when a third language is added, etc.⁸

3 The “imaginären Bücher (imaginary books)” and Benjamin’s idea of translation

Tawada’s first book *nur da wo du bist da ist nicht* begins with the prose *Bilderrätsel ohne Bilder* (*Etoki 絵解き, Picture puzzle without pictures*) when we read it in German. This story is the first literary text that Tawada wrote in Germany with great effort. In the first paragraph, the first-person narrator explains the circumstances of her departure from Japan. She talks about the “imaginary »books« that have not yet been written, that are not yet bound, that we keep turning pages in our dreams without being able to understand them,” and confesses that she has “a passion for them that borders on insanity” (Tawada, 1987, p. 9/120). These “imaginary books” remind us strongly of the medieval, handwritten chronicle that Heinrich von Ofterdingen, the title character of Novalis’ novel fragments, finds at an old hermit. It is written in Provençal, and therefore Heinrich only turns the pages without understanding the text. But it is provided with pictures, so he finally understands that it contains his life story.⁹ Tawada’s narrative is actually about visiting “an exhibition of handmade picture books”. (p. 9/120.) As the reason why the narrator is so interested in this, she explains with her

8 The alienation effect of the German language can be lost if the poetess lives in Germany for too long. Then she needs another language, as she writes in the story *Porträt einer Zunge* (*Portrait of a tongue*): “It had become impossible for me to fall in love in Berlin. The sentences that sprang into my ears had an immediate cooling effect. People don’t talk in America — or so I thought. How nice. I mean, of course they talk, but they speak only American English and that will surely be a refreshing change because the language bears no trace of my fingerprints yet”. (Tawada, 2002a, p. 121; Tawada, 2013, p. 44.)

9 The “imaginary books” are leafed through in dreams, and the dream motif also plays a very important role in Novalis’ novel fragments. The novel begins, as is well known, with the description of a dream in which Heinrich sees the symbolic blue flower, a symbol of aspiration and recognition. Ivanovic (2010) notes allusions to Heinrich von Kleist in this narrative (especially *Über das Marionettentheater* (*On the marionette theatre*), cf. pp. 178-179), for Tawada begins the narrative as follows: “I remember that the tradition of puppet theatre had long been cultivated in R, for I had once read a report on it in a colourful museum brochure, but this time my short visit to R was not for the puppet theatre [...]” (Tawada, 1987, p. 9/120). It is reasonable to assume that this narrative is under the influence of German Romanticism.

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passion for “imaginary books” and says:

Two years before, when I was still in Japan, these dreams had begun to fade; from the books I picked up, I could only see the contents. Books full of foreign letters were responsible for the fact that I was seized again. For hours I leafed through the Arabic and Hindi books that lay in the bookstores and I could not read. Even the English translations of the Japanese classics enchanted me. These classics, which I had already had enough of reading, suddenly opened my eyes again to that imaginary book by means of the letters of the alphabet, which were like engineering plans. When I buried the box in which I had packed my dead Japanese books in a park outside Tokyo, I decided to go to Germany.

(Tawada, 1987, pp. 9/120-11/118)

This concerns the alienation effect of the unknown letters, and further the liberation of language from its fixed meaning. The books that only convey a certain content are already dead for the narrator. The text quoted above clearly shows that Tawada does not regard language as a mere means of transmitting information.

Letters or characters are a favorite theme of Tawada. In her Tübingen poetics lecture *Schrift einer Schildkröte oder das Problem der Übersetzung (Writing of a turtle or the problem of translation, 1998)*¹⁰ she deals with the difference between the Chinese characters and the Latin letters:

The body of an ideogram is not puzzling, because it shows what it means. I can calmly let my eyes linger on it. There is no danger of falling into nonsense, even though an ideogram usually has several meanings that have been gathered in it throughout history. [...] A character is a picture that has been painted over several times.

10 With the expression “writing of a turtle” Tawada means Chinese characters, because they were carved in their original form as pictograms in turtle shells and cattle bones. With this expression the language is again represented as a living being.

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In contrast, every letter of the alphabet is a mystery. For example, what does an A want to tell me? The longer I look at a letter, the more enigmatic and alive it becomes: alive because it is not a sign that stands for a signifier. It is neither an image nor a pictogram. It must not be looked at, but immediately translated into a sound and its body must disappear.

(Tawada, 1998, p. 30)

So a Latin letter could be a “picture puzzle without pictures”. But the Japanese title of this story is actually “*Etoki 絵解き*” and means “rebus”. The title could be related to Walter Benjamin’s *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (*The origin of German tragic drama*, 1925), because Tawada was working intensively on Benjamin’s texts at that time with Sigrid Weigel at the University of Hamburg.¹¹ In his habilitation thesis Benjamin (1991b, p. 345) analyses, among others, allegory in the Baroque and the term “rebus” appears in this context. He claims: “The language of the Baroque is at all times shaken by the rebellion of its elements” (Benjamin, 1991b, p. 381), i.e. by the rebellion of the “Schriftbild (written character)” and “Sprachlaut (vocalization)” (Benjamin, 1991b, p. 376).

This mechanism also applies to Tawada’s poetics: the emphasis on the materiality or corporeality of the language (sound bodies / written bodies) is one of the typical artistic devices of Tawada, and both the Japanese and German languages are constantly alienated and restructured in her works by “rebellion of their elements”.¹² A typical example can be found in her short story *Im Bauch des Gotthards* (*In the belly of Gotthard*, 1996). It is about a trip through the Gotthard Tunnel in Switzerland:

Suddenly the ray of sunlight pierced through the window glass: “Airolo”. The letter “O” appears twice in this name, as if the

11 In her dissertation Tawada dedicated a chapter to Benjamin. Benjamin dealt a lot with the philosophy of language of German Romanticism, and Tawada’s interest in Romanticism could also be understood in this context.

12 Concerning Tawada, we could note the additional influence of Russian avant-gardists such as Velimir Khlebnikov (1885-1922) and his “zaum” language (language beyond reason), for she studied Slavic studies in Tokyo. “Alienation” is also the term conceived by the Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984). They are both Benjamin’s contemporaries.

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name wanted to recreate the shape of the tunnel exits I had left behind. [...] I looked at the map to decide where I wanted to go. To Como or to Locarno: Also in these names the letter “O” opened twice. All names reminded me only of the tunnel entrances, and I noticed that I wished nothing else but to return to Göschenen. I shouted “Göschenen” and heard stones in the word. Hard stones lived in “G,” pebbles slid down the slope at “ÖSCHE,” and soft stones became damp and loamy in “NEN”.

(Tawada, 1996b, p. 98.)

In an interview with the literary critic Yasuhisa Yoshikawa, Tawada talks about this passage of text and says that she associates the sound “NEN” with the Chinese character “粘” (sticky). Why soft stones became “damp and loamy in “NEN,” German readers would not understand. Loam means “*nendo* (粘土)” in Japanese, that is why the author uses the word “loamy”. In the interview she says: “In literary works there are passages that are only understood when they are translated into another language” (Tawada, 1997, p. 90). This statement, in turn, reminds us of Benjamin: the task of the translator is “to release in his own language that pure language which is exiled among alien tongues, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work” (Benjamin, 1991a, p. 19; Benjamin, 1996, p. 261).

Indeed, in her essay *Das Tor des Übersetzers oder Celan liest Japanisch* (*The gate of the translator or Celan reads Japanese*, 1996), Tawada refers to Benjamin’s essay *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers* (*The task of the translator*, 1921), which begins the discussion with the problem of translatability. Thus Tawada reflects on the translatability of Celan’s poems in her essay. She writes that when reading the Japanese translation by Iiyoshi, she felt that Celan’s poems are “peering into Japanese” (Tawada, 1996a, p. 122), and asks “why Celan’s poems were able to reach another world that lay outside the German language” (Tawada, 1996a, p. 122). She came across a possible answer to this question when an acquaintance of hers said that “the radical 門 [‘tor (sic)’ in German, ‘gate’ or ‘gateway’ in English] played a decisive role in this translation,” and then she suddenly had the idea: “It was precisely this radical that

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embodied the translatability of Celan's literature". (Tawada, 1996a, p. 122.)

She claims that the ideograms with the radical "gate" such as 闕 (threshold), 聞 (hear), 閃 (gleam), 間 (in-between space), 開 (open), 闇 (darkness) are very important for understanding Celan's poems, although the poet himself could not possibly know how his poems are translated into Japanese:

The translation is not the image of the original but rather, in the translation a meaning of the original is given a new body [a written body, in this case, not one for sound to resonate in]. Walter Benjamin writes: *Translatability is an essential quality of certain works, which is not to say that it is essential that they be translated; it means rather that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability.*

(Tawada, 1996a, p. 134)

We can understand Benjamin's sentence quoted here to mean that there is a certain hidden meaning in the original, which the translation sheds light on. Tawada practices this idea playfully in the episode of the sound "NEN" in the place name "Göschenen".¹³ Tawada obviously reads Benjamin's texts not as a scientist, but as a writer of "exophony" when she writes:

I compare Celan's words with the gates and remember that Ben-

13 The following statement by Tawada in the interview with Yoshikawa should also be understood in this context. "In the beginning I always brought my poem to him [to her translator Peter Pörtlner] as soon as I had written it. I wanted to see immediately how it would look in German. [...] At that time I felt a great joy to experience my own poem in German translation. I wrote poems in Japanese without knowing what I wanted to express, I just knew that the text and style had to be as I wrote it. [...] After the poem was translated into German, I suddenly thought I understood what I was aiming at with the poem" (Tawada, 1997, p. 90). In the interview, Tawada also talks about Hölderlin's translations of the Greek tragedy, probably because Benjamin refers to Hölderlin in his essay *The task of the translator*. Benjamin drew inspiration for the concept of "pure language" from Hölderlin's theory of caesura, developed in *Anmerkungen zu Oedipus (Notes to Oedipus, 1804)*. Caesura is a metric incision within a verse, it is a short (speaking) pause. Hölderlin does not regard this pause as a blank space; for him it is "the pure word, the counter-rhythmic interruption" (Hölderlin, 1954, p. 196). The word is "pure" in the sense that it carries neither meaning nor sound. The "pure word" is the basis of all languages that people use, and this basis is only audible during the (speech) pause, because it is usually covered with meaning and sound.

jamin describes literalness in a translation as an ‘arcade’: *True translation is translucent; it does not conceal the original, does not block the light from falling upon it, but allows pure language—as if intensified though its own medium—to shine upon the original all the more fully. This may be achieved, above all, by a literal rendering of the syntax, which proves the word rather than the sentence to be the primary element [Urelement] of the translator. For the sentence is the wall before the language of the original, and literalness is the arcade. An arcade consists, if you will, of many gates placed one behind the other. If each one of Celan’s words comprises a gate, the poem as a whole might resemble an arcade.*

(Tawada, 1996a, p. 131.)

In her novel *The wound in the alphabet* (*Arufabetto no kuzuguchi* アルファベットの傷口, 1993), Tawada took Benjamin’s idea of “a literal rendering of the syntax,” which is quoted here, indeed literally. In the novel, a translator wants to translate a German text into Japanese so that the German syntax remains in the Japanese translation, and this attempt fails, as we can easily imagine. The title of this novel for the paperback edition *Transplanting letters* (*Moji ishoku* 文字移植, 1999) probably shows the connection with Benjamin’s idea even more clearly. Because Benjamin also uses the word “transplant (verpflanzen)” (Benjamin 1991a, p. 15; Benjamin 1996, p. 258).

4 Conclusion

Tawada’s poetics of “exophony,” of liberating language from its fixed meaning and reviving it, is presented in her early work as a translation process. She therefore speaks of “translation without an original”. The concept of considering “exophonic” writing as “translation” is understandable because it involves a constant process of self-translation. Is an “exophonic” author like Tawada then actually a writer or translator? In his talk on Benjamin’s essay *The task of the translator*, Paul de Man (1985, p. 34) distinguishes the poet from the translator as follows:

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Of the differences between the situation of the translator and that of the poet, the first that comes to mind is that the poet has some relationship to meaning, to a statement that is not purely within the realm of language. That is the naiveté of the poet, that he has to say something, that he has to convey a meaning which does not necessarily relate to language. The relationship of the translator to the original is the relationship between language and language, wherein the problem of meaning or the desire to say something, the need to make a statement is entirely absent.

In her earlier essay *Die verlorenen Manuskripte (Ushinawareta genko 失われた原稿, The lost manuscripts)*, Tawada (1999b, p.26) describes the writing process of a novel. She obviously writes this text as a writer because it is about what she wants to say:

There's something I want to write. I start to write a novel but soon I realize there is something wrong with it and then I have to start all over again and I write something completely different. The plot, characters, circumstances, style, everything is completely different. What are the relationships between different versions of a novel that is rewritten and reworked several times? Maybe like in the family tree, where parents create children and die? Or are they different versions of a single informal text when it takes on a form and becomes visible?

It is remarkable that she imagines her “statement” as a text, i.e. as something verbal, although it has not yet been verbalized and is therefore still “formless”. This is the translation from “inner speech” to “external speech” in Vygotsky’s sense. As an “exophonic” author, Tawada also needs an additional process of translation between the “external speeches” (Japanese-German). This double translation process probably takes place almost simultaneously for Tawada, which is why she equates her writing activity with translation.

The translation on the level of the “external speech” gives the original a new body of writing and sound, and emphasizing this corporeality of

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language is one of the typical tricks for Tawada. By adopting another language, she gains a distance from her mother tongue, which is constantly alienated and restructured in her works by the “rebellion of its elements”. The restructuring of language through translation processes provides the writer with the framework for writing.

“The translator can never do what the original text did. Any translation is always second in relation to the original, and the translator as such is lost from the very beginning,” states de Man (1985, p.33). But when he derives the translator’s “defeat” from the ambiguity of the word “Aufgabe (task),” he conversely shows the translator’s creativity, which Tawada enjoys immensely:

If the text is called “Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers,” we have to read this title more or less as a tautology: *Aufgabe*, task, can also mean the one who has to give up. If you enter the Tour de France and you give up, that is the *Aufgabe* — “er hat aufgegeben,” he doesn’t continue in the race anymore. It is in that sense also the defeat, the giving up, of the translator.

(de Man, 1985, p. 33)

Tawada doesn’t give up. On the contrary, she is extremely productive, because she is convinced that the translation is not a copy of the original. There is never the correct translation, which for de Man means the “defeat” of the translator, but it is precisely this inaccessibility of the original that allows the translation to be constantly renewed. According to Benjamin, the diversity of the languages that exist on earth is proof that every language is imperfect. While Benjamin therefore idealizes the language before the Tower of Babel and speaks of the “reine Sprache (pure language),” Tawada conversely enjoys the multilingualism after Babel. She deals with this problem in her novel *Scattered across the earth* (*Chikyu ni chiribamerarete* 地球にちりばめられて, 2018). The title is obviously an allusion to the tower-building myth. After all, before Babel no translation was needed.

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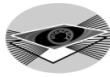
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[received March 20, 2020
accepted June 10, 2020]

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The Liminal Lyrical I in the Poetry of Tawada Yōko and

Arthur Binard

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Abstract

This paper compares the position of the speaking subject in the work of two transcultural poets, Tawada Yōko and Arthur Binard. German-Japanese bilingual poet Tawada Yōko establishes a poetics of exophony, which focuses not on a person's entering a new language community, but on the departure from the mother tongue. Through this, the writer becomes free to explore the possibilities of new language(s) and thoughts. To this end, Tawada's poems often construct a lyrical subject removed from the action, belonging to neither of the cultural spheres presented. Using the concept of liminality as developed by Victor Turner, I consider the implications of the liminal subject positions in the poems 観光客 (*kankōkyaku*, *Tourists*, 1987) and チガレット (煙草か) (*chigarette* (*tabako ka*), *Cigarette?*, 2017). In contrast to Tawada, American-born Japanese poet Arthur Binard can more readily be classified as a migrant author, choosing to write exclusively in his acquired language. He engages with topics typical for migrant writing, such as his experiences with Japanese language and culture and his feelings of exclusion. 線 (*sen*, *Lines*, 2000) and タグ (*taggu*, *The Tag*, 2000) also inquire into the confining attribution of (national) identity. This is where I will point out similarities in both writers' transcultural poetry, referencing the model of layered lyrical subjectivity developed by Henrieke Stahl.

Keywords: exophony, Japanese, poetry, transculturality, subjectivity, liminality

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The Liminal Lyrical I in the Poetry of Tawada Yōko and Arthur Binard

As the number of multilingual writers increases through global migration, global travel and global communication, scholarly interest in border phenomena and their artistic representation also rises (Schimanski & Wolfe, 2007).¹ In this analysis, I plan to show one such phenomenon: the liminal lyrical subject, as it appears in the Japanese–language poems of two contemporary poets. While Tawada Yōko² relocated from Japan to Germany in the 1980s, the American Arthur Binard immigrated to Japan in the 1990s. Reflecting on these fractures in their biographies, both writers construct a liminal subject in their poems. However, Tawada’s text subjects, the ‘voices’ of the poems, elect the in–between space and are empowered by it, whereas Binard’s speakers are more ambiguous regarding the liminal state, and seek to assert themselves by exerting power over their readers.

Using the concepts of lyrical subjectivity as described by Henrieke Stahl and the notion of liminality as developed by Victor Turner, I consider the implications of the liminal subject positions in Tawada’s poems 観光客 (*kankōkyaku*, *Tourists*, 1987) and チガレット (煙草か) (*chigarette* (*tabako ka*), *Cigarette?*, 2017). In these texts, Tawada constructs a lyrical subject removed from the action, as commentator or spectator. It takes part in the poem’s content only tangentially and belongs to neither of the cultural spheres presented, thereby deconstructing the binary. Meanwhile, in the poetry of Arthur Binard, the lyrical subject often acquires liminality through its status as a foreigner. His poems illustrate the struggles of a non–Japanese within Japanese culture, in a more typical ‘migrant literature’ style. But at the same time, Binard’s humour questions a straightforward assignation of this label, and a de-

1 This article was first presented as a paper at the Poetry and Transculturality in Asia and Europe Symposium, Taipei, 22–23rd February 2019.

2 In this essay, Japanese names appear in their original order (family name first).

gree of ambiguity appears desirable for his lyrical subjects. His poems 線 (*sen, Lines*, 2000) and タッグ (*taggu, The Tag*, 2000) also inquire into the confining attribution of borders and of (national) identity. Before the analysis of the four texts, however, I will briefly explain four relevant theoretic concepts: migrant literature, exophony, liminality and the lyrical subject.

‘Migrant literature’ is a term that immediately comes to mind regarding writers in a foreign language context. Professor of German and Comparative Literature Azade Seyhan describes three ‘stages’ of migrant literature, although she acknowledges that they can be mixed in a specific work. The first stage would be for a migrant to report their experiences in their new country, usually in their mother tongue. In the second stage, migrant writers would address their observations of the host country to its natives in the language of the majority (Seyhan, 2001). This is what Binard does in his poems; Tawada uses this stance in her German-language prose work. Japanese studies scholar Florian Gelzer (2000) argues that after 20 years of living in Germany, her stance becomes a pose. Since I work with the basic assumption that the lyrical subject is *always* a construction (see below), the liminal observer would be a pose (a constructed poet persona) of Binard, as well.

Despite his work’s fulfilling Seyhan’s criteria, Binard’s move as a white Westerner towards a non-western culture is an inversion of the usual image of the migrant and thus troubles the categorization of his work as migrant literature. This could also have an impact on his poetics and the poet persona constructed through his poetry, as I discuss below. In particular, the usual power dynamics of the speaking position are disrupted: the subject of a first stage text speaks to an audience of peers, while the second stage features a speaking subject culturally and linguistically removed from its intended audience, which therefore speaks from a position of inferiority. Binard, by contrast, assumes a more empowered position, as I will discuss below.

Seyhan’s third stage of migrant literature uses techniques such as collage and language experiments (Seyhan, 2001). Much of Tawada’s work

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can fit into this third category. However, Tawada actively rejects the attribute of ‘migrant’ writer. Instead, she prefers the term ‘exophony’, which developed to its current meaning in the aftermath of a conference on African literatures she had attended.

As a contrasting term to migrant literature, ‘exophonic’ literature constitutes a move *out of* the native language (instead of *into* a foreign language/culture) in order to discover the artistic potential of language(s). This makes the borderland between languages the origin of creativity (Tawada, 2012, pp. 3, 6–7, 31–32, 35, 2016). I would argue that the inside/out/between dynamic Tawada develops here also applies to the speaking subject in Seyhan’s three stages of migrant literature. While Seyhan’s stage one places the speaking subject into a state of peripheral belonging to their culture of origin (still endophonic), stage two presents them in liminal state between the cultures (exophonic), and the third stage then represents a type of literary empowerment *through* this liminal state and the exophony associated with it. In this way, I connect migrant literature and exophony through the notion of liminality.

Originally coined in anthropology by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, the term ‘liminality’ describes the transitional phase in a ritual, after separation from the social group and before re–entry in a new role. It is an ‘in–between stage which bears features of neither the past nor the future state and enables new, partly disturbing experiences’ and is able to (temporarily) dissolve borders (Warstat, 2005, p. 186, my translation). This concept has gained traction in the humanities, particularly Theatre Studies, through the argument that in aesthetic processes, the irritation or disorientation of a liminal subject is transferred to the audience. This alienation is the artistic experience of liminality, which encourages the questioning of borders, i.e. preconceptions, and may even lead to a change of perspective (Warstat, 2005). In this way, literary liminality could have the same status–changing effect as ritual liminality. Consequently, the liminal state is a position of in–between–ness both empowering and threatening to one’s very identity, and in the following, I use it in this sense.

Authors can choose to construct a liminal speaker (subject) in the text, and I argue that both Tawada and Binard do so in the texts I present below. As the ‘liminal lyrical subject’ is my focus in this analysis, it is relevant to clarify the model of lyrical subjectivity to which I refer. Professor of Russian Studies Henrieke Stahl describes the subject as a given feature of lyrical texts. It emerges from their performativity, so that for centuries, critics have presumed the existence of a ‘lyrical I’ or speaking subject even if it did not appear directly in the poem (Stahl, 2017). The layered narratological model of subjectivity in fiction (character(s), focalizer(s), implied author etc.) is more complex than the notion of a ‘lyrical I’, but its applicability to poetry remains contested, which is why Stahl develops an outwardly similar model based on transcendental philosophy instead (Stahl, 2017).

Stahl differentiates two types of subjectivity, text–external and text–internal. The first type includes constructs such as the abstract or transcendental author as well as the actual person writing (the empirical author), while the second type consists of the character(s)/ experiencing subject(s), the speaking subject (‘text subject’) and the poet persona (‘subject of expression’) (Stahl, 2017, p. 132, 2018). An editorial instance can also exist between the second and the first type of speaker, as either text–external reality or text–internal fiction. Critics may differentiate the instances of subjectivity, if they comment on or contradict each other. However, text–internal subjects can also merge (i.e. the experiencing subject is also the speaker (text subject), which is also the poet persona) (Stahl, 2018).

Comparing the poems of Tawada and Binard illuminates the versatility of the liminal speaking position. The two writers share some similarities, most notably a background of voluntary migration and exophony, i.e. artistic expression in a non-native language. In this context, they both choose a similar – liminal – speaking positions for their poems, and the speakers of their poems reflect on shared themes: experiences of marginalization and the desire to belong. However, the speakers have different goals, as is already apparent from the language choice of both

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authors. Tawada's decision to continue writing in Japanese³ when she is also publishing in German points to her desire for interstitiality, while Binard's focus on writing in Japanese reveals a drive toward recognition in the host culture; the analysis will show how the poems reflect this difference.

The liminality I want to explore in the following poems affects every level of subjectivity. The experiencing subject may live through exclusion (see Binard), the text subject may speak from a liminal perspective (see Tawada), the subject of expression may emerge from the liminal space between languages and cultures (see both authors). This latter aspect of cause has a connection to the real-life border-transgressing situation of the actual poets. However, while connections may exist between the poet persona created by the poem (or series of poems) and the empirical author, they cannot be the same, since the former is created by the text, whereas the latter is always external to it. In other words, the text may evoke a poet persona that resembles the author him/herself closely in situation or biography, but this persona is still a textual construct and not the author him/herself. Despite this, considering the author's biography is necessary to notice such connections, which is why I introduce both authors before I discuss their poems.

1 Tawada Yōko (多和田葉子)

Born in 1960 in Tokyo, Tawada Yōko now lives in Berlin, Germany. She studied Russian Literature at Waseda University, Tokyo, and moved to Germany in 1982 to work at a publisher's in Hamburg. In the following years, she took up the study of German literature at Hamburg University and later completed a doctorate from Zürich University (Krstovic, 2017; Literature Resource Centre, 2010). Her first collection of poetry and prose appeared in 1987, translated from the Japanese by Peter Pörtner. Since 1991, she publishes prolifically in both German and Japanese: poetry, novellas, novels, dramas, radio plays, essays and more.

³ Both poems discussed here were written in Japanese, even though the first one was published in a bilingual edition in Germany.

Her works have won numerous awards such as the Akutagawa– and Tanizaki–Awards in Japan, or the Goethe–Medal, the Kleistpreis and the Erlangen Award for Poetry in Translation in Germany. She has been writer–in–residence at different universities in Europe and the US, and has twice given poetry lectures as guest professor at German universities. Her audience was able to witness her reading both published texts and specific performance pieces at over 1100 events around the globe (*Yoko Tawada*). However, little of her poetry is available in English. The poet herself has translated some for events and performances, and a few translations are online on the platform *Lyrikline*.⁴ Regarding print media, the Chinese edition *A Poem for a Book* 一詩一書 includes some English renditions along with Chinese translations.⁵ However, so far there has been no full translation of any of her poetry collections. All translations to English in this paper are therefore my own.

The first poem I want to consider is 観光客 (*kankōkyaku*, *Tourists*) from Tawada’s 1987 debut collection あなたのいるところだけなにもない/*Nur da wo du bist da ist nichts (anata no iru tokoro dake nani mo nai, Nothing only where you are)* (Tawada, 1987).⁶ The four sections of the poem are distributed across the book on specific salmon–coloured pages, which are not included in the pagination and thus attain special significance. In both languages, the first section of the poem is printed on the first page, doubling as an epigraph, and the last section on the second to last page. Thus, the poem forms a frame for the entire collection.

本当は言ってはいけないことだけれど
 ヨーロッパなんて
 ない
 駱駝の行列が
 自分の足跡を踏みながら
 ゆっくり地球をまわっている
 [..]

(1. 5)

4 E.g. the Danish poetry festival ‘Poetry International’, see <https://www.poetryinternational.org/pi/poem/22156/auto/0/0/Yoko-Tawada/THE-FLIGHT-OF-THE-MOON/en/tile>. Retrieved on January 15, 2019. <https://www.lyrikline.org/de/gedichte/diagonal-13800>. Retrieved on January 15, 2019.

5 Cf. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/43183>. Retrieved on January 15, 2019.

6 The text of the poem appears on the front endpaper, a leaf between pp. 32/97 and 33/96, a leaf between pp. 96/33 and 97/32, and the back endpaper. Thus, no page numbers can be given.

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ヨーロッパでは、と男が言いかけると (1. 12)

陽炎の鏡は下痢にかかる

わたしたちはおしゃべりな観光客になろう

ガイドさんは邪教徒の旗をかかげて (1. 15)

土地の名前を呼び続ける

わたしたちは存在の香りを写真に撮り

売り切れたおみやげを腕いっぱいにかかえて

とどかぬ土に涙と情報をふりそそごう

わたしたちの言葉の向こう岸に また (1. 20)

ヨーロッパの木がすくり伸び立つように

大きな声では言えないけれど

わたしたちは もう

それなしには生きられない

You really shouldn't say so, but

there's no such thing

as Europe

A parade of camels

follows their own footsteps (1. 5)

as they slowly round the globe

[...]

in Europe, a man begins to say, (1. 12)

and the reflecting haze gets diarrhoea

Let us become garrulous tourists

the tour guide hoists the heathen flag (1. 15)

and continues to call out place names

we take photographs of the scent of existence

our arms crammed with sold-out souvenirs

let us pour tears and information onto the unreachable earth

on our language's opposite bank, again (1. 20)

the tree of Europe rises high

You shouldn't say it out loud, but

We can no longer

Live without it.⁷

⁷ Tawada, 1987, npn. Translation by the article author.

The first section imparts the notion that ‘there’s no such thing/ as Europe’ (ヨーロッパなんて/ ない, *yōroppa nante/ nai*, ll. 2–3) in a gesture of telling a secret (言っ**て**はいけないことだけれど, *itte wa ikenai koto da keredo*, ‘You really shouldn’t say so, but’, l. 1).⁸ This invites the reader into comradery with the voice of the poem, creating a personal connection between the reader and a speaking subject addressing them. By contrast, in the second section, the speaker remains an observer, and transcends the limited human perspective. The phrase ‘parade of camels’ (駱駝の行列, *rakuda no gyōretsu*, l. 4) employs a cliché image to allude to the global migration movements in the late 20th century, and the limited and formulaic response to it. The comparison of national borders with the sky reveals the constructed nature of borders — because they are based on a human point of view, borders become insignificant once the human perspective is left behind. In the same vein, the poem establishes borders and lines like the horizon as zones, instead of one-dimensional lines. The space within and beyond bordering processes, the in-between, is a central concept in Tawada’s poetics, and lines 5–11 (omitted in the quotation) similarly deconstruct the border images of language and reality. Childlike imagination transcends the limits set by human conceptualizations of the world, (such as the horizon as a line, instead of an area optically compressed). This concept is visualized in the children rope-skipping with the horizon.

The speaker links the faculty of imagination to feminine creativity, especially the woman poet, who gives birth not to children but, through the act of writing, to herself (ll. 9–11). By contrast, the concept of Europe, which Tawada’s speaker colours as masculine, becomes a mirage, ‘the mirror of the heat haze’ (陽炎の鏡, *kagerō no kagami*, l. 13) because, as the poem has asserted in the beginning, Europe does not exist (l. 2–3). That the mirage ‘gets diarrhoea’ (下痢にかかる, *geri ni kakaru*, l. 13) visualizes a rejection of language as a masculine principle as literal ‘shit-talking’.

However, the lyrical subject does not clearly assign itself to either side

8 Tawada also engages with the constructed image of Europe in an essay that takes its title from this poem: ‘Eigentlich darf man es niemandem sagen, aber Europa gibt es nicht’ (‘Actually, you are not supposed to tell anyone, but Europe does not exist’, Tawada, 1996, pp. 46–52).

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of the gender binary. Instead, it remains liminal in this regard, as well, and dissolves into an all-encompassing ‘we’ (わたしたち, *watashitachi*, l. 14). This union with the addressee it had hooked in in the first section creates a plural lyrical subject. Liminality is maintained despite the union because this subject identifies as a tourist, which is a transitory and dislocated identity. The tourists are alienated from their surroundings, so much so that their tears cannot reach the soil (l. 19). The ‘sold-out souvenirs’ (売り切れたおみやげ, *urikireta omiyage*, l. 18) they carry symbolize consumerism, which has replaced social connections, such as religion. This becomes clear when the tour guide rises the ‘heathen flag’ to the tourists (l. 15). The selling out of the souvenirs, which indicates a failure of the subject to procure one as a token of belonging to the tourist group, and the rejection of religion, are two additional factors in the speaker’s liminality.

For the Japanese-speaking voice of the poem, Europe is an Other (positioned, as the poem points out, on the opposite side of the globe, l. 20). Yet this self/other dynamic is not merely geographically defined; it is constructed through language, as the man speaking the name of Europe (l. 12) and the verbosity of the tourists (わたしたちはおしゃべりな観光客になろう, *watashitachi wa oshaberi na kankōkyaku ni narō*, l. 14) suggest. Without the Other, there can be no Self, as the final lines claim: ‘we can no longer/ live without it’ (わたしたちは もう/それなしには生きられない, *watashitachi wa mō/ sore nashi ni wa ikirarenai*, ll. 22–3).

The poem comes full circle at the end, returning to the distanced stance of the first lines. This type of framing represents the greater and more encompassing viewpoint of the liminal speaker. The focus in this last part is directly on language: since the speaking subject exists beyond linguistic and cultural belonging, it can see the ‘other bank’ of language (言葉の向こう岸, *kotoba no mukō gishi*, l. 20). Their liminality is essential to the understanding of Europe as a construct. Nevertheless, they remain dependant on the image, unable to ‘live without it’. The idea of Europe arises from beyond any particular language as a trans-lingual, trans-cultural concept that has become necessary as self/other. Despite its constructed nature, it is essential to the construction

of subjects — even ones so transpersonal, de-localized, transitory (in short, liminal) as this poem’s speaker. While this speaker’s liminality is geographic as much as linguistic, the next poem I discuss focuses more on language and social spheres.

When she was writing ‘Kankōkyaku’, Tawada was a peripheral member of the German language community she lived in, a language-learning immigrant, which may have lead her to first consider a liminal speaking position. In the following decades, she has become an accomplished writer and speaker in her second language. Nevertheless, the liminal speaking position remains an important device in her poetics, as its application in following, the 30 years younger poem reveals. Like the exophonic stance, liminality becomes a conscious choice, a speaking position she can adopt in any of her languages.⁹

Tawada’s 2017 poem チガレット (煙草か) (*chigarette (tabako ka), Cigarette?*) is part five of the book-length poetry series シュタイネ (*shutaine*, a transliteration of the German ‘stones’). In the collection, every poem’s title is a transliteration of a German noun, followed by its bracketed translation into Japanese marked with a question particle (Tawada, 2017, pp. 29–32). Thus, by the titles alone, a poetic persona emerges which positions itself in the liminal border region of translation, between German and Japanese.

このおっさんの隣にしばし留まっていたい
煙さ冷え切って
にかい
干からびた男たちの集まる焦げたにおい
おむつの湿った塩っぼさから逃げて (1. 5)
[...] 昨日の新聞みたいにインクが乾いて
鼻の奥が痛い (1. 10)
プラットホームがマイホーム
巨大なアイロン電車が入ってきて
両開きの鉄の扉が開き

9 For instance, in her Japanese novel 飛魂 (*Hikon, Flying soul*, 1998), Tawada uses metaphorical expressions that sound like literal translations from another language, as she notes in her essay 言語の狭間 (*genko no hasama*, lit. *The gap of language*, 1999, p. 74). This constitutes an exophonic style, even in her mother tongue.

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夏休みが生産したみずみずしい
 少年たち [...] (1. 15)
 笑いかけてきても (1. 22)
 見向きもせずに
 煙草と睦(むつ)まじく見つめ合っている
 土色の顔をしたおっさん (1. 25)
 の隣にわたしは
 もう少しだけ
 すわっていたい

Next to this old guy I want to stay for a while
 Smoke going cold
 bitter
 the burnt smell of dried-up men gathering
 who fled from the salty moisture of diapers (1. 5)
 [...] dry like the ink of yesterday's newspaper
 the back of the nose hurts (1. 10)
 the platform is ,my 'home'
 giant iron, the train rolls in
 iron double doors open
 to summer's fresh batch
 of boys [...] (1. 15)
 even if they laugh at him (1. 22)
 he does not lift his eyes
 from the exchange of loving gazes with his cigarette
 The old guy with the earthen face (1. 25)
 next to whom I
 just for a little while longer
 want to sit.¹⁰

In addition, *Cigarette?* resembles *Tourists*, because its voice portrays two levels of liminality: a liminal observer describes a liminal object. While, in the earlier poem, the liminal object was tourists, here the voice evokes a man or group of men, lingering on a train platform,

¹⁰ Tawada, 2017, 29-32. Translation by the article author.

which is a place of transit and thus a liminal space.¹¹ These character(s) could be salarymen avoiding a return to a family home (with diapers and laughing children) where they feel out of place. Alternatively, they could be homeless people who have no *home* to go to but the platform (プラットフォームがマイホーム, *purattohōmu ga mai hōmu*, l. 11), a play on sound typical of Tawada’s work. The use of the full term *purattohōmu* is significant here, as it is usually abbreviated to *hōmu* in everyday speech, making the connection to the anglicism *maihōmu* (‘my home’) obvious.

An opposition emerges through the poem: Whether homeless or salarymen, the characters are associated with dryness and fire: they are described as ‘dried’ and having a ‘burned smell’ (干からびた男たちの集まる焦げたにおい, *hikarabita otoko-tachi no atsumaru kogeta noioi*, l. 4), and are associated with the drying newspaper ink (インクが乾いて, *inku ga kawaite*, l. 9). This imagery contrasts with the humidity attributed to homes and children as ‘wet saltiness of diapers’ and the ‘boys fresh as splashing water’ (おむつの湿った塩っぼさ, *omutsu no shimetta shioppo-sa*, l. 5; みずみずしい/少年たち, *mizumizushii shōnen-tachi*, ll. 14-15) .

The lyrical voice, however, is liminal: It identifies with neither realm, not even the also liminal space of the platform, and only establishes a temporary (もう少しだけ, *mō sukoshi dake*, l. 27), one-sided comradeship with the men in that liminal space. Unlike the text subject of ‘Tourists’, the liminal speaker of *Cigarette?* assigns themselves to neither side of the described binary male/adult/work/fire and female/child/home/moisture. Instead, it empathizes and observes, disconnected. Nevertheless, both poems position the speaking voice as a liminal subject and thus in a position to question binary oppositions (Europe/Asia, migrant/tourist, insider/outsider, gender). Again, the liminal position of the text subject empowers it to criticize and deconstruct, but it also isolates it. With Binard’s poetry, the situation is different, as I will demonstrate in the following section.

¹¹ For the specific (liminal?) status of places of transit as ‘non-places’, see Augé and Bischoff, 2012, pp. 83, 90.

2 Arthur Binard (アーサー・ビナード)

Arthur Binard was born in 1967 in Michigan, USA. He studied American English Literature at Colgate University, New York, and developed an interest in languages as he lived in both Italy and India. While writing his final assignment, he grew interested in Chinese characters, and moved to Japan after his graduation in 1990. Besides visiting a language school and supporting himself by teaching English, he practiced Japanese by translating children's literature in a local library (Binard & Tanaka, 2006, 104–6; Mami, 2011 (June 21)). His debut poetry collection 釣り上げては (*tsuriagete wa, Catch and Release*) appeared in 2000; with it, he became the first foreigner to win the Nakahara Chūya Poetry Award. In the following year, the work appeared in Binard's own translation into English.¹² Since then, he has published prose and poetry in Japanese as well as translations. He also works as a radio host (Binard & Tanaka, 2006). In public lectures, Binard takes a firm stance as a political activist against atomic weapons and nuclear power.

I discuss two examples from Binard's debut collection here, the first of which is 線 (*sen, Lines*; Binard, 2000, pp. 14–15). In this text, three poems are embedded in a prose (con)text, similar to classical Japanese literature. However, these poems are free verse, and their difference to the prose surroundings emerges mainly through the layout. One could make a case that the experiencing subject of the poems is immediately in the situation, whereas the subject narrating the prose parts is a later, reflective instance, a text subject.

ひしめき合う店と家とアパートに挟まれながらも (1. 7)
このアスファルトの黒無地の一帯には
それなりの〈無限〉があった。

[...]
いつも歩いている (1. 18)

自分ばかりの幅を持った〈私道〉には
線を引かずにいきたい。 (1. 20)

¹² Unfortunately, I could not acquire a copy. The English translations from Binard's poems in the following are therefore my own.

BÖHM

そう思いながら、真っ白な一丁に、たっぷりと醤油をたらす。

Pinched as it was between the jostling shops and houses and
flats (l. 7)

This strip of black, unmarked asphalt
had had a certain ‘infinity’ to it.

[..]

The path I always walk (l. 18)

which only is as wide as myself:

on my ‘private way’, (l. 20)

I want to walk without drawing lines.

So I thought, as I generously poured soy sauce onto the pure
white tofu block.¹³

One hint towards this is that the speaking voice of the prose text refers to a softly masculine ‘I’ (*boku*, 僕, in the opening prose section not cited here), but there is no direct mention of an ‘I’ as grammatical subject in the poems themselves. This is not unusual for Japanese texts, but it may support my assumption of two distinct speakers. In any case, the description of the route to the shop and the choice of silk tofu for lunch associate a local, i.e. Japanese, speaker. Indeed, after the collection won the Nakahara Award, critics praised the everyday feeling and Japanese perspective of Binard’s poems (Arakawa, 2001; Kitakawa, 2001; Sasaki, 2001). By contrast, the speaker of the poems is more aloof and critical.

The poem’s theme of drawing lines associates bordering processes and exclusion. The lines on the road impose difference where ‘infinity’ (無限, *mugen*, l. 9) had been before. The lyrical subject rejects these lines and moves physically beyond them, finally balancing on top of one (l. 13). The rejection of borders—‘on my ‘private way’ /I want to walk without drawing lines’ (〈私道〉には/線を引かずにいきたい, (*shidō*) *ni wa/sen wo hikazu ni ikitai*, ll. 19–20)—symbolically repeats itself in the last image of the text, as the lyrical subject pours black soy sauce onto white silk tofu. Poet and essayist Sasaki Mikirō sees Binard’s talent revealed

¹³ Binard, 2012, pp. 14-15. Translated by the article author.

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in this last line, where the doubling of a block of tofu and a city block in the term ‘chō’ (丁) connects the image with the senses (Sasaki, 2001, p. 50). In my interpretation, however, the experiencing subject’s act of pouring black soy sauce onto the white tofu becomes a counter–image for the white lines drawn on the black road. The speaker symbolically erases these lines and thus categorical borders in general, so that he is no longer ‘defined far too clearly’ (あまりにハッキリする, *amari ni hak-kiri suru*, l. 12, not quoted in the extract above). Therefore, the subject of expression emerges from the contrast between experiencing subject and text subject, and positions itself *beyond* the border between those who belong (Japanese, such as the experiencing subject) and those who feel they do not (foreigners, such as the empirical author), as a hybrid poetic persona. The topic of assimilation becomes more overt in the next poem I discuss, the free verse piece タッグ (*taggu*, *The Tag*, Binard, 2000, pp. 16–17).

The Tag is a ‘punchline–poem’ in that its last line constitutes a witty return to the first image of peanut butter, which ironically undercuts the expressed desire for assimilation. Japanese critics Arakawa and Kitakawa both mention Binard’s engaging use of humour. Sasaki specifically voices his surprise that Binard uses a Japanese, not American, style of humour, and acknowledges Binard’s Japanese–language perspective (Arakawa, 2001; Kitakawa, 2001; Sasaki, 2001). Binard himself identifies as a ‘日本語人’ (*nihongojin*, ‘Japanese–language–person’) because he would not be seen as Japanese (日本人, *nihonjin*) even if he changed his citizenship status (Binard & Itō, 2017). This may also be the background of the hybrid subject of expression in this poem: Linguistically Japanese, but visually American.

よく見ると 100% CottonのこのTシャツって (l. 7)
マカオ出身だったのか。
たびかさなる出入国と洗濯でくたびれて やっと
〈MADE IN〉というアイデンティティから解放された。 (l. 10)
自らの〈タッグ〉も
ぼくは長いこといじくっている。
取れたかと思うと
ひょんなところで また顔を出す。

If you look closely, well, this 100% cotton T-shirt (l. 7)
 originally came from Macao.
 Worn out from bordercrossing and washing repeatedly. Finally
 it was freed from its ‘Made In’ identity. (l. 10)
 With my own ‘tag’, too/
 I’ve been fiddling for quite some time.
 If I think it has come loose
 unexpectedly, it shows up again.¹⁴

The speaker identifies with a T-shirt, which has travelled the world from America to Italy to Ikebukuro (a district of Tokyo) with him, and which has now lost its ‘tag’, the marker of its origin. The use of the term ‘出身’ (*shusshin*, l. 8) for ‘origin’ emphasizes the personification of the T-Shirt, because this word is normally used for human beings. As the T-Shirt is 100% cotton, the speaker is (originally) 100% American, but due to his extended travels, this label (tag) has lost much of its relevance.¹⁵ The tearing of the tag, however, occasions the speaker to contemplate his (ぼく, *boku*, l. 1, omitted above) own difficulty in dissociating from his American origins: ‘取れたかと思うと/ひょんなところで また顔を出す’ (*toreta ka to omou to/ hyon na tokoro de mata kao wo dasu*, ‘If I think it has come loose/ unexpectedly, it shows up again’, ll. 13–14). The lyrical subject of ‘Tag’ is ultimately ambivalent toward the process of assimilation. On the one hand, he states a desire to be free of his nationality, on the other he remains loyal to it, as evidenced by its desire for peanut butter, which forms the final punchline. The structure of the poem implies that true assimilation is not feasible, or at least not desired by the lyrical subject. This puts the subject in a liminal, in-between position: He has integrated into the host culture, but not completely dissociated himself from his origin.

Fitting with the cultural hybridity of its lyrical subject, the poem includes foreign terms in Katakana as well as Arabic numerals and Roman let-

¹⁴ Binard, 2012, pp.16-17. Translated by the article author.

¹⁵ I thank professor of Japanese Studies Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt for pointing out the relevance of the choice of ‘出身’ and ‘100%’ to me.

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ters and thus calls to attention the hybridity of the Japanese script.¹⁶ In this way, the subject of expression reflects visually the speaker's growing distance from America, most noticeably in line 10. Here, the script moves from the Roman letters and English language of 'MADE IN' to アイデンティティ (*aidentiti*, 'identity'), an English word that functions as a Japanese loan word in Katakana, and finally to 'release' (解放, *kai-hō*), a Sino-Japanese term written in Kanji. The experiencing, speaking subject desires a release from his Western origin into the Japanese (language) along the same trajectory.

At the same time, the poetic persona empowers itself, firstly by mastering the language and secondly by determining, in the poem itself, how it expects readers to understand it. In other words, the lyrical subject lays out the intended interpretation in the poem itself, merging the text subject (voice) with the subject of expression (the poetic persona). Binard is an atypical 'migrant writer' because of his privileged background as a white Western male. Perhaps this results in a certain confidence or sense of entitlement on part of the poet persona, which leads it to attempt controlling the interpretation of the poems.

3 Comparison and Conclusion

So far, it has become apparent that Tawada uses liminality to empower the text subject—the voice of the poem—as a trans-categorical entity. The two poems I analyse were published 20 years apart, so their common tones suggest that this is a continuing feature in Tawada's poetry. By contrast, Binard's poems emphasize a subject of expression (a poet persona) who empowers himself by asserting his mastery of the Japanese language (and culture, as the local knowledge and food choice of the speaker of 'Lines' suggest), and by controlling the interpretation of his poems despite the ambiguity of the text subject. A potential reason for this different stance is the difference in Tawada and Binard's poetics. Binard sees language as a means, whereas Tawada puts it centre stage.

¹⁶ Journalist Taylor Mignon claims that 'Tag' is one of the few poems in the collection originally written in English (Mignon, 6 June, 2001); this older version would possibly be less effective due to less options in the choice of script.

For example, Binard speaks of language in mechanical terms, calling it a ‘vehicle’ or ‘toolbox’ (Binard & Nakausa, 2015, my translation; Mami, 2011 (June 21)). Such a view of language is typical for migrant writers (Seyhan, 2001). Tawada instead emphasizes a sense of discovery rather than mastery. ‘Perhaps, I don’t want to become an author who writes in languages A and B, but fall into the poetic ravine I might find between them’ (Tawada, 2012, pp. 31–32, my translation), she states in her poetological essay collection *Ekusophonī*.

In all four poems, the lyrical subject works with and from a liminal position, but the use it is employed for is different. Tawada’s multi-layered poems foreground the voice of the poem as a subject who chooses the liminal position to break up dichotomies. Because she moves out of language/culture, she qualifies as an exophonic writer. By contrast, Binard’s poetry creates similarities by metaphor, then explains them. As a result, his poems focus on a poet persona directing his Japanese readers’ understanding. In Tawada’s case, the empowerment is directed out of the (one) language, exo-phonetic, into the realm of poetic creation (Tawada, 2016). Contrastingly, Binard’s lyrical subject directs it inward, into the language and culture of the host country and into its own sense of control. Nevertheless, in the poems discussed here, the lyrical subject self-consciously positions itself in a liminal position and uses the creative potential of merging cultures for poetic effect, creating cultural hybridity.¹⁷

17 I plan to elaborate on the relation of Tawada’s in-between and Bhabha’s Third space in my doctoral thesis.

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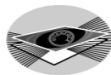
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[received March 19, 2020
accepted June 10, 2020]



Gabriele d'Annunzio orientalista. Intertestualità nella novella “Mandarina”

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Abstract

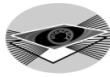
L'articolo descrive l'evoluzione dell'orientalismo in Gabriele d'Annunzio, dalle cronache giornalistiche *fin-de-siècle* su simposi giapponesizzanti alla creazione letteraria di personaggi esotici per il suo primo romanzo, secondo l'influenza esercitata dalla contemporanea letteratura di viaggio francese. Nel corso della sua giovinezza, la passione per le ceramiche orientali, le lacche e i bronzi coincide con un interesse radicato per la prosodia giapponese. L'aspetto materiale è, in effetti, di fondamentale importanza: il collezionismo dannunziano di artefatti giapponesi è un'estensione dello stesso scrittore, un veicolo per le proprie fantasie e un'ispirazione per la prosa. Alla fine del diciannovesimo secolo D'Annunzio era impiegato come giornalista presso i più importanti quotidiani romani dell'epoca, curandone la cronaca mondiale. Nella novella intitolata “Mandarina”, si fa beffa dei dettami dell'alta società che imponevano il collezionismo di prodotti artistici giapponesi. L'orientalismo dannunziano è documento di un'attrazione per le qualità esotiche e fantastiche della cultura giapponese, di un interesse per la maniera simbolica attraverso cui gli artisti giapponesi rappresentavano la realtà. Seppur muovendo sempre dal pregiudizio di una fondamentale superiorità italiana e appropriandosi degli elementi giapponesi come *divertissement*, D'Annunzio è riuscito a confezionare una novella sagace, nella quale si intravedono già temi, personaggi e ambientazioni del primo romanzo *Il Piacere*. Questo contributo, in definitiva, si concentra sull'intertestualità insita nella prosa giovanile dannunziana; analizza la maniera in cui lo scrittore ha reinterpretato una selezione di fonti francesi al fine di elaborare il suo discorso orientalista, attraverso lo sviluppo dei personaggi di Mandarina e del Cavalier Sakumi.

Parole chiave: D'Annunzio, orientalismo, Mandarina, Sakumi, collezionismo, intertestualità.

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Gabriele d’Annunzio as an orientalist. Intertextuality in the short story “Mandarina”

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Abstract

This article describes the evolution of Gabriele d’Annunzio’s orientalism, from *fin-de-siècle* chronicles of Japanese themed symposia to the literary creation of exotic characters for his first novel, informed by contemporary French travel literature. In his youth, the passion for oriental ceramics, lacquerware, and bronzes coincides with a deep interest in Japanese prosody. The material aspect is, indeed, most important: D’Annunzio’s collection of Japanese artifacts is an extension of the writer himself, a vehicle of his fantasies, as well as an inspiration for his prose. At the end of the 19th century, D’Annunzio was working as a journalist for the most influential Roman newspapers of the era, writing for the society page. In a short story titled “Mandarina”, he pokes fun at the dictates of high society and the craze for collecting Japanese art. D’Annunzio’s orientalism documents an attraction for the exotic and fantastic qualities of Japanese culture, an interest in the symbolic way Japanese artists represented reality. Although always operating from what he considered to be the high ground of Italian cultural superiority and appropriating Japanese elements as a *divertissement*, D’Annunzio succeeded in crafting a witty tale in which themes, characters, and settings of his first novel, *Il Piacere*, are already sketched out. This paper, ultimately, focuses on intertextuality in D’Annunzio’s early prose. It investigates how the writer reinterpreted a selection of French sources to elaborate his orientalist discourse, through the development of the characters of Mandarina and Cavalier Sakumi.

Keywords: D’Annunzio, orientalism, Mandarina, Sakumi, collections, intertextuality

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Gabriele d'Annunzio orientalista. Intertestualità nella novella “Mandarina”

Nel Giappone, nei dintorni di Kyoto abiterò
un vecchio tempio di legno,
fra i ciliegi lievi
e gli stagni coperti dai fiori del loto
e i sorrisi discreti dei bonzi.
21 luglio 1923
(D'Annunzio, 1990, p. 33)

Varcata la soglia della Prioria, la residenza che Gabriele d'Annunzio volle sulle sponde del Lago di Garda, all'interno del complesso del Vittoriale degli Italiani, il visitatore può fare esperienza dell'atmosfera di profonda religiosità in cui sono immersi tutti gli ambienti.¹ Simbologia francescana e misticismo esotico si mescolano nella volontà fattiva del suo creatore e la sterminata collezione di oggetti estremo-orientali, con le statue dei budda e le maschere rituali giapponesi, racconta della passione del poeta per la spiritualità dell'Est. Il sincretismo dannunziano fa dialogare religioni diverse nel chiuso di una stanza, attraverso l'arredamento fantasioso e l'accorta disposizione dei manufatti sacri che si accumulano nella Stanza delle Reliquie.

La ritualità del lontano oriente intrigava D'Annunzio che, con la sintesi delle varie esperienze religiose (non ultimo il culto della velocità e del pericolo), si pone il fermo proposito di mettere in comunicazione “il dio unico” con il divino che alberga nella propria anima; scriverà nel Libro segreto: “Aspiro al dio unico, cerco il dio soprano, e sento come quel che è in me divino tenda a ricongiungersi col dio inaccessibile, si sforzi

1 In tutte le sue case, in particolare alla Prioria, la passione dannunziana per il superfluo si rivela soprattutto nella contaminazione dell'arredo fra sacro e profano. Tom Antongini (2013, p.162) conferma che la disposizione di tutti gli oggetti al Vittoriale è opera dello stesso D'Annunzio: “L'arredamento e l'ammobiliamento vero e proprio d'una casa occupa per D'Annunzio quasi tutto il tempo durante il quale egli vi abita, si tratti anche d'un periodo molto lungo. Il rimaneggiamento dei particolari, le trasposizioni di stanze, i mutamenti, sono nei primi tempi quotidiani e continui. Il costante afflusso di nuovi oggetti comperati o donati, la mania della perfezione, favoriscono questo incessante lavoro di abbellimento e di super-decorazione”.

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di possederlo” (D’Annunzio, 2005, p. 1723). Fa incidere, infatti, sulla trabeazione che sorregge la serie di sculture lignee raffiguranti santi e angeli nella Stanza delle Reliquie: “Tutti gli idoli adombrano il Dio vivo / Tutte le fedi attestan l’uomo eterno / Tutti i martiri annunziano un sorriso / Tutte le luci della santità / fan d’un cor d’uomo il sole / e fan d’Ascesi / l’Oriente dell’anima immortale”.²

Però è sicuramente la Piramide degli idoli a catturare l’attenzione del visitatore, a dare manifestazione concreta alla tendenza dannunziana al sincretismo religioso: costituita alla base da una gatta addormentata insieme ai suoi cuccioli e a due coniglietti di terracotta, che rappresentano il mondo terreno; poco più sopra due cani Fo dell’olimpo cinese e, a salire, immagini di idoli e di budda, figure orientali di uccelli, fino alla Madonna in trono col Bambino (Guerri, 2015, p. 78). D’Annunzio (2005, p. 1722) scrisse nelle sue pagine mature: “Dianzi, nel Cenacolo delle Reliquie, fra i Santi e gli Idoli, fra le immagini di tutte le credenze, fra gli aspetti di tutto il Divino, ero quasi sopraffatto dall’èmpito lirico della mia sintesi religiosa”.

Ispirazioni diverse e differenti suggestioni si uniscono nel gusto dannunziano, un *horror vacui* che guida l’arredatore d’eccezione nella scelta del mobilio e nella composizione. La Stanza delle Reliquie rappresenta, insomma, il risultato concreto del tentativo dannunziano di fusione tra oriente e occidente, dal punto di vista religioso e artistico (Mazza, 1995, pp. 92-94).

La stratificazione materiale di *bibelot* orientaleggianti è testimone dello studio per una fusione ideale tra repertori culturali lontani tra loro, nel tempo e nello spazio. La ricerca estetica di D’Annunzio conserva sempre una certa tendenza centripeta: l’alterità artistica, quanto più difforme e deforme, quanto più distante dal nucleo dei motivi culturali della tradizione poetica coeva, lo affascina e lo seduce; il suo desiderio prensile afferra i manufatti letterari di un altrove vagheggiato (il francese arcaico, l’Abruzzo mitico, l’oriente misterioso, la Grecia antica)

² Il riferimento è ad Assisi, la patria di San Francesco, e rimanda a un verso del Paradiso dantesco: «Però chi d’esso loco fa parole / non dica Ascesi, ché direbbe corto, / ma Oriente».

e li fa propri, mescolandoli tra loro, addomesticandoli. La materialità è centrale in questo discorso: il desiderio tattile di possedere l'oggetto esotico, metterlo in dialogo con un altro pezzo per suscitare segrete associazioni mnemoniche, prelude alla composizione letteraria e anzi l'assiste. Nell'Atto di donazione del complesso del Vittoriale allo Stato italiano del 1923, D'Annunzio dichiara:

Non soltanto ogni casa da me arredata, non soltanto ogni stanza da me studiosamente composta, ma ogni oggetto da me scelto e raccolto nelle diverse età della mia vita, fu sempre per me un modo di espressione, fu sempre per me un modo di rivelazione spirituale, come un qualunque dei miei poemi, come un qualunque dei miei drammi, come un qualunque mio atto politico o militare, come una qualunque mia testimonianza di dritta e invitta fede.

(Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia, 1937, p. 3275)

L'elemento materiale veicola l'espressione artistica, rivela le nascoste complicità tra lo spirito e le cose: "D'Annunzio qui espone un'ideologia dell'arredamento che concepisce la casa e gli oggetti quali portatori di significato metafisico, quali mediatori fra le persone che vivono in questi ambienti e una realtà soprannaturale basata sulla memoria, la sensibilità e la sensualità" (Hendrix, 2008, p. 295).

Nel 1884, poco più che ventenne, già scriveva sulla *Tribuna*:

La rassomiglianza curiosa dei riti buddisti con i riti della Chiesa romana è causa di alcune singolarità figurative che alla prima vista generano stupore. Infatti voi vedrete, in mezzo ai mostri e a tutta la grottesca umanità elefantica dei vasi, una figura di Satzuma, dolcissima, in un atteggiamento di madonna cattolica, china il capo pudicamente, piegata su'l petto le mani. O voi vedrete in un *foukousa* un gran vecchio adorante che tiene levati li occhi verso un'apparizione di santo cinto dall'aureola cristiana.

(D'Annunzio, 1996, p. 213)

D'Annunzio annota queste riflessioni in un periodo fondamentale per la penetrazione del gusto orientale, soprattutto giapponese, nel contesto culturale italiano. Sul finire dell'Ottocento, infatti, diventa popolare una maniera esotica nell'arredamento dell'abitazione signorile a Roma bizantina, città che D'Annunzio frequenta come giovane cronista di episodi mondani. Le *garçonnière* straripano di statuette d'avorio, figurine di giada, *kimono* e *ukiyo-e*. L'oggettistica estremo-orientale colora di uno svagato esotismo tante pagine dell'esordiente giornalista, ma diventa materia di prosa d'arte quando D'Annunzio si cimenta con la novellistica.

1 Scrittura e riscrittura dannunziana: la novellistica mondana del periodo romano

Nelle pause dalla cronaca mondana, che lo consacravano cantore della Roma umbertina e gaudente, D'Annunzio licenzia qualche racconto ironico, si prova con le parabole e le novelle. Scrive *fiction*, insomma, ma sullo sfondo continuano a muoversi i protagonisti dell'*haute société* che suole frequentare, bozzetti di personaggi descritti talvolta con bonaria indulgenza o castigati con sferzante dissacrazione.

Federico Roncoroni raccoglie nel 1981 le più significative prove di prosa di questa stagione sotto il titolo di *Favole mondane*; tentativi simili di compendiare la prosa dannunziana del periodo romano, distillata sui giornali, erano apparsi già all'inizio del secolo, D'Annunzio vivente, con feroce risentimento del poeta che aveva "protestato contro le pubblicazioni che si vanno facendo delle sue opere anteriori", come si premura di segnalare l'editore di certe *Parabole e novelle* dannunziane nel 1914, che infine si giustifica asserendo che "esse valgono sempre più alla luminosa conoscenza dello scrittore, ch'è più grande della contemporanea letteratura italiana" (D'Annunzio, 1914, p. 15).

La curatela di Roncoroni accoglie una composita raccolta di racconti sceneggiati, racconti in forma epistolare, monologhi, recuperi di leggende popolari, che mostrano le sorprendenti incursioni dello scrittore

nei territori del fantastico e la sua frequentazione con la nuova sensibilità per l'oriente (Reim, 2013, pp. I-VIII). Appaiono tra il 1884 e il 1888 sul *Capitan Fracassa* e sulla *Tribuna* e costituiscono un'eccezione nel panorama della produzione dannunziana per la loro leggerezza ironica e la facilità di fruizione, a beneficio certamente dei lettori civettuoli di cronaca mondana, come nota Roncoroni nell'introduzione alla curatela (D'Annunzio, 1981, pp. 5-9).

Qui D'Annunzio si esercita al meglio delle sue possibilità inventive, dando prova di una maturità artistica cui darà piena espressione nel primo romanzo, *Il Piacere*, del 1889. Abbandona il taccuino del giornalista, pur senza deporre i modi del cronista mondano, e si lascia andare al suo estro creativo. Ancora Roncoroni:

La differenza tra la cronaca di attualità dei normali pezzi giornalistici e la cronaca inventata delle *Favole*, peraltro, agli occhi del lettore è minima. Spesso, infatti, le cronache reali sono così favolose da sembrare inventate, quasi un'ironica mistificazione, e spesso, di converso, le *Favole mondane* sono così realistiche da sembrare cronache di attualità.

(D'Annunzio, 1981, p. 7)

Non è da sottovalutare la dimensione letteraria presente in questi racconti. Vi si possono rintracciare, in bozzetto, i personaggi del futuro romanzo: svetta Roma, le sue piazze, le scale, le ville, le donne, gli amori, tutto ciò che confluirà nel *Piacere*, vera e propria summa del periodo romano di D'Annunzio. *Il Piacere* si configura, infatti, come ripresa di tanti materiali prodotti negli anni romani, apparsi sulle colonne dei giornali, e le *Favole mondane* furono spesso la fucina dove si approntarono i materiali per la riscrittura. Nell'introduzione alla raccolta mondadoriana degli scritti giornalistici del periodo romano, Annamaria Andreoli sostiene che: "Il cronista darà senz'altro manforte al narratore affinché si configuri in tutto e per tutto quale *artifex additus artificum*" (D'Annunzio, 1996, p. XXV).

Di seguito si metteranno in luce, attraverso l'analisi di una novella delle

Favole mondane, le strategie di composizione che governano il trattamento dell'esotico nelle pagine romane di D'Annunzio e la loro ripresa nel *Piacere*. Si confronterà la descrizione del Cavalier Sakumi nella favola intitolata "Mandarina" con quella che si fa, dello stesso personaggio, nel successivo romanzo *Il Piacere*. Non si trascurerà di rintracciare le fonti francesi di questo racconto esotico, ma pure si cercherà di dimostrare come D'Annunzio abbia plasmato la fisionomia e il carattere di Sakumi a partire dall'osservazione diretta del ministro giapponese Fujimaro Tanaka, di cui racconta in un articolo sulla *Tribuna*. Il reimpiego di pagine di cronaca mondana nel tessuto dei grandi romanzi non è un fenomeno trascurato dalla critica, che ha cominciato a dedicare attenzione agli scritti giornalistici dell'abruzzese proprio a partire dal confronto con la produzione letteraria successiva: un D'Annunzio scrittore della propria scrittura.

2 Una favola mondana d'ispirazione giapponese

"Mandarina" è una favola mondana che appare per la prima volta sul *Capitan Fracassa* il 22 giugno 1884, a firma Gabriele D'Annunzio (1981, pp. 11-20). L'autore, dopo l'apparizione nel quotidiano, ne prevede la pubblicazione nel volume di novelle *I Pantaleonidi* che propone all'editore Treves nel 1885. *L'Illustrazione italiana* tramanda questa lettera, tra le altre selezionate da Mimì Mosso entro il voluminoso carteggio D'Annunzio-Emilio Treves, che ne illumina il progetto editoriale:

Caro Signore,

Ho qui la Sua lettera, lo non le dissi né il titolo del libro né il contenuto, perché sapevo che alcune settimane fa la signorina Matilde Serao ne aveva parlato particolarmente a Lei o a suo fratello. Il libro si compone di novelle in prosa ed è intitolato *I Pantaleónidi*.

I titoli delle novelle sono questi:

I. I Pantaleónidi; II. Annali d'Anna; III. L'incantesimo; IV. La morte di Sancio Panza; V. Villa Borghese; VI. Mandarina; VII. Mungia; VIII. La guerra del Ponte; IX. San Laimo navigatore;

X. Idillio notturno; XI. Congedo.

Le manderò il manoscritto appena Ella mi darà una risposta.

Le novelle, per la massima parte, sono state pubblicate nel «Fanfulla domenicale».

Cordiali saluti.

Dev.mo Gabriele d'Annunzio.

Roma, il 3 di marzo 1885.

(Mosso, 1923, p. 512)

Le esose richieste di D'Annunzio, che pretende ben 1500 lire da pagarsi alla consegna del volume, fanno fallire l'accordo con Treves il quale commenta, risentito: "Vedo che con lei i rapporti sarebbero molto difficili, avendo acquisito idee molto erronee sul movimento letterario in Italia. Le rimando quindi le sue novelle" (Mosso, 1923, p. 513). Eppure saranno i torchi di Casa Treves a stampare il fortunato primo romanzo dannunziano nella primavera del 1889.

"Mandarina" non è presente nel volume che esce un anno dopo, con il titolo *San Pantaleone*, presso l'editore Barbera di Firenze. Ivanos Ciani (1975, p. 77) afferma che l'esclusione dalla raccolta fosse dovuta al fatto che l'argomento mondano della novella poco aveva in comune con il tono delle altre. "Mandarina" si attesta, comunque, come la più compiuta espressione dell'interesse dannunziano per l'esotismo giapponese che, sull'esempio francese, si diffondeva in Italia in quegli anni. Incarna un aspetto importante del complesso fenomeno del *japonisme*, che fu caratteristico della scrittura di Vittorio Pica: l'evasione dalla vita ordinaria in un mondo alternativo, fantastico e poetico. La mescolanza dei caratteri esotici, senza troppa cura per le peculiarità nazionali in riferimento ai motivi artistici, è una prassi dell'orientalismo del tempo, evidente pure qui quando D'Annunzio prende per giapponese il tema del mandarino, caratteristico invece della Cina (Muramatsu, 1996, p. 28).

Mandarina è il soprannome della marchesa Aurora Cardinale, vedova romana, svampita e sognante. In un ambiente arredato alla giapponese, tiene ogni sabato il tè delle cinque, a cui partecipano i nomi più chiari dell'aristocrazia tiberina. Gli aromi intensi della bevanda giapponese

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accendono gli spiriti corrotti dei convenuti che, schermati dai paraventi floreali, si abbandonano al pettegolezzo e al corteggiamento raffinato. Mandarina assume pose giapponesi ed indossa *kimono* preziosi, si perde nelle sonorità meliche dei versi orientali e s'innamora di un tale cavalier Sakumi, segretario giapponese d'ambasciata, il quale tutto ignora dei costumi sofisticati del *flirt* ricercato dell'alta società romana. La marchesa instaura col giapponese un gioco elegante di seduzione, le cui regole cortesi sfuggono al cavaliere che, impacciato, spezza l'incantesimo d'amore "con una goffa dichiarazione di disponibilità erotica, sin troppo esplicita" (Lamberti, 1985, p. 307), borbottando alla fine del racconto in un pessimo francese: "Je voudrais bien coucher avec vous, Madame!" (D'Annunzio, 1981, p. 20).

Non sono sfuggite, ai critici, le attinenze con la prosa successiva, tanto che si può parlare per "Mandarina" di uno studio di romanzo. Il cavaliere Sakumi sarà tra i personaggi del *Piacere*, ospite in casa della Marchesa D'Ateleta. Roberto Forcella (1928, pp. 58-60) cataloga perciò la favola come: "Importantissima prosa, da considerare come un capitolo extravagante del romanzo *Il Piacere*. Appaiono per la prima volta il nome, il linguaggio barbarico e la spiritualità singolarissima del Cavaliere Sakumi, segretario della Legazione giapponese".

Converrà, allora, analizzare l'evoluzione del personaggio Sakumi dalla favola mondana alle pagine del *Piacere*, che faccia da esempio per comprendere meglio il procedimento della riscrittura dannunziana. Si analizzerà, di contro, pure la figura di Mandarina, la marchesa Aurora Cardinale: il ritratto muliebre dannunziano è testimonianza in prosa della percezione di un Giappone al femminile, sensuale sogno esotico che evoca nella mente dei lettori della Roma umbertina la licenziosità dei costumi e l'affettazione dei modi. La descrizione della marchesa permette una lettura delle modalità attraverso cui il discorso orientalista rende fruibile il Giappone ai lettori di quotidiano nell'Italia di fine Ottocento. Partendo dall'analisi del ritratto femminile dannunziano, si possono evidenziare le dinamiche interpretative che l'Europa letteraria adotta per la comprensione dell'oriente nel momento storico in cui il Giappone si apre al mondo. Un'indagine accurata delle fonti letterarie

di cui D'Annunzio si serve per la stesura di questa favola mondana, che saranno il modello pure per tante pagine del *Piacere*, renderà esplicito il contesto culturale entro cui si muovono le prime relazioni italo-giapponesi.

3 Orientalismo dannunziano: Sakumi e Mandarina attraverso le fonti francesi

L'origine della descrizione del personaggio del cavalier Sakumi può, senza difetto, essere rintracciata in un breve schizzo del ministro giapponese Fujimaro Tanaka, che D'Annunzio (1996, pp. 197-204) realizza nell'articolo "Cronica del fiore dell'Oriente", apparso sulla *Tribuna*

Intanto, nel *Piacere* in gestazione, il ministro nipponico della cronaca dannunziana apparsa nella *Tribuna* veniva tramutandosi in quel cavaliere Sakumi segretario della Legazione giapponese che in casa d'Ateleta prende parte al pranzo in cui s'incontrano per la prima volta Elena e Andrea.

(Trompeo, 1943, p. 187)

D'Annunzio (1996, p. 197) tratteggia, del ministro, un rapido acquerello colorato: un ometto giapponese buffo e caricaturale, spogliato dei segni della nobiltà che connotano l'aristocrazia nipponica (le spade alla cinta), "tutto umiliato nel nero abito europeo". La levatura dell'ospite orientale, comunque, doveva essere tutt'altro che trascurabile se, come D'Annunzio (1996, p. 197) riferisce, egli "fu ricevuto da S. M. il Re d'Italia con molta pompa di cerimonie, nella sala del Trono". Fujimaro Tanaka era infatti un ex-samurai di Nagoya, cui venne affidato l'incarico, nel gran fervore Meiji di rinnovamento per la società giapponese, di progettare il Primo Piano Nazionale per l'Istruzione nel 1873, in quanto nuovo ministro (Duke, 2009, p. 6). Il suo lavoro prendeva avvio dalla diretta conoscenza del sistema educativo occidentale, che si voleva confrontare con quello tradizionale giapponese, per rilanciare quest'ultimo in un contesto di rinnovata modernità. Tanaka partecipò, infatti, alla Missione Iwakura, importante viaggio diplomatico intorno al mondo organizzato

dal governo Meiji, per lo studio della cultura e dei sistemi amministrativi dei Paesi occidentali. La missione partì da Yokohama il 23 dicembre del 1871, alla volta degli Stati Uniti e dell'Europa. La delegazione giapponese visitò anche l'Italia ed è attestata la curiosità dei nipponici per le architetture delle città d'arte italiane, come per l'organizzazione dei giardini, così diversi da quelli a cui erano abituati (Iwakura, 1992).

Non era quindi, quella di cui ci parla D'Annunzio nel 1884, la prima visita italiana di Fujimaro Tanaka. Si può ipotizzare che il ministro si sia arrischiato, per cortesia, a pronunciare pubblicamente qualche breve frase in italiano e che D'Annunzio (2014, p.52) se ne sia ricordato quando ha descritto nel *Piacere* la parlata di Sakumi come "lingua barbarica, appena intelligibile, mista d'inglese, di francese e d'italiano".

Questa "Cronica del fiore dell'Oriente" si apre con l'incipit orientaleggiante: "Salute a *O Tsouri Sama*, a Sua Signoria la Gru!" (D'Annunzio, 1996, pp. 197), che è la chiave di volta per la comprensione del gioco di riscrittura dannunziano per quanto concerne il *japonisme*.³ Individuata la fonte di questa singolare citazione, avremo rintracciato il fondamentale tramite materiale tra D'Annunzio e il Giappone. L'intermediario è un testo francese, *La maison d'un artiste* di Edmond de Goncourt, che "è il più celebre dei viaggi intellettuali all'interno della propria casa, costruzione e materializzazione al tempo stesso dell'io segreto del proprietario" (Lamberti, 1985, pp. 307-308). In quest'opera viene descritta la casa dell'autore ad Auteuil, nella periferia parigina, con dettagliate descrizioni degli arredi e delle collezioni artistiche, arricchite da divagazioni sul profilo dei singoli artisti. Il *japonisme* di Goncourt è noto in tutta Europa, D'Annunzio (1996, p. 160) gli riconosce un ruolo attivo nella promozione dell'arte giapponese all'interno di un articolo giornalistico intitolato "Letteratura giapponese", in cui il cronista s'improvvisa erudito conoscitore dell'intera storia letteraria della Terra dei Crisantemi.

3 Il curioso saluto ricorre in altre pagine di cronaca mondiale. Nell'articolo "La vita a Roma: Nuptialia", in cui commenta il matrimonio di Edoardo Scarfoglio e Matilde Serao, D'Annunzio (1996, p. 269) descrive la casa maritale, arredata in stile giapponese: "In un angolo un grande specchio, contornato di stoffe frangiate, riflette una gru di bronzo, l'uccello bene amato nell'Impero del Sol Levante, o *Tsouri Sama*, sua signoria la Gru".

Nel libro di Goncourt, al capitolo destinato al *vestibule* della casa, l'autore descrive i ricami che adornano l'ingresso: tessuti di seta provenienti dal Giappone chiamati *fusha* o *foukousa*, ricamati con un disegno che raffigura delle gru, che sono per i giapponesi messaggeri celesti a cui ci si rivolge con l'appellativo: “*O Tsouri Sama, Sa Seigneurie la Grue*” (Goncourt, 1881, p. 7), proprio come nell'incipit dell'articolo dannunziano sulla *Tribuna*. La studiosa dannunziana Mariko Muramatsu segnala, ad avvalorare questo rapporto di filiazione diretta, un errore significativo presente in entrambi i testi: “La citazione da Goncourt è evidente, tanto più che si avvale della stessa traslitterazione alla francese di una proposizione giapponese gravata da un errore – Tsouri, piuttosto che Tsourou (in giapponese la gru è tsuru)” (Muramatsu, 1996, p. 23).

A firma dell'articolo compare Shiun-Sui-Katsu-Kava, fortunato pseudonimo del D'Annunzio cronista, che D'Annunzio scova pure tra le pagine goncourtiane. Nella presentazione degli album contenuti nella sua casa-museo, Goncourt alterna, alla descrizione dei motivi artistici, informazioni circa episodi sulla storia dell'arte giapponese. Si sofferma in particolare sul pittore “O-kou-saï”, autore di tre degli album della sua collezione. Una noticina messa a chiosare parte del testo ci svela l'arcano:

D'après une curieuse note de Bergerat, sur des indications fournies par Narushima, un des Japonais venus en France, l'année de l'exposition, Oksaï, O-kou-saï, Fokkusai, dont le vrai nom serait Hottéyimon-Miuraya, serait né à Yedo au milieu du XVIIIe siècle, aurait travaillé dans l'atelier de Shiun-Sui-Katsu-Kava, puis chez Shiun-Shivo, et aurait débuté par une suite des Jardins de Yedo.

(Goncourt, 1881, p. 218)

Il grande Hokusai avrebbe quindi lavorato nello studio del maestro Shiun-Sui-Katsu-Kava, o quantomeno così riporta Goncourt. Muramatsu, con precisione, anche qui interviene a ricostruire la lezione originale: “In realtà il primo maestro di Hokusai si chiamava Shiunsho Katsukawa, ma curiosamente sia D'Annunzio sia Goncourt hanno usato la

stessa trascrizione sbagliata *Shiun-Sui*, facendo un identico uso di maiuscole e trattini” (Muramatsu, 1996, pp. 24-25). Questo nome proprio giapponese, poi, doveva essere già familiare a D’Annunzio, perché nel periodo in cui era collaboratore del *Fanfulla della Domenica*, Luigi Capuana pubblica una lunga recensione di un romanzo giapponese dello scrittore Tamenaga Shunsui, *Les fidèles ronins* (Salierno, 1985, p. 11). In “Mandarina” D’Annunzio (1981, p. 14) scrive che la marchesa Aurora Canale sognava il Giappone lontano “bevendo piccole tazze di the o leggendo i romanzi di Tamenaga Siounsoui e di Kiokutei”. Di Tamenaga Shunsui proprio nel 1884 era stato pubblicato in diciassette fascicoli dall’editore Perino di Roma il romanzo *I cavalieri della morte*, che ha introdotto così il topos consueto della *geisha* e *samurai* giapponesi (Ciapparoni La Rocca, 2003, p. 283).

Non è arbitrario, quindi, accreditare il testo goncourtiano come fonte della maggior parte delle citazioni dannunziane dei nomi e delle parole giapponesi: lo tradiscono le trascrizioni alla francese e gli errori comuni. La fisionomia di *Mandarina* è costruita attingendo fedelmente alle immagini delle donne giapponesi che Goncourt riporta, queste figurine femminili dotate di grazia innata e modi fanciulleschi.⁴

La femme japonaise, les anciens albums la représentent le front remarquablement bombé, les sourcils semblables à un trait de pinceau, l’ouverture de l’œil tout étroite et extrêmement fendue avec une prunelle coulée dans un coin sous la mince paupière, un petit nez courbe d’une très grande finesse, une bouche toujours entr’ouverte dans le dessin du peintre, comme une bouche d’enfant, et l’ovale long, long, long, mais parfaitement régulier.

(Goncourt, 1881, pp. 235-236)

Un paravento, dove alcune cicogne bianche si nascondevano tra i giaggioli d’acqua violacei, faceva da fondo alla singolare bellezza di lei, a quell’ovale magro dove il naso lievemente aquilino era tagliato con estrema finezza e l’apertura dell’occhio lieve-

⁴ La stessa grazia accordata alle figure femminili giapponesi è evidente nelle pagine del *Piacere* in cui si descrive la nipponica Principessa Issé (D’Annunzio, 2014, p. 72).

mente obliqua mostrava la pupilla verso l'angolo al battito dei cigli tenuissimi. [...] Restava spesso così, con nelli occhi una espressione di stupore ingenuo, con la bocca semiaperta come quella di un poppante, con una ciocca di capelli nerissimi serpeggiante sulla tempia, tentando di allungare ancora più l'ovale del suo viso.

(D'Annunzio 1981, pp. 11-14)

La descrizione giapponesizzante di Mandarinina permette a D'Annunzio di dotare la sua pagina di un erotismo discreto, una sensualità delicata, che anima le dettagliate descrizioni dei simposi aristocratici che avvengono nei salotti della marchesa Aurora Cardinale. La moda del tempo detta il Giappone e D'Annunzio cede al fascino molle del capriccio esotico. Ben prima della percezione di un Giappone al maschile che negli anni '30, in *Teneo Te Africa*, D'Annunzio (2005, p. 2556) definirà "acciaiato" in seguito all'invasione della Manciuria, esiste nell'immaginario del poeta la vaga percezione di un Paese che assume tutte le caratteristiche femminili della disponibilità erotica e della sottomissione.

Rimando all'articolo "Giapponeserie dannunziane" di Maria Mimita Lamberti (1985) e all'ampio saggio di Mariko Muramatsu (1996) intitolato *Il buon suddito del Mikado*, per una disanima accorta dei prelievi dannunziani dal testo goncourtiano. Ciò che mi preme, qui, è segnalare un'altra fonte delle riprese dannunziane, sfuggita finora all'occhio critico. Si tratta di un libro di Auguste Wahlen, pseudonimo di Jean-François-Nicolas Loumyer, libraio e stampatore di Bruxelles. Faccio riferimento al volume dedicato all'Asia per la raccolta di saggi *Mœurs, usages et costumes de tous les peuples du monde, d'après des documents authentiques et les voyages les plus récents* del 1843; si tratta di un poderoso sforzo enciclopedico che mira a descrivere, entro i cinque continenti, gli insediamenti umani e i caratteri delle popolazioni.

In tanti passaggi della novella, D'Annunzio utilizza parte del repertorio di motivi desunti dalla lettura del libro di Whalen. Le pareti della stanza da tè in cui è ambientata la favola sono quasi viventi di vita vegetale, grazie al reimpiego della terminologia botanica ricavata dalla sezione

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relativa alla flora giapponese del trattato geografico:

La flore du Japon est une des plus riches que l'on connaisse. Les forêts et les haies étalent les roses du Trocbaki; le sotoouki donne une fleur semblable à celle du lis, le momidsi se couvre de magnifiques fleurs rouges.

(Whalen, 1843, p. 541)

Nella sala, al chiaror delle lampade sorrette dalle quattro gru di bronzo, la flora e la fauna parietali ebbero una gioconda risurrezione di vita. Da ogni parte, uccelli posati su rami di rose del Trocbaki, uccelli svolazzanti sui gigli bianchi del sotoouki, uccelli dormenti sotto i grandi calici rossi del momidsi.

(D'Annunzio, 1981, p. 19)

Il volto di Mandarinina, per la consuetudine con le cose giapponesi, ha preso a somigliare a quello di una *geisha* e la trasmutazione, da nobildonna romana a principessa nipponica, si fa concreta in questa favola mondana. La descrizione dannunziana della marchesa trae spunto ancora da Wahlen:

Les Japonais ont dans leur organisation tous les traits caractéristiques de la conformation mongole, y compris la position oblique de l'œil qui s'éloigne plus de la forme ronde que chez aucun autre peuple; oblong, petit, enfoncé dans la tête, il paraît clignoter continuellement.

(Whalen, 1843, p. 548)

Ed era ben curiosa quest'incarnazione del tipo femminile mongolico in una donna occidentale [...]. L'apertura dell'occhio lievemente obliqua mostrava la pupilla verso l'angolo al battito dei cigli tenuissimi.

(D'Annunzio, 1981, p. 12)

La descrizione del volto di Mandarinina, "quell'ovale magro dove il naso lievemente aquilino era tagliato con estrema finezza" (D'Annunzio,

1981, p. 12) potrebbe essere influenzata anche dalla lettura del libro *L'empire Japonais di Léon Metchnikoff*, testo da cui D'Annunzio solitamente attinge quando tratta di giapponeserie (Leo, 2019, pp. 83-88). Vi si legge infatti che la conformazione fisica degli abitanti giapponesi delle isole Ryukyu è caratterizzata “par l'ovale très-allongé et assez régulier de leurs visages” e più oltre che “leurs yeux ne sont que légèrement obliques et presque jamais bridés”, mentre il naso “est surtout d'une forme particulière: très-étroit et plat dans sa partie supérieure, il forme une proéminence considérable à l'endroit où les cartilages se joignent aux os nasaux, ce qui lui donne un faux air de nez aquilin” (Metchnikoff, 1881, p. 169).

Il contrasto tra la composta, quasi spirituale, grazia di Mandarina e la caratura grottesca del grugno del cavalier Sakumi è il nodo problematico dello sguardo orientalista dannunziano, che esalta l'esotico in Mandarina fintanto che è belletto superficiale, vezzo che tinge di vaghezza la bellezza europea della marchesa. Il godimento dell'alterità deve necessariamente passare attraverso le modalità interpretative classiche del bello occidentale. Anche Whalen si compiace della bellezza delle donne giapponesi di buona famiglia, con la loro bianchezza quasi europea per la consuetudine a restare in casa come la stessa Mandarina, di contro al colorito giallastro degli uomini giapponesi e di Sakumi:

Les écrivains hollandais vantent avec beaucoup de complaisance la beauté des jeunes femmes; celles de distinction, en s'exposant rarement à l'air sans être voilées, conservent le teint aussi blanc que les Européennes.

(Whalen, 1843, p. 548)

Quindi viveva quasi sempre nella casa, per circondarsi dell'aria appropriata alla delicatezza delle sue grazie, per emergere più vivamente da un fondo pittorico di tinte armoniose; poiché la luce della strada brutale toglieva a quella sottilissima architettura feminea ogni incanto.

(D'Annunzio, 1981, p. 14)

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Per converso, il cavaliere Sakumi incarna in modo quasi caricaturale l'opposto dell'immagine finora evocata. Mandarina si innamora di Sakumi soltanto perché la sua più ardente aspirazione è di vivere un amore giapponese. Il cavaliere perde ogni connotazione reale agli occhi della dama e rappresenta “un Oriente vaghissimo di poesia, di amori sognati, di paesaggi dell'immaginazione” (Lamberti, 1985, p. 307). Ilvano Caliaro (1991, p. 51 n.4) rileva che Sakumi, in “Mandarina” e nel *Piacere*, è modellato sul Marquis de Chou-Hang-Li dell'*Initiation sentimentale* di Péladan.

Possiamo rintracciare una serie di eloquenti richiami intertestuali, per quanto riguarda la descrizione del cavaliere Sakumi, che prima assume i tratti del ministro Tanaka nella “Cronica del fiore dell'Oriente”, poi compare nella novella “Mandarina” come segretario d'ambasciata, e infine si presenta tra i commensali in casa D'Ateleta nel *Piacere*.⁵

Il ministro Fujimaro Tanaka è “gialliccio come un avorio di tre secoli” mentre il Sakumi di “Mandarina” ha “il colorito giallognolo della razza mongolica”; “giallognolo” è anche nel *Piacere*, oltre che “piccolo di statura”. In Metchnikoff (1881, p. 173) si legge infatti: “Le teint est jaunâtre chez les hommes, blanc et rosé chez les femmes”.

Tanaka ha gli “occhi lungamente obliqui” e un sorriso che “gli faceva battere rapidamente le palpebre”, contrappunto perfetto a “li occhi obliqui, oblungi, piccoli, profondati nel capo, sparsi di venature sanguigne, parevano ridere tra il continuo battere delle palpebre” in “Mandarina”, e “gli occhi lunghi ed obliqui, venati di sangue, su cui le palpebre battevano di continuo” nel *Piacere*. Si può ragionevolmente supporre che questa sia una ripresa da Wahlen (1843, p. 548) che descrive il tipo d'occhio giapponese: “il paraît clignoter continuellement”.

Il buon suddito del Mikado, il ministro, si produceva in mille inchini “sorridente d'un infaticabile sorriso”, mentre in “Mandarina” Sakumi, “alla meraviglia ilare delli interlocutori contrapponeva il piccolo riso

5 Si confronteranno, di seguito, le pagine dannunziane dell'articolo “Toung-Hoa-Lou, ossia cronica del fiore dell'Oriente” (D'Annunzio, 1996, p. 197-198), con quelle di “Mandarina” in cui compare Sakumi (1981, pp. 15-20) e poi con le corrispondenti nel *Piacere* (D'Annunzio, 2014, pp. 51-69).

delle pupille sfuggenti nelli angoli delle palpebre, contrapponeva l'ironia inconsapevole di tutti i tratti della faccia; così che alcuni credevano quasi d'essere burlati e se ne vendicavano con malignità". Nel *Piacere*, infine, si dice che egli "pur nella sua goffaggine, aveva un'espressione arguta, una specie di finezza ironica agli angoli della bocca", "reiterando i sorrisi e gli inchini".

Sakumi è "un buddhista inclinato naturalmente alla pinguedine", "molto coltivava i piaceri della gola" in "Mandarina". Anche nel *Piacere* si dice che aveva "il corpo troppo grosso in paragone delle gambe troppo sottili". A causa della consuetudine con i vizi dell'Occidente e la frequentazione delle amicizie di Mandarina, "Sakumi da prima era caduto in uno stupidimento grave; poi a poco a poco la sua buona natura voluttuaria si era andata risolvendo tra mezzo alle nebbie dell'intelligenza ottusa", "viveva in una specie di ebrietà sonnolenta, prosperando nell'esercizio delle funzioni vegetative, espandendosi di tanto in tanto in una mimica corporale che pareva imitata dai disegni classici di *O-Kou-Sai*". La scaltrezza gli fa difetto anche nel *Piacere* e la sua figura caricaturale risalta negativamente nel raffinato contesto aristocratico; lo sguardo del delegato si fissa a scrutare la presenza di Elena Muti, *femme fatale* del romanzo: "Fino a quel momento, egli aveva guardato la duchessa di Scerni, con l'espressione statica d'un bonzo che sia nel cospetto della divinità. La sua larga faccia, che pareva uscita fuori da una pagina classica del gran figuratore umorista *O-Kou-Sai*, rosseggiava come una luna d'agosto, tra le catene de' fiori", ecco "l'amorosa contemplazione del *daimio* travestito", "con gli occhi imbambolati". La *Maison* è certamente il modello di riferimento di D'Annunzio anche in questo passo. Si leggano certe pagine in cui Goncourt (1881, pp. 220-221) descrive i motivi grotteschi e buffi che l'arte di Hokusai riproduce: "Dans la figuration rigoureuse, dans les copies fidèles de ses hommes et de ses femmes O-kou-sai, apporte un grossissement comique qui n'est pas, à proprement parler, caricatural, mais plutôt humoristique. L'artiste, si l'on peut dire, a la réalité ironique".

La scarsa dimestichezza di Sakumi con la lingua degli interlocutori occidentali è il pretesto per la risata liberatoria del lettore nella chiusa

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della favola mondana: “ronzavano nel suo cervello, tra le sonorità della lingua nativa, alcune centinaia di parole francesi, confusamente. E come egli non era ancor giunto ad afferrare il significato preciso di ciascun suono, spesso gli accadeva di esprimersi con modi niente affatto rispondenti al caso”. D’Annunzio descrive un “balbettamento sconnesso”, quando Sakumi “oscillava stranamente in una confusione di frasi falliche, di perifrasi pudibonde”, l’iconica frase finale viene pronunciata “con uno sforzo di sillabazione grottesco”. Nel *Piacere*, si è detto, “l’Asiatico parlava una lingua barbarica, appena intelligibile, mista d’inglese, di francese e d’italiano”.

L’inviato giapponese, nella cronaca, ha un portamento stravagante, è “tutto umiliato nel nero abito europeo”, “non portava alla cintola le due sciabole, segno di nobiltà nell’Imperio del Sol Levante”. L’uomo di cui Mandarinina s’è invaghita “compariva egli nelle sale, a lato dell’ambasciatore principe, camminando colla punta dei piedi in dentro come se una stretta legatura gli fasciasse le anche”; D’Annunzio ne denuncia l’imbarazzo quando scrive che “il cavaliere buddhista si avanzò co’l suo passo malfermo [...]. Ahimè, egli non portava un fulgido vestimento di *daimio*”. Andrea Sperelli, protagonista del *Piacere*, registra mentalmente i movimenti del nipponico: “camminava colle punte de’ piedi in dentro, come se una cintura gli stringesse forte le anche. Le falde della sua giubba erano troppo abbondanti; i calzoni facevano una quantità di pieghe; la cravatta portava assai visibili i segni della mano inesperta. Egli pareva un *daimio* cavato fuori da una di quelle armature di ferro e di lacca che somiglian gusci di crostacei mostruosi e poi ficcato ne’ panni d’un tavoleggiante occidentale [...]. A mezzo del salone s’inclinò. Il *gibus* gli cadde di mano”. A questo riguardo, Wahlen commenta con una curiosità di carattere esotico, indicando il motivo per cui l’osservatore occidentale percepisce come sgarbato il modo di camminare dei giapponesi; tutta colpa delle calzature infradito, il cui peculiare modo di aderire al piede impedisce la scioltezza dei movimenti:

Dans les maisons, l’unique chaussure des Japonais se compose de chaussons. S’ils sortent, ils mettent des souliers par-dessus, mais de l’espèce la plus incommode. Ce ne sont guère que des

semelles de paille, de roseau ou de bois, maintenues sous le pied par une petite cheville perpendiculaire qui traverse une ouverture faite exprès dans le chausson, et passe entre le pouce et le premier doigt du pied. L'impossibilité de soulever en marchant un pied ainsi chaussé explique suffisamment la gaucherie des Japonais dans leurs mouvements.

(Wahlen, 1843, p. 576)

Il nipponico è oggetto di risa, si muove impacciato in abiti europei che gli ostacolano il movimento, spogliato degli attributi di nobiltà (il *daimio*, il signore feudale a servizio dello *shogun*, doveva portare due spade in rappresentanza del potere e della classe sociale), privato dei simboli guerreschi e dell'armatura temibile. D'Annunzio ironizza e si figura il giapponese come un "crostaceo mostruoso" in quell'usbergo colorato. La connessione tra personaggi odiosi e metafore animali è di norma nel D'Annunzio del *Piacere* (Turchetta, 1993, p. 132). Le qualità bestiali del cavaliere, descritto in termini di natura, contrastano con quelle dei personaggi dell'aristocrazia tiberina, descritti in termini di arte e paragonati a quadri celebri e statue famose, secondo la tecnica dell'*ecfrasis* (Eskelinen, 2006). Deborah Collen Fisher (1998, pp. 58-59) sostiene che nell'opera dannunziana sia radicato un credo "in the superiority of Italian society over other races, a view enhanced for D'Annunzio by Darwin's findings and Nietzschean philosophy [...]. Elements of this philosophy are apparent in the portrayal of the oriental character Cavaliere Sakumi".

La descrizione di Sakumi fu poco apprezzata dai lettori giapponesi; già nel 1909 Mori Ōgai scrisse: "Sakumi fa la figura dello stupido" e il letterato Sei Itō lo liquidò come "detestabile" (Hirashi, 1996, p. 36). Noriko Hirashi afferma che la figura del giapponese nel *Piacere* sia stata riprodotta a partire da un'ispirazione francese ulteriore rispetto alla *Maison*, si tratterebbe di *Madame Chrysanthème* di Pierre Loti, testo fondamentale per la diffusione di una certa immagine del Giappone in Europa alla fine dell'Ottocento.⁶

⁶ Loti sarà anche fonte d'ispirazione per Puccini nella realizzazione della *Madama Butterfly* (Groos, 2003, pp. 352-363).

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Si è detto che Sakumi è paragonato nel *Piacere* ad un “bonzo”, che fissa la divinità in estasi mistica; Loti (1888, p. 184) scrive proprio di un simile bonzo esotico: “Les bonzes assis en théories immobiles, dans la sanctuaire étincelant d’or qu’habitent les divinités, les chimères et les symboles”. Per quanto pertiene, poi, l’aspetto grottesco di Sakumi, si può fare riferimento ad un’altra opera di Loti: “Un bal à Yeddo” in *Japoneries d’Automne*. Non è altro che l’affresco di un evento mondano giapponese nell’era Meiji, testimoniato da un osservatore europeo, i cui invitati vestono all’occidentale. Loti ritiene che i giapponesi in abito lungo, alla foggia europea, possano apparire eccessivamente imbellettati e alquanto baroccheggianti: “Vaguement ils me rappellent certain général Boum⁷ qui eut son heure de célébrité jadis. Et puis, l’habit à queue, déjà si laid pur nous, comme ils le portent singulièrement!” (Loti, 1889, p. 88).

Endymion Porter Wilkinson scrive che, nei lavori di Loti, i giapponesi sono circondati da un alone di decadenza, contraddittori, pronti a trarre in inganno l’incauto visitatore, che pure scimmiescamente imitano nei costumi occidentali: “The Japanese are mercilessly caricatured as inferior yellow people: they are small, fragile, and feminine” (Wilkinson, 1982, p. 44).

I saggi raccolti in *Japoneries d’Automne* furono inclusi nella rivista *La Nouvelle Revue* nel 1887 e nel 1888. Questi articoli di Loti, ipotizza Hirashi, potrebbero avere attirato l’attenzione di D’Annunzio, lettore accorto della rivista: “Absorbant l’image des Japonais de Loti, D’Annunzio créa Sakumi, grotesque et comique” (Hirashi, 1996, p. 37).

C’è poi un altro curioso dettaglio su cui vale la pena di indagare: il modo di camminare di Sakumi, con le punte dei piedi rivolte in dentro. Questo non è, in realtà, costume degli uomini giapponesi ma pare fosse prassi per le donne. Loti descrive Madame Chrysanthème con le sue amiche: “et s’efforcent de marcher les bouts de pied tournés en dedans, ce qui est une chose de mode et d’élégance”, ma non specifica che è

⁷ Il generale Boum è un personaggio dell’opera buffa *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* di Jacques Offenbach.

un'abitudine solamente femminile (Loti, 1888, p. 92). D'Annunzio, leggendo Loti, avrà supposto che questa foggia inconsueta fosse pertinente tanto agli uomini quanto alle donne (Hirashi, 1996, p. 37).

Resta, tuttavia, preponderante il contributo goncourtiano alla creazione del personaggio Sakumi. In "Mandarina" si legge che Sakumi, "nato in un paese dove gli uomini, benché impudichi, hanno dell'amore un concetto singolarissimo era rimasto attonito d'innanzi a certe libertà di linguaggio cortese europeo" (D'Annunzio, 1981, p. 17). Goncourt scrive alcune pagine sul concetto d'amore attribuito ai giapponesi:

Car, sur l'amour, les Japonais ont une manière de sentir, des idées, des délicatesses tout à fait extraordinaires. [...] Et au théâtre l'amour d'une jeune fille, et l'amour le plus purement et le plus chastement exprimé, révolterait les spectateurs de cette contrée paradoxale, où l'impudicité court la rue.

(Goncourt, 1881, p. 213)

Il nucleo fondamentale della novella, il *misunderstanding*, si trova in un aneddoto esposto nella *Maison d'un artiste*. Goncourt ricorda che un giovane giapponese che egli conobbe dal suo amico Philippe Burty, noto critico d'arte, si fosse indignato nell'udire espressioni amorose francesi fin troppo dirette:

Je me rappelle, un soir, chez mon ami Burty, l'indignation d'un jeune Japonais à qui il était demandé ce qu'il trouvait de choquant de dire à une femme qu'on en était amoureux, et qui, après une sortie sur la grossièreté de notre langue, de nos expressions, de nos mots, s'écriait : "Chez nous, ce serait comme si on disait : Madame, je voudrais bien coucher avec vous".

(Goncourt, 1881, p. 213)

Quest'ultima è proprio la stessa frase che Sakumi sillaba nella chiusa di D'Annunzio, con la notevole differenza che, se nell'aneddoto è la maniera erotica occidentale ad apparire grossolana agli occhi giapponesi, nella favola mondana è l'inesperienza del linguaggio dell'orientale

a essere motivo di scherno, confuso dai costumi dell'amore europeo.

4 Conclusione. D'Annunzio orientalista *flâneur*

L'orientalismo dannunziano, dove orientalismo sta per la maniera occidentale di trattare e in certa misura inventare l'oriente (Said, 2013), è lo strumento impiegato dal cronista per tessere nella trama del racconto i fili dorati della lussuria verbale e dell'erotismo discreto. L'abitudine di collezionare manufatti giapponesi, capriccio del poeta sin dagli anni giovanili, non è altro che la manifestazione materiale della pulsione ad accumulare sulla pagina effetti figurativi intriganti, tramite il ricorso a bozzetti esotici destinati ad affascinare il pubblico delle lettrici dei giornali mondani. Il cronista *flâneur* frequenta i trattati geografici dei viaggiatori in Asia, compendia le curiosità più interessanti e ne riempie le colonne dei giornali, analogamente a come fa il giovane D'Annunzio, cliente affezionato della bottega Beretta di articoli orientali nel cuore di Roma bizantina, che ingombravano le stanze del poeta, come ricorda egli stesso nel *Teneo Te Africa*:

Era quello il tempo quando incominciava da parte de' mercatanti esploratori la spoliazione dei palagi e delle pagode. E a Roma v'era appunto una bottega d'arte governata da Maria Beretta, donna di alto gusto, tanto indulgente al mio fervore che mi lasciava portar via a credito il fiore delle sue vetrine.

(D'Annunzio, 2005, p. 2556)

La produzione mondana dannunziana degli anni Ottanta, traboccante di prestiti dal giapponese mediati dal francese, raramente si armonizza in una prosa qualitativamente valida. Eppure, in "Mandarina", la leggerezza svagata del racconto, la padronanza sicura dei mezzi espressivi, lo studio degli ambienti e dei personaggi che saranno propri del *Piacere*, consacrano questa favola mondana come uno dei risultati più significativi dell'apprendistato bizantino. L'elemento esotico diventa materia stessa del racconto e non soltanto strategia retorica utile ad accendere la curiosità dei lettori. Resta vero, tuttavia, che il Giappone

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dannunziano è soprattutto un'invenzione, descritto per lo più in termini negativi in contrapposizione al costume occidentale, proprio per ribadire i caratteri identitari del modo di fare europeo e rilanciarli con rinnovata forza. Il cavalier Sakumi del *Piacere* è l'eterno sconfitto della prosa dannunziana, un sé opposto e complementare al tipo latino del seduttore sperelliano.

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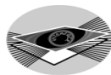
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[received March 3, 2020
accepted June 10, 2020]



Многоязычие в современной русской поэзии:

попытка типологии

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается использование многоязычия в современной русской поэзии и делается попытка определить его основные виды. Исходя из функциональной направленности, выделяются четыре группы: 1. Ситуативное многоязычие, призванное передать аутентичность текста и использующееся как своего рода документальное свидетельство «иноязычности» ситуации; 2. Интертекстуальное многоязычие, т. е. включение в поэтический текст иноязычных фрагментов, которые прямо отсылают к каким-либо текстам из других культур; 3. Креативно-игровое многоязычие, охватывающее тексты, в которых иноязычные слова и фрагменты служат материалом, дополняющим ресурсы русского языка и позволяющим найти необычные креативные формы выражения; 4. Культурно-идентичностное многоязычие, под которым понимается использование иноязычных элементов для выражения тех аспектов лирического субъекта, которые связаны с его самоидентификацией и ценностной установкой в отношении различных культурных контекстов.

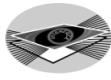
В заключение статьи рассматривается специфика использования многоязычия в современной русской поэзии. Делается вывод о том, что, в отличие от современной американской и западноевропейской мультилингвальной поэзии, в русской поэзии многоязычие в большинстве случаев ограничено сферой эстетики и культурных референций, в то время как использование многоязычия для артикуляции социально-политических и идентичностных проблем, связанных с развитием мультикультурализма, пока остается редкостью.

Ключевые слова: современная русская поэзия, многоязычная поэзия, типология

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Multilingualism in contemporary Russian poetry: towards a typology

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Abstract

The article deals with the use of multilingualism in contemporary Russian poetry and attempts to define its main types. Based on the functional focus, four groups are distinguished: 1. Situational multilingualism, designed to convey the authenticity of the text and used as a kind of documentary evidence of a “foreign language situation”; 2. Intertextual multilingualism, i. e. the inclusion of foreign language fragments that directly refer to texts from other cultures; 3. Creatively playful multilingualism, comprising texts in which foreign language words and phrases serve as material that enhances Russian language resources and allows finding unusual creative forms of expression; 4. Identity-related multilingualism, understood as the use of foreign language elements to express those aspects of a lyrical subject that relate to its self-identification and values in relation to various cultural contexts.

In conclusion, the specific features of multilingualism in contemporary Russian poetry are considered. It is suggested that, unlike contemporary American and Western European multilingual poetry, in Russian poetry multilingualism is in most cases limited to the sphere of aesthetics and cultural references, while the use of multilingualism to articulate the socio-political and identity problems associated with the development of multiculturalism remains rather uncommon.

Keywords: : contemporary Russian poetry, multilingual poetry, typology

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Многоязычие в современной русской поэзии:

попытка типологии

Поэзии как особой разновидности речевой деятельности имманентно присуще напряженное и амбивалентное отношение к языку. Используя язык в качестве главного средства художественного выражения, поэзия часто оперирует на границе лингвистических возможностей, экспериментируя с принятой языковой нормой и расширяя ее за счет включения элементов из других лингвистических и даже экстралингвистических систем.¹

Произведения, в которых используются элементы двух или более языков, хорошо знакомы в разных поэтических культурах, однако в истории поэзии им долгое время отводилось маргинальное место, ограниченное, в основном, юмористическими функциями (так называемая «макароническая поэзия» и т. д.).² В этом отношении литературоведение находилось в русле монолингвальной парадигмы, которая господствовала во всех областях идеологической и культурной жизни по крайней мере с конца XVIII века, эпохи образования национальных государств и утверждения национальных языков в Европе (см. Yildiz, 2012, pp. 2-6).

Хотя монолингвальная парадигма логична и хорошо объяснима в рамках своих исторических условий, она, очевидно, является

1 См., например, давнюю традицию визуальной поэзии или призыв поэтов-конструктивистов использовать в поэзии «все наличие знаков, существующих для самых разнообразных целей условного обозначения» – математических символов, музыкальных знаков, торговых эмблем и т. д. (Чичерин, 1926, цит. по: Кузьминский, 1988, с. 199).

2 В качестве хрестоматийного примера макаронической поэзии можно привести шуточную поэму И. П. Мятлева «Сенсации и замечания госпожи Курдюковой за границею, дан л'этранже» (1840), в которой пародируется смешение русского и французского языков, характерное для представителей провинциального дворянства. Отношение к многоязычию в поэзии как к чему-то «несерьезному» является отражением общей тенденции, рассматривающей смешение языков (наблюдающееся, например, в речи билингов или среди населения зон языковых контактов) как проявление неряшливости или недостатка языковой компетенции, подлежащее высмеиванию и иным формам стигматизации (см. Davies, Bentahila, 2008, p. 1-2).

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сильным упрощением и мало соответствует эмпирической действительности. В лингвистике мы редко имеем дело с ситуацией чистого мооязычия.³ Более того, мооязычие является весьма условным понятием даже в рамках одного языка – как показал Бодуэн де Куртенэ уже в начале XX века, «чистых» языков в природе не существует, они все представляют собой продукт языкового смешения (Бодуэн де Куртенэ, 1963). Это же касается и так называемых «стандартных» или «литературных языков», специально созданных для обслуживания культурных функций. Так, язык Пушкина, который считается «отцом» русского литературного языка, возник как продукт сознательного смешения как минимум трех разнородных лингвистических источников: церковнославянского, французского и русского вернакуляра.⁴

Однако после формирования стандартного литературного языка в эпоху Пушкина на протяжении всего XIX века использование многоязычия в русской поэзии становится скорее редкостью. Возвращение интереса к многоязычию наблюдается лишь в начале XX века в связи с выходом на сцену различных авангардистских течений, прежде всего футуризма. В поэтике авангарда с его программным стремлением к ревизии традиционных языковых средств важная роль отводится пограничным областям языка и элементам из других языковых систем. В качестве наиболее яркого примера выхода за пределы своего языка можно вспомнить «заумный язык» русских футуристов, одним из источников создания неологизмов в котором являлись различные иноязычные влияния.⁵

На протяжении XX века монолингвальная парадигма в

3 На это обращает внимание, например, Уриель Вайнрайх, который отмечает, что распространенное отношение к одноязычию как к правилу, а многоязычию – как чему-то исключительному является «в высшей степени идеализированным» представлением (Вайнрайх, 1972, с. 25).

4 Этот вопрос подробно рассмотрен в классическом исследовании Виноградова (1935).

5 См., например, «фоническую музыку» Туфанова, основную роль в которой играют «простые звуковые комплексы, осколки английских, китайских, русских и др. слов» (Туфанов, 1924, с. 12), или элементы южнославянского языкового материала у Хлебникова, связанные с его интересом к архаическим фольклорным источникам, а также использование им отдельных иранских слов, навеянных впечатлениями от похода в Иран. См. работы: Парнис (1978), Тартаковский (1992).

художественном творчестве подвергалась дальнейшей эрозии и к настоящему времени утратила значительную часть своего влияния. Этому способствовали как имманентно-художественные, так и внешние факторы. Так, многоязычие стало одним из важных стилистических приемов для различных направлений модернизма, объединенных общим недоверием к языку как средству адекватного отражения мира. Наряду с другими языковыми экспериментами, писатели-модернисты активно прибегали к возможностям языкового остранения, которые открывало использование альтернативных языковых кодов. К внешним факторам можно отнести возросшее число писателей-эмигрантов, вызванное мировыми войнами и другими потрясениями XX века. Пересекая национальные и языковые границы, такие писатели часто давали выражение переживаемой ими многоязычной реальности в своем творчестве.⁶

В последние десятилетия использование различных элементов многоязычия, в том числе и в художественном творчестве, проходит еще более интенсивно, что, очевидно, находится в непосредственной связи с развивающейся в наше время интернациональной интеграцией и связанными с ней процессами миграции населения и культурных моделей.⁷ В данной статье мы рассмотрим, как манифестируются эти элементы многоязычия в современной русской поэзии. Интернационализация всех областей жизни не обошла стороной и Россию, и мы можем установить явное увеличение количества и форм использования иноязычных элементов в художественном творчестве. При этом можно отметить как наличие традиционных, идущих в основном от авангарда приемов использования многоязычия, так и связанных с сегодняшним днем мультилингвальных практик. Ниже

6 Говоря о русской литературе, наиболее характерными примерами здесь, очевидно, будут Владимир Набоков и Иосиф Бродский, хотя можно назвать и обратные случаи, когда эмиграция в другую страну скорее служила катализатором консервации своего национального и языкового самосознания, как это произошло в случае Александра Солженицына.

7 Некоторые исследователи идут так далеко, что видят в усилении роли многоязычия в современном мире знак начала новой постмонолингвальной парадигмы (postmonolingual paradigm), которая должна прийти на смену одноязычию эпохи национальных государств (см. Yildiz, 2012, с. 3).

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предпринята попытка классифицировать эти многообразные проявления многоязычия и разделить их на ограниченное количество групп в зависимости от присущей им доминирующей функциональной направленности.

1 Ситуативное многоязычие

К этой группе можно отнести случаи включения в поэтический текст отдельных слов или фраз из других языков, возникшие под непосредственным влиянием иноязычного окружения и призванные передать аутентичность текста как своего рода документальные свидетельства «иноязычности» ситуации. Очень типичны такие иноязычные отсылки в стихах, связанных с поездкой поэта за границу или какую-либо национальную республику внутри России. Так, в стихах поэта Евгения Степанова, посвященных путешествию в Чувашию, читаем:

ЧУВАШСКАЯ НОТА
алатырь шумерля канаш
алтарь шумеры я ль не ваш
(Степанов, 2015, с. 10)

Чувашские слова в первой строке (в действительности, они представляют собой названия городов) остаются для русских читателей, которые едва ли знакомы с чувашской топонимикой, непонятными, но именно по этой причине они выполняют свою функцию – передают «нерусскую» аутентичность, а также привлекают внимание к звуковой форме и интригуют своей загадочностью, дающей возможность связать названия мелких провинциальных городов с понятиями из сферы сакрального и далекой истории.

Путевые впечатления, связанные с конкретной ситуацией (в данном случае путешествие в немецком поезде), отражены и в следующем стихотворении Сергея Бирюкова:

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ИЗ ПОЕЗДА
германский дух
британский гений
здесь временами ветрено
сквозит
и всюду ожидание мгновений
по направленью к выходу –
exit
из поезда не выглянешь
куда там
задраен люк
и речь чужую раздробляешь
в атом
du kannst zum glük

(Бирюков, 2013, с. 92-93)

Если слово «exit» (очевидно, надпись над дверью в поезде) является здесь не более чем передачей внешнего визуального впечатления от ситуации, то фраза «du kannst zum glük» представляет собой уже внутреннюю проекцию иноязычного звукового поля, которое вторгается в сознание поэта. Интересно, что, отраженная в этом сознании, она оказывается уже не такой чужой: она прекрасно вписывается в рифму и ямбический размер русского текста, а ее запись дается не в нормальной немецкой орфографии, а как внутренняя фонетическая транскрипция с «русским акцентом».

Парадоксальным случаем ситуативного многоязычия является употребление иностранных слов в связи с поездкой по России. Так, стихотворение Степанова «Москва» представляет собой череду иностранных слов, которые передают реальность современного русского быта:

МОСКВА
хайвей
вайфай
окей
гудбай

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пардон
рунет
айфон
айпед

ушу
акай
фэн-шуй
бансай

мерс и
сидан
мерси
сапсан

слова
слова
привет
Москва

(Степанов, 2015, с. 35)

О степени интегрированности этих иностранных заимствований говорит их написание в кириллице, а также ассимиляция в соответствии с русским языковым узусом (например, сокращение Мерседес до разговорной формы «мерс» или написание японского слова «бонсай» в акающей манере московского произношения). Любопытно, что старое название одного из видов охотничьего сокола «сапсан», отмеченное в русском языке по крайней мере с XIX века, поставлено в один ряд с новейшими заимствованиями как обозначение скоростного поезда между Москвой и Петербургом.

2 Интертекстуальное многоязычие

Под ним мы понимаем включение иноязычных фрагментов,

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которые прямо отсылают к каким-либо текстам из других культур. Наиболее типичным случаем здесь будет введение прямых цитат. Такие цитаты часто носят программный характер, отсылая читателя к конкретному тексту, автору или общему кругу идей, с которыми себя ассоциирует поэт. Ввиду концептуальной важности подобных культурных индексов они часто получают структурно значимую позицию, например, выносятся в название:

LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS

(заглавие стихотворения Алексея Парщикова, см. Парщиков, 2014, с. 41)

SELVA SELVAGGIA

(заглавие стихотворного триптиха Ольги Седаковой, см. Седакова, 2010, с. 65)

Вполне естественно, что представитель московской художественной субкультуры Парщиков выбирает цитату из Битлз, а филолог Седакова цитирует Данте – название призвано преактивировать определенную сферу в репертуаре культурных текстов читателя и таким образом снабдить его ключом к восприятию данного поэтического текста.

Иноязычные цитаты используются также и в следующих двух стихотворениях Евгения Степанова, в которых они схожим образом занимают маркированную позицию начала или конца текста:

БРЕЛЬ
Je suis malade
Parfaitement malade

О чем поет мой любимый певец
Он поет о любви

Так не поет больше никто

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Потому что
Он поет обо мне
(Степанов, 2015, с. 13)

СУДЬБА
да я не стал
мастером спорта
виртуозным аккордеонистом
переводчиком-синхронистом
знаменитым поэтом
академиком РАН
многодетным отцом
долларовым миллиардером

ну что же поделаться?!

но иногда
ты лежишь рядом со мной
обнимаешь меня

и я абсолютно счастлив

ne me quitte pas
ne me quitte pas

поет великий Жак Брель
(Степанов, 2015, с. 14)

Помимо указания на определенные эстетические предпочтения автора, эти цитаты из песен бельгийского шансонье Жака Бреля (Jacques Brel) выполняют еще две важные функции, нередко свойственные иноязычным фрагментам: во-первых, цитатная форма повышает «ранг» сказанного, делает банальное выражение чем-то более значительным. Во-вторых, фразы на иностранном языке помогают вербально выразить то, что на родном языке трудно поддается выражению в силу каких-либо моральных, этических

или психологических барьеров. Иноязычная форма сглаживает эти трудности и делает сказанное как бы не вполне сказанным.⁸ Так, во втором стихотворении, после того как лирический субъект кается в целом ряде всевозможных жизненных неудач, для него было бы неловко и унизительно прямо просить женщину о том, чтобы она от него не уходила – в этой деликатной ситуации элегантное французское выражение оказывается как нельзя более подходящим.

3 Креативно-игровое многоязычие

В эту группу входят тексты, в которых иноязычные слова и фрагменты используются как материал, дополняющий ресурсы русского языка и позволяющий найти необычные креативные формы выражения. Как по характеру используемого материала, так и по способам его разработки эта группа выделяется своим разнообразием.

Так, в творчестве поэта Вили Мельникова многоязычие представляет собой отличительную особенность стиля. Важнейшим элементом его творческой стратегии стало позиционирование себя как полиглота, который после ранения на Афганской войне чудесным образом овладел более чем ста языками. Наиболее характерным приемом его поэзии является гибридизация, при которой слова из разных языков, имеющие сходно звучащий элемент, соединяются в один конструкт (сам поэт называет этот прием «муфталингва»):⁹

АССОЛЬВЕЙГ
След слюды не спит до пятой стражи.
Икс конверта тает, снег тая...
Я тебя изваял из вояжей,
неправдоподобная моя!

8 Ritchie и Bhatia обозначают подобные случаи термином «hedging» (Ritchie, Bhatia, 2006, p. 346).

9 Подробнее об этом см.: Никуличева (2015).

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Мелом хмельно-смело измельчённым
испишу испертием испуг,
бросив слово ново-и-speech'ённым <1>
на абракадабразивный круг –

отточить неприка'science fiction <2>
и, до равнодзенствия молясь,
стать у Всепроникшей велорикшей,
для парковки выбрав коновязь.
[...]

<1> [спи:ч] (англ.) – произносимая речь

<2> [сайэнс-фикшен] (англ.) – научная фантастика

(Мельников, 2012)

Интересно, что полиглот Вилли Мельников не забывает, что у его читателей может не все так хорошо обстоять с иностранными языками, и педантично снабжает свои стихи примечаниями с переводами используемых иностранных слов. Хотя эти слова у Мельникова обычно остаются в латинской графике, они хорошо вписываются в русский текст в метрическом отношении и частично ассимилируются за счет элементов русской морфологии. Реальное морфологическое членение не играет при этом никакой роли – в качестве важнейшего критерия словесного комбинирования выступает лишь звуковая форма. Если для поэзии вообще необычные сочетания элементов характерны для уровня тропов и концептов,¹⁰ то Мельников переносит этот принцип на уровень слов и их составных частей.

С элементами слов – действительными или воображаемыми морфемами – работает также и Сергей Бирюков. В следующем стихотворении тематизируется английская морфема *-ing*, которая в последнее время все активнее используется в русском словообразовании.¹¹ Реальные английские заимствования с этим

¹⁰ По выражению Ломоносова, которое стало широко известно в формулировке Тынянова, «сопряжение далековатых идей» (Тынянов, 1977, с. 236).

¹¹ См. Дьяков, Скворецкая (2013). Специально об использовании «инговых» форм в

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суффиксом чередуются с русскими неологизмами, построенные по тому же образцу:

СТИХИ НА «ИНГ»
я слово полюбил маркетинг
оно зеркалинг нашевремлинг
в нем чувствинг умвинг
всей эпохинг
где нужен пилинг
как гуд ивнинг
[...]
(Бирюков, 2009, с. 127)

Любопытно, что это стихотворение предвосхищает некоторые новообразования, которые вошли в русский язык в последующие годы (например, «путинг», «собянинг» и др. (см. Михеев, 2013, с. 14).

Интересным примером «вариаций на тему морфологии» является и следующее стихотворение Бирюкова:

OFF СНЕНОФ
Чехов – ох
ох – Чехов
Чехов – ах
Чехов – ахов
Чехов – смехов
Чехов – охов
Чехов – вздохов
Чехов – ох
Tschehow –
noch
(Бирюков, 2015, с. 224)

Здесь мы имеем дело со своего рода языковым «реимпортом».

современной русской поэзии см.: Григорьев (2005).

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Типичное для русских фамилий окончание -ов, которое раньше в латинизированной записи часто передавалось как -off, например, Chekhoff, Rachmaninoff (сейчас такое написание воспринимается в России как несколько устаревшее и излишне манерное), переосмысляется как английский послелог фразовых глаголов off и возвращается назад в русский. При этом он инициирует целую серию сходно звучащих междометий и их дериватов.

Надо заметить, что использование иностранных имен и географических названий как материала для языковых игр представляет собой прием, к которому Сергей Бирюков прибегает очень охотно и чрезвычайно изобретательно. Нередко они становятся материалом для различных «поэтических этимологий» («Бодрийар – бодр и яр», см. Бирюков, 2009, с. 103) или анаграмм. При этом, аналогично анаграммам в традиционной поэзии или религиозных текстах, ключевое слово анаграммы может быть как эксплицитно выражено, так и отсутствовать, предоставляя читателю возможность самому его дешифровать. Первый случай можно проиллюстрировать следующим стихотворением:

TARTU
O TARTU
TARTU

O TARTU
UTRAT

O UTRO
UTRAT
TARTU
U WRAT

O URARTU
O TURAT
O TUTAR
O RATUT

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TARTU
TUT

(Бирюков, 2013, с.72)

Название эстонского города Тарту (в филологических кругах известного как место работы Юрия Лотмана и центр Тартуско-Московской школы семиотики) вынесено здесь уже в заглавие, а затем обыграно в серии анаграмм и палиндромов. Обращает на себя внимание, что название самого города дается в латинице, хотя в России оно хорошо известно и в кириллическом написании. Более того, выбор латинской формы названия города задает и всю логику развития текста – латинская графика подчиняет себе все стихотворение. Это создает легкий остраняющий эффект, когда знакомые русские слова приобретают налет «иностранности». Выраженная через графику идея «свой, ставший чужим» может звучать и как выражение политических обертонов, что подкрепляется также фонетическим сближением *TARTU UTRAT*, вызывающим ассоциации с распадом Советского Союза.

Напротив, в стихотворении «Внутренности театра» текст не содержит самого анаграммируемого слова, но имя одной из покровительниц театра музы Мельпомены однозначно прочитывается в заключительных строках:

ВНУТРЕННОСТИ ТЕАТРА
Излом ноги. Изгиб шва.
Марионетки боли.
Ниточки, бахромка. Крууужева...
Трусики, растекшиеся
на поверхности столика.
В зеркале гладь профиля
груди.
Мельк млика.
Мельк

(Бирюков, 2009, с. 26)

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Еще более сложный случай анаграмматического кодирования иностранного имени можно отметить в стихах Сергея Бирюкова, посвященных лингвистическим мотивам (лингвосерия), которые заканчиваются следующими строками:

сн сн сн сн сн сн сн
es schneit
(Бирюков, 2009, с. 24)

Амбивалентность графем *сн*, которые могут быть прочитаны как в кириллице, так и в латинице, сближает их, с одной стороны, с русским словом *снег* (на это, возможно, указывает стоящее рядом немецкое выражение *es schneit*). Однако с другой стороны, их латинское прочтение является принятым сокращенным обозначением Швейцарии (от лат. *Confoederatio Helvetica*), что в контексте этой «лингвосерии», где речь идет о *parole* и *lingua* (sic! Там же, с. 23) ведет читателя к имени знаменитого швейцарского лингвиста, который, помимо прочего, известен своими работами об анаграммах (Соссюр, 1977). Включение в текст иностранных имен в качестве анаграмм можно рассматривать и как своеобразную разновидность интертекстуальных референций, метонимически репрезентирующих определенный корпус текстов или культурную парадигму.

4 Культурно-идентичностное многоязычие

Наконец, можно выделить еще одну группу использования многоязычия, которую мы обозначим как «культурно-идентичностное». Использование иноязычных элементов служит здесь для выражения тех аспектов лирического субъекта, которые связаны с его самоидентификацией и ценностной установкой в отношении различных культурных контекстов. В количественном отношении эта группа не столь значительна, как предыдущая – скорее даже можно сказать, что тексты подобного рода представлены весьма скупо и наблюдается прежде всего у русских

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поэтов, живущих за границей. Так, тема поиска идентичности часто оказывается связана с многоязычием в творчестве поэта Евгения Степанова, который длительное время жил в различных европейских странах:

РОЗА АУСЛЕНДЕР

Инне Иохвидович

Поэт Роза Ауслендер (Розалия Шерцер),
жившая в Америке, Европе
и Черновицком гетто,
почему-то Ваши стихи мне оказались наи-
более
созвучны,
и я часто твержу их наизусть.

Жаль, что я не могу взять Ваш псевдоним
(Иностранка, Иностранец).

В Германии
Я часто говорю:

Ich weis nicht,
Ich bin Ausländer.

(Степанов, 2015, с. 6)

Здесь лирическое «я», размышляя о своем положении иностранца, ставит себя в ряд других поэтов-изгнанников, устанавливая через перевод имени поэтессы Розы Ауслендер исторические, интертекстуальные и культурно-идентичностные параллели. Характерно, что эта роль иностранца уже во втором поэтическом поколении (так как само имя *Роза Ауслендер* является псевдонимом, выбор которого также был продиктован осознанием своей чуждости). Следует добавить, что Степанов посвящает свое стихотворение еще одному поэту-эмигранту, украинской поэтессе Инне Иохвидович, живущей в Германии. Это пронизывающее

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время и пространство самоощущение поэта как чужестранца и изгнанника заставляет вспомнить об известной строке Марины Цветаевой, что все «поэты – жида» (Цветаева, 1983, с. 185)

Следующее стихотворение Степанова, которое также затрагивает вопрос культурной идентичности, посвящено прозаическим будням русского эмигранта в Германии:

EIN TAG IN BERLIN (moderne Gedichte)

Guten Tag
Tschus
Guten Tag
Tschus
Guten Tag
Danke schön
Entschuldigen Sie bitte
Guten Tag
Sparkasse
Entschuldigen Sie bitte
Tschus
S-Bahn
Entschuldigen Sie bitte
U-Bahn
Entschuldigen Sie bitte
Какие же вокруг козлы!
Чего-чего?! Сам козел!
Entschuldigen Sie bitte
Danke schön
Nächste Station Halemweg
Zurück bleiben bitte
Links
Entschuldigen Sie bitte
Danke schön
Netto
Danke schön

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Aldi
Danke schön
Jobcenter
Guten Tag
Danke schön
Termin
Entschuldigen Sie bitte
Danke schön
Guten Tag
Tschus
Guten Tag
Tschus

(Степанов, 2015, с. 19-20)

Встреча двух языков и культур подается здесь в предельно конфронтационной манере. Длинный ряд немецких выражений вежливости и размеренного распорядка дня вдруг прерывается взрывом ярости и оскорблений, который маркируется переходом на русский. Два языка и два типа дискурса являются здесь выразителями контрастных моделей организации жизни и культуры поведения. Вежливая, но пустая и скучная (в восприятии лирического субъекта) повседневность немецкого языка сталкивается с эмоционально интенсивной, но грубо-агрессивной сферой русского. Несомненная ирония и самоирония этого стихотворения свидетельствует о расколе субъекта – ему не удастся выбрать сторону в этом конфликте и идентифицировать себя с какой-либо культурной моделью. Это стихотворение интересно еще и с точки зрения перевернутого соотношения между двумя языками – чужой для поэта немецкий язык здесь явно доминирует в количественном отношении, однако решающим все же становится не столько сам текст, сколько факт и характер перехода на другой язык.

5 Заключение

Подведем итоги. Мы видим, что в современной русской поэзии элементы многоязычия довольно активно используются некоторыми поэтами в различных формах и функциях. Вероятно, можно говорить и об увеличении количества иноязычных включений в современной поэзии по сравнению, например, с русскоязычной поэзией советского периода. В этом смысле Россия стоит в русле того же тренда на глобализацию и интернационализацию, который мы наблюдаем во многих других странах.

Однако рассмотрение форм и функций многоязычия, проведенное выше, выявляет и любопытную специфику. Подавляющее большинство проявлений многоязычия имеет либо чисто внешний характер (ситуативное многоязычие), либо же относится к сфере эстетики и культурных референций (креативное и интертекстуальное многоязычие). Лишь сравнительно небольшая группа культурно-идентичностного многоязычия использует его для тематизации социопсихологических аспектов, причем касающихся преимущественно отдельного субъекта или личности.

При сравнении, например, с американской многоязычной поэзией, бросается в глаза явная лакуна. В русской поэзии практически полностью отсутствует область, в которой многоязычие используется как средство артикуляции широких социальных и политических проблем, таких как колониальное наследие, дискриминация или защита прав национальных меньшинств – всех тех тем, которые так типичны для современной американской и в значительной части западноевропейской мультилингвальной поэзии. Так, в новейшем обзоре мультилингвализма в современной американской поэзии (Spahr, 2015) дается анализ поэзии авторов, создающих «literature in English that includes other languages» (там же, с. 1123). Характер отношения поэтов к этим «другим языкам» и степень их владения ими весьма различны – это могут быть двуязычные эмигранты с преобладанием не-английского языка или так назы-

ваемые «heritage speakers», у которых английский является доминантным. Наконец, это могут быть поэты, вовсе не имеющие объективных этнических или культурных связей с используемыми ими языками. Среди них представлены авторы, относящиеся к самым разным этническим и социальным группам: испаноязычные «чиканос», представители гавайского или индейского коренного населения, новые корейские или старые польские иммигранты. Но за всем этим разнообразием бросается в глаза одна общность. Ведущие функции использования многоязычия в современной американской поэзии так или иначе связаны с психологической, социально-критической или политической проблематикой. На первом плане стоят вопросы поиска индивидуальной, этнической или национальной идентичности, колониальная история или постколониальная действительность, борьба за права национальных меньшинств и т. д. Вопросы собственно эстетического характера занимают лишь маргинальное место и явно играют служебную роль для выполнения социально-политических функций. Как отмечает Spahr, «literature in English that includes other languages [...] is under the influence of the hothouse of the poetry of the late 1960s and early 1970s that is associated with minority cultural activist movements. Many of these movements see poetry as one genre among many that can be used for cultural representation, cultural uplift, and preservation of the culturally disenfranchised» (там же, с. 1132).

Для современной русской поэзии вся эта проблематика мультикультурализма и национальной эмансипации остается во многом чуждой. Очевидно, что такая особенность имеет глубинные причины, которые связаны как с внутриязыковыми, так и с внешними (в первую очередь историко-политическими) факторами. При объективном взгляде мы должны будем признать, что Россия в значительной мере была и остается пространством языкового монизма. Несмотря на формальное признание прав других языков, в России, по крайней мере, в ее преимущественно русскоязычных областях, употребление национальных языков не приветствуется и является минусом для социального статуса. Обратим внимание на то, что даже у поэтов-билингвов, таких как

Геннадий Айги, Бахыт Кенжеев, не говоря уже о «heritage speakers» типа Тимура Кибирова, мы практически не встречаем стихов, в которых они хотя бы спорадически использовали свой язык. Эта имперская модель предполагает, что поэт из «национальной окраины», приехавший в метрополию, должен подчиниться ее культуре и языку и по возможности не акцентировать внимание на своем иноязычном происхождении.¹²

Таким образом, внутри русскоязычного пространства поэтическое многоязычие остается ограничено довольно узким спектром рассмотренных выше функций: передача аутентичности (ситуативное многоязычие), интертекстуальные отсылки к другим культурам, а также креативно-игровые моменты. К тому же и сам выбор языков оказывается довольно ограниченным и отражает национально-культурные иерархии – допуская многоязычие, русские поэты обращаются в основном к «престижным» западноевропейским языкам. Так, Геннадий Айги в своих стихах вполне мог использовать элементы французского языка, но не своего родного чувашского.¹³

Пожалуй, единственно, кто начинает пользоваться палитрой многоязычия для артикуляции социально-политических и личностных аспектов идентичности, это поэты, которые живут за границами русскоязычного пространства и сами оказались в положении меньшинства (см. приведенные выше примеры из

12 Это верно даже в тех случаях, когда изначально поэтическим языком поэта являлся его родной национальный язык. Как отмечает Азарова, «[...] переход билингвов на другой язык не так редок, и он чаще всего маркирован более престижным статусом языка и литературной традиции на нем. В советское время поэты-билингвы из национальных республик, пишущие на национальных языках, тем не менее в качестве преимущественного поэтического языка выбирали русский, т. е. переходили на язык титульной нации» (Азарова, 2016, с. 259). Остается добавить, что и в постсоветское время ситуация практически не изменилась – см. поправки в российскую конституцию, специально подчеркивающие особый статус русского языка как «языка государствообразующего народа» (Закон «О поправке к Конституции Российской Федерации», ст. 68. <http://duma.gov.ru/news/48045/>).

13 Использование «этнических» языков санкционировано в основном лишь с имитационно-пародийными целями, когда русский текст стилизуется под примитивную или ошибочную речь «инородца», будь то с налетом пренебрежения (как в случае с виртуальным кавказским поэтом Эбеккуевым, см. <http://vk.com/ebekkuiev>) или же с руссоистской апологетикой «примитива» (Евгений Клюев в своих стихах об индейцах Пираха, см. Клюев, 2010, с. 73–75).

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творчества Евгения Степанова, связанные с его впечатлениями от жизни в Германии). Эта группа включает в себя и русскоязычных поэтов, проживающих в бывших советских национальных республиках, ведущее положение в которых сейчас занимают другие языки.

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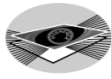
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INTERFACE

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[received March 30, 2020
accepted June 10, 2020

ГРЕЧКО



Transcultural Aspects in Chang Yi-Jen's 張以仁 Poetry

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Abstract

The focus of the present paper is on the poetic oeuvre of the scholar and poet Chang Yi-Jen (Zhang Yiren 張以仁, 1930–2009). Born in Hunan (Mainland China), he had become familiar with the art of writing traditional Chinese poetry when still a boy. After the end of the Chinese civil war, he was relocated, with his family, to Taiwan. Notwithstanding some early and modest poetic attempts, he eventually began writing huge amounts of poetry in traditional forms around 1987. This late period of creativity lasted for 20 more years, until the very end of his life. His most active phase as a poet thus coincides with the political opening in Taiwan, beginning in the late 1980s.

Even though Chang Yi-Jen mostly applied the formal rules of traditional Chinese *shi* 詩 and *ci* 詞 poetry, in his works we encounter several peculiarities, which can be characterized as “transculturality”. Firstly, there are many direct references to Western culture, including impressions from his travels to the United States. Secondly, he tends to adapt elements from traditional Chinese culture, which also serve as a contrast to modernity, often causing a humorous effect on the reader. Thus, I will be able to demonstrate both diachronic and synchronic aspects of transculturality, which—due to Chang Yi-Jen’s affinity to comment on contemporary events—also can serve as a mirror of contemporary Taiwanese history.

Keywords: Transculturality, Classicist Poetry, Taiwan, Chang Yi-Jen, Sinophone Poetry

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Transcultural Aspects in Chang Yi-Jen's 張以仁 Poetry

In order to overcome the traditional model of distinct “cultures”, seen as more or less homogenous “spheres” interacting or conflicting with each other, Wolfgang Welsch introduced the concept of transculturality in the 1990s (Welsch, 1992). This theory is based on the realization that cultures penetrate each other on various levels; hence, two random persons with different cultural backgrounds might have significantly more cultural characteristics in common than two individuals from the same cultural region. As an alternative to the traditional spherical cultural model, Welsch envisions a flexible cultural network with various knots and connections on all levels. When analyzing cultural phenomena from the perspective of transculturality, a typical observation would identify a general trend towards hybridity, as each culture can possibly contain elements from any other cultural field within itself, and many interactions are taking place within a context that cannot be firmly linked to a single cultural sphere. The transcultural viewpoint is fundamentally distinct from multi- or interculturality, as the latter approaches still suppose the preexistence of mutually exclusive cultural core systems, before they are able to engage in interaction. The effects of transculturality become especially apparent in the modern age of globalization, with its convenient instruments of global transportation and communication; but, in fact, symptoms of transculturality can be observed in any time period throughout the history of humankind.¹

Despite the abundance of transcultural impact factors in our present time, in many parts of the world there is an obvious trend to maintain the traditional model of spherical cultures, in particular by those championing “national characteristics”—for example the organs of the Communist Party in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which display an inflationary usage of the term “Chinese characteristics” (*Zhongguo tese* 中國特色). Although this point of view only partly reflects factual re-

1 For a concise summary of the concept of transculturality see Welsch (2017, pp. 10–30).

ality, these “national characteristics” serve as a psychological reference point for large parts of the population, and the subjective feeling of a national identity still works as a binding agent that may keep societies stable and rather uniform. In fact, the Chinese cultural region—in particular the PRC—is currently one of the best examples for this kind of illusionary monoculturality, where among its inhabitants the notion of a singular “Chinese” culture in interaction with a perceived (but in fact constructed) “Western” culture is very widespread, even among scholars, as most intellectuals in the “Greater China” area stick to the firm belief that they belong to the realm of “Chinese culture” (*Zhonghua wenhua* 中華文化) being diametrically opposed to “Western culture” (*Xifang wenhua* 西方文化). Although it is widely acknowledged among these scholars that what would be considered as “Western culture” has had a crucial impact on East Asia, in particular on China, from the mid-19th century until today, but even those who try to foster “intercultural studies” tend to argue that certain literary works and genres, historical constellations or philosophical ideas can be considered to be genuinely “Chinese” or “Western”, and together with these labels, should be treated as study objects in the academic discourse. The social impact also is undeniably strong: in the PRC, nationalistic cultural campaigns (like the so-called “Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation”, *Zhonghua minzu weida fuxing* 中華民族偉大復興) have gained a huge momentum since its very beginnings in 1949. Similar trends had emerged in the Republic of China (i.e. Taiwan) as well in the late 1960s (at that time called “Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement”, *Zhonghua wenhua fuxing yundong* 中華文化復興運動), and still today the population in Taiwan deems many cultural elements in their society to be genuinely “Chinese” (*Zhonghua wenhua* 中華文化, or even *Zhongguo wenhua* 中國文化). Societies in the global Western regions (i.e. Europe and North America) at first glance seem to be better equipped to critically reflect on the very existence of cultural boundaries, yet many scholars still ignore or downplay the impact of cultural elements originating in the Eastern hemisphere have had on their own cultural history and identity.

In the present paper I am going to apply the concept of transculturality on the works of Chang Yi-Jen (Zhang Yiren 張以仁, 1930–2009), a

contemporary scholar-poet from Taiwan. I have selected him for this case study, because at first glance he seems to be one of the least probable examples of transcultural interaction: Firstly, as a scholar he was very well-versed in the Chinese literary tradition and more firmly rooted in the “Chinese tradition” than most other contemporary poets from Taiwan. Secondly, he was politically conservative, with a Kuomintang (Guomindang 國民黨) background. But I will showcase that even in his poetry we can observe a very strong and obvious impact of transculturality. An important catalyst were his travels both to Mainland China and to the United States of America.

In order to display transcultural factors in Chang’s poetry, it is useful to concentrate on the perspective of the “material world”, which distils down to the central question, how lyrical works express concepts of space and time. This approach is especially promising, since notions of space and time have always played a central role in the history of Chinese poetry (Liu, 1979).

1 Life and Work of Chang Yi-Jen

Our protagonist, the scholar and poet Chang Yi-Jen, was born in 1930 in Hunan (Mainland China) into the family of the high-ranking Kuomintang military officer Zhang Yangming 張揚明 (1912-?), who was quite fond of poetry himself, and even had published some verses.² Under the guidance of his father, Chang Yi-Jen had become familiar with the art of writing traditional Chinese poetry when still a boy. Later, in 1949, after the end of the Chinese Civil War, he was relocated, together with his family, to Taiwan. While the quantity of his early poetry was rather modest, at the age of sixty years he eventually began to produce huge amounts of verses written in traditional Chinese genres. The stimulus for this late period of creativity was a 16-day-long visit to Mainland China in July 1990, together with a group of professors from Taiwan

2 Zhang Yangming 張揚明: *Sketches from Floating Around, Pinggeng yin cao* 萍梗吟草 (1968). He also authored prose collections, mainly dealing with his experiences during military campaigns, like *Arriving in the North-West, Dao Xibei lai* 到西北來 (1937), and *Returning Home, Guilai* 歸來 (1948), as well as philological studies like the *Critical Review on the Laozi, Laozi kaozheng* 老子考證 (1985).

(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 404); a voyage that led him to the cities of Kunming 昆明, Chengdu 成都 (in particular the iconic “Straw Hut of Du Fu” *Shaoling caotang* 少陵草堂—named after the famous Tang poet Du Fu 杜甫, 712-770), Xi’an 西安, and Beijing 北京, including the nearby Great Wall (Zhang Yiren, 2010, pp. 5–9). Chang Yi-Jen wrote merely fourteen poems during this visit; but having recovered his poetic voice, he composed around one thousand pieces in the remaining twenty years of his life. His most active phase as a poet thus coincides with the era after the political opening in Taiwan in the late 1980s, after the lifting of martial law in 1987, and the period after the Tian’anmen 天安門 Incident in Beijing in 1989. The works composed since the year 1990 comprise more than 99% of Chang’s complete poetic oeuvre.

He and his beloved wife Chou Fu-Mei (Zhou Fumei 周富美, 1936–2018, born and raised in Taiwan) worked as professors at the Chinese Department (*Zhongwen xi* 中文系) of National Taiwan University (Guoli Taiwan Daxue 國立臺灣大學), where Chang Yi-Jen specialized mainly in the field of traditional Chinese poetry, especially *ci* poetry of the Song dynasty (*Song ci* 宋詞). In this context, he published many articles on the famous traditional *ci* poetry collection *Songs from Between the Flowers*, *Huajian ci* 花間詞, and his essays on this subject were published in two volumes entitled *Essays on the Huajian ci* (Zhang Yiren, 1996) followed by a supplementary volume (Zhang Yiren, 2006).³ His academic work was awarded the prestigious Academic Award of the Ministry of Education (*Jiaoyubu xueshujiang* 教育部學術獎) in 2007, two years before his death in September 2009.

A quite extensive biography, composed by his former student Yang Chin-Lung (Yang Jinlong 楊晉龍) in the traditional biographical *nianpu* 年譜 style, appeared as appendix to the collection of his poetic works, the *Collection of Chang Yi-Jen’s shi and ci poetry* (Zhang, 2010, pp. 647–671).⁴

3 Another research focus was Chinese traditional linguistics; his corresponding works can be found in Zhang Yiren (2012).

4 The Shanghai edition from 2012 also has a biography of Chang Yi-Jen in the appendix (Zhang Yiren, 2012, pp. 345–356), which includes a few more events that occurred after his decease.

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As source material for Chang's poetic works, I shall use here the very same edition, which is carefully edited and was prepared by his students and his wife. It also includes some additional notes, which are very instructive to understand the poems in the context of his biography.

As the focus of my paper is dedicated to the question of how Chang's transcultural experiences are reflected in his poetic work, I shall concentrate on the pieces composed during his travels abroad. He traveled to the U.S. several times to meet Chinese (or Taiwanese) colleagues, to attend scholarly conventions, and also to visit the family of his son, who had settled down in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. During his first visit in the United States in 1976, he did not compose any poems (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 11), but his three later travels to the U.S. are represented in his poem collection *Zhang Yiren xiansheng shi ci ji*: The journey in the year 1992 yielded 12 poems, contained in a small collection entitled *Various Songs from my Voyage to America and California* (*Mei Jia zhi xing zayong* 美加之行雜詠; Zhang Yiren, 2010, pp. 11-13); the poetic output from the following visit in 1995, entitled *Poetic Sketches Recalling my Travels to America* (*Lü Mei shicao ganhuai pian* 旅美詩草感懷篇; Zhang Yiren, 2010 pp. 38-42) consists of 20 poems; and during the last visit in 1999, he composed poems divided into two sections, *Visiting Stanford University Again* (*Chong you Shidanfu daxue* 重遊史丹福大學, 5 poems) and *Joyful Family Reunion in Washington, D.C.* (*Huafu huanju* 華府歡聚, 9 poems; Zhang Yiren, 2010, pp. 215-219). Formally, all these poems belong to the genre of traditional *shi* poetry, with five or seven characters per verse, and typically 4 or 8 verses in total. Compared to original works from the Tang dynasty, the language is rather simple, which is characteristic for "classicist" poetry from the late 20th or 21st century. However, Chang still observes the traditional Tang end rhymes in most cases.

The published *Zhang Yiren xiansheng shi ci ji* contains also *ci* poetry, which amounts to 25% of the total lyrical corpus of Chang Yi-Jen, but there are no published *ci* poems that were written during his visits to the U.S.; obviously he must have felt that *ci* poetry was not an appropriate genre to transform his inter- and transcultural experiences into verse.

2 Traditional Poetic Genres in the Contemporary Sinophone World

Chang specialized in “classical” poetic forms, in particular the Tang-style *shi* 詩 (*Tang shi* 唐詩, with subgenres like the “Chinese quatrain” *jueju* 絕句 and “regular verse” *lushi* 律詩, prominent in China since the Tang Dynasty 618–907) and the Song-style *ci* (*Song ci* 宋詞, especially prominent since the Song Dynasty 960–1296).

Here, it seems appropriate to write some words on the role of “classical lyrical” forms in present-day Chinese poetry—or in a broader sense “Sinophone poetry”, i.e. verses written in one of the Chinese language varieties—and recent academic research in this field, mainly because studies on contemporary Chinese poetry mostly focus on “modern style” poetry (*xin shi* 新詩). Recently, there have been more and more—though still few—attempts to write on contemporary poetic works, written in traditional Chinese lyrical styles (see for example Yang Zhiyi & Ma Dayong, 2018, and the current project by Frank Kraushaar on classicist internet poetry). Accordingly, I shall adopt the term “classicist”, a term that has been proposed by a group of scholars and advanced students around Yang Zhiyi (the so-called “Frankfurt consensus”; Yang Zhiyi, 2015). Many contemporary poets regard “classicist” Chinese poetry as anachronistic and consider the pieces of this genre as mediocre in value. But aside from value judgments, we should at least recognize the fact that these forms still are quite popular today, hence contemporary “classicist” poetry can be used as source material to be utilized for diachronic studies in Chinese literature: When comparing modern “classicist” poetry with classical verses from the distant past, we at least profit from the advantage that the striking difference in form between modern new poetry and classical poetry remains no longer the focus of observation, which makes it easier to shape out other characteristic changes and developments. In the present study, however, I focus on classicist poetry in order to demonstrate more vividly the broad impact of transculturality.

3 Spaces

It is very obvious that transcultural experiences preferably happen in a corresponding spatial environment. We can distinguish roughly between (concrete) geographical and natural surroundings creating a landscape environment, on the one hand, and more abstract social or cultural spaces, which are very often linked to or influenced by iconic cultural symbols, on the other hand. These images are not necessarily functioning as part of a “cultural memory” as an institution (using a notion by Assmann, 2008, 110f.), since the poet does not identify himself with American culture and rather takes on an outside perspective. Still, Chang’s poetry is abundant in such examples.

3.1 Landscape

3.1.1 Parks, Mountains and Rivers

The factual physical environment in North America is depicted by the poet Chang Yi-Jen as quite impressive, and explicitly serves as source of inspiration, which is frequently reflected in the titles of his poems. Even though the parks, mountains, rivers, and forests are not cultural items *per se*; but in his poems they appear to be transcultural in the sense that distinct features of a foreign geographic region are nevertheless perceived from a Chinese point of view. His travels mostly took place in the Washington, D.C. area, where his son was living, around Stanford (in the San Francisco Bay area) and also led our poet to a number of famous touristic locations in the U.S. and around Vancouver in Canada.

Chang Yi-Jen’s travels also include a visit of Disney Park (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 12), where he depicts his experiences during the enjoyable leisure visit in words, resulting in the long poem *Visiting the Disney Park* (*You Disinai leyuan* 遊狄斯耐樂園), consisting of 20 verses of 5 characters each. The poet’s enjoyment reaches its peak when in another poem he describes California as paradise, albeit with some dangers lurking beyond the surface: “If there were no earthquakes, this place would be

a paradise” 「...若其無地震，此處即天堂」 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 42).

3.1.2 Animals and Plants

Animals and plants have served as important symbolic markers in traditional Chinese poetry since its very beginnings, which can be related to the everyday experience in ancient Chinese rural society (Kwong, 2003). As soon as living beings typical for Chinese traditional literature dwell in a foreign context or landscape, they naturally form a transcultural image and generate a certain literary tension. The physical space in Chang Yi-Jen's poetry is densely populated with plants (trees and flowers) and animals, ranging from small insects (*Visitor from Abroad*, *Yixiang ke* 異鄉客; Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 39) and fighting snails (*Mountain Forest*, *Shanlin* 山林; Zhang Yiren, 2010) to larger species. In fact, the most common animals mentioned in his poems are birds. For example, the duck serves as symbol of marital love, which is depicted as the speaker strolls around a lake together with his dear wife.⁵

Much more often still the (sea)gull (*hai'ou* 海鷗, or *ou* 鷗) appears, being a permanent wanderer in the skies, which serves as self-reference for the unsteady traveler longing to return home one day.⁶ This motive was already very popular in the poetry of the Tang dynasty, particularly in the works of Du Fu, who is also famous for his line “Floating around, whom do I resemble to? A single gull between Heaven and Earth” 飄飄何所似，天地一沙鷗。⁷ Even though the motive of the seagull appears in Chinese literature centuries before Du Fu, I have no doubt that Chang

5 Cf. the line “In jest, the green duck chases after the couple in from of the islet”, 青鳧戲逐洲前侶; see the poem *When Visiting the Washington Monument State Park with [my Wife] Fu-mei I Obtained Two jueju*, *Yu Fumei tong you Huashengdun jintianbei gongyuan de er jueju* 與富美同遊華盛頓紀念碑公園得二絕句 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 11).

6 Cf. the line “Beyond the Clouds Ascends a Pair of Seagulls” 雲外過雙鷗, in *Visiting the Great Falls Scenic Area, You da pubu qu* 遊大瀑布區 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 11). Other examples can be found in *Travelling Seagull, Lü ou* 旅鷗 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 42), *Visiting the Statue of Liberty in the Port of New York I was Inspired and Obtained Three jueju*, *Ye Niuyue gang Ziyou nūshen xiang you gan de san jueju* 謁紐約港自由女神像有心得三絕句 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 13; see also translation below), *My Grandson Yuan Joyful Playing, Yuan sun you xing* 元孫遊興 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 217), and *News from Taiwan, Taiwan xiaoxi* 臺灣消息 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 218).

7 A stanza from Du Fu's poem *Feelings While Traveling at Night, Lü ye shu huai* 旅夜書懷 (Du Fu, 1979, p. 1228f.), which has been translated and analyzed very frequently, see for example Mc Craw (1992, p. 64).

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is consciously referring to the famous master of Tang poetry: the abundance of allusions does not allow a different interpretation.⁸ But of course this does not mean that Chang is trying to copy Du Fu's style, as he still employs his modern adaptation of the formal Tang verse rules.

The following example demonstrates very well how the traditional motif of the seagull and the Moon—another central topos in classical Tang poetry—are interwoven into a factual place on the Californian coast, playing with motifs from the Chinese past:

Travelling Seagull

The bright moon sends its lonely light upon the ridges of the mountains,
a flock of seagulls arises from the treetops.
The Pacific Ocean welcomes the waves approaching from Eastern neighbours.
If I just had a boat heading back home to enter the inebriated eyes!

《旅鷗》

曉月孤明山脊上，
旅鷗羣起樹梢頭。
太平洋接東鄰浪，
可有歸舟入醉眸。

(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 42)

This poem was written at the sight of the Californian coast. The most intriguing picture from this poem appears in the third verse: The “waves approaching from Eastern neighbours” (or literally “Eastern-neighbour-waves”) could refer to waves running eastward from Taiwan (or China) across the entire Pacific Ocean until reaching the shores of California. This figure plays with the paradox that a region normally considered to be “Far East” is, in fact, located in the far west of the beholder's location, but is still emitting eastward waves. Alternatively, from the perspective of Taiwan, one could consider the “Eastern neighbour” to

8 Just to give an example: All motives contained in the famous verse “in this sorrowful autumn ten thousand miles from home I am a vagrant traveler” 萬里悲秋常作客 by Du Fu (*Ascent, Deng gao* 登高, Du Fu, 1979, p. 1776) appear in Chang's poem *Dwelling in a Foreign Country, Yiguo chunqiu* 異國春秋 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 38). I will discuss still more connections to Du Fu later in this paper.

be California, from which waves emanate to meet the Pacific Ocean located in the Western direction.

The fourth verse obviously refers to a boat, which the poet might embark on, to journey back from North America to his home in East Asia, but at the same time alludes to his yearning to leave Taiwan and return back to his old home in Hunan on the Mainland. All in all, the reader encounters a combination of geographical spaces, interwoven by the seagull motif. Still another characteristic element of traditional Tang poetry can be observed here: this piece can be readily interpreted as landscape depiction, which resembles a piece of traditional Chinese painting.

3.2 Social Environment

3.2.1 Persons, Family and Friends

Among all persons mentioned in these poems, the central part is played by his family and—to a somewhat lesser degree—by his friends. In particular, there are several poems specifically devoted to his close family members. This comes as no surprise, since from the Chinese cultural perspective, the family has always been very crucial to define one's own social status. Chang Yi-Jen even reflects on this and states in the introduction to one of his poems:

My family is scattered, their homes spread over two countries, separated by dense mountain ridges and vast waters, by thousands and tens of thousands of miles. Facing the inconvenience not to be able to see each other every morning and evening, I cannot be but full of sorrow. When I now compose poems, I only record the joy of family reunion. A human being's life has already enough sorrows and it is not appropriate to use the [beautiful] melody of string and wind instruments to note down the sound of tears and pain of separation.

骨肉離散，分居兩國，隔重山遠水，千里萬里，無朝夕相見之

便，則又不無遺憾焉。今為詩但誌其團聚之樂，以人生已多愁苦，不堪絲竹之聲譜啼淚離情以出也。⁹

Thus, even though being homesick in Washington, he focuses on his writing about enjoyable experiences during family gatherings (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 216). All these poems on family and friends are positive, sometimes even full of humor. His family consists of his son, grandson, daughter-in-law, as well as the family dog named Qiubi 裘比.¹⁰ Likewise, his friends and colleagues evoke positive emotions in his mind (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 215f).

3.2.2 Other People

During his stay in the United States, Chang apparently had almost no interaction with locals. One reason certainly is the language barrier, but another might be a general lack of stimulus to get into contact with other cultures. The only foreign individuals mentioned in his poems are the teacher and a fellow student in his English class, which he attended merely for a few days.¹¹

Impressions while visiting an English language class for one week

Once again, I study the foreign tongue, “yi-ya”—I cannot pronounce it clearly.
One week I have learned the sound of the Western soil, me, the 60-year-old school
boy.

Beidi [= Betty] is a good teacher, Majia [= Margarita] is performing well.

In the room are mostly women, their nimble tongues like parrots.

《補習英語一週有感》
再學番人語，伊呀說不清。

9 Preface to *Joyful Family Reunion in Washington, D.C.*, *Huafu huanju jiu shou* 華府歡聚九首 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, pp. 217). Similar statements can be found in his collected essays, e. g. *Echoes of Doggerel Verses*, *Dayoushi de huixiang* 打油詩的回響 (Zhang Yiren, 2010a, pp. 181-183, here p. 183).

10 See the poem [*My Son*] *Hanyi Keeps a Dog named Qiubi, who is Brave and Robust, Guarding his Master Well, but still is Gentle and Obedient to the Family Members*, *Hanyi xu quan Qiubi jiaojian duoli shan wei zhu dui jia ren roushun zhongjin* 漢宜蓄犬裘比矯健多力善衛主對家人柔順忠謹 (ibid.).

11 The preface to this poem mentions a Russian fellow student named “Nargarida” (sic!) in Latin letters, obviously a misspelling of “Margarita”, which illustrates the intercultural challenges typically faced by East Asians living in Western countries.

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一週洋土調，六十老童生。
蓓蒂能施教，瑪嘉善表情。
同窗多女性，靈慧舌如鸚。

(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 41)

In this humorous piece, the English language is called “sound of the Western soil” (*Yang tu diao* 洋土調), a term encompassing all Western languages ignoring their diversity—which fits to a cliché perspective of the “West” being a monolithic unit (similarly, Westerners tend to use terms like “Asian”, “East Asian” or even “Eastern” or “Oriental” culture, when speaking about China). Despite his low level of willingness to engage into serious interaction with the anglophone culture, this failed classroom encounter would likely not have happened without the significance of English as global *lingua franca*. It is remarkable that this brief experience resulted in the composition of a poem with obvious signs of a transcultural impact on the protagonist.

3.2.3 Cultural Spaces

During Chang Yi-Jen’s visits, the U.S. is basically perceived as a cultural extension of China, with a dominant focus on “China towns” and his Chinese family members and friends. Furthermore, there is a cliché reception of Western culture, aside from the classroom experience just mentioned, also represented by iconic sites like the Statue of Liberty or Disney Park, which he found actually quite enjoyable.¹²

In the poems, China (in Chinese named “Middle Country”, *Zhongguo* 中國) is very often simply called “the country” (*guo* 國), which is common usage in traditional and contemporary China (cf. the popular expressions “country studies” *guoxue* 國學, “within the country” *guonei* 國內, “outside the country” *guowai* 國外, referring to “Chinese studies”, “within China”, “outside China” respectively).

Chang also emphasizes the Chinese roots of the people of Chinese origin living in North America:

¹² *You Disinai leyuan* 遊狄斯耐樂園 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 12).

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Verses inspired by the Annual Meeting of Chinese Culture

The conference of Chinese culture shows the brilliance of our country,
two hundred specialists are assembled in one hall.
They are interested to do research and to teach, whose plan might this be?
The Red and the Yellow Emperor are root and stalk of their family.¹³

《全美華文年會書感》
華文會議國之光，二百專家聚一堂。
研教有心誰畫策，親親根蒂是炎黃。
(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 11)

The poet had to face a more complicated clash of cultures during his visit of the Butchart Gardens on Vancouver Island:

Inspired by a visit of the Butchart Gardens in Canada

... The landscape traverses both the Eastern Ocean¹⁴ and the West.
It is a spiritual voyage full of visual impressions and poetic feelings.
Who cares about the culture and artifacts of us Chinese?
We forever remember the old sage, who sought to abolish the weapons.

《遊加拿大布查德花園有感》
...景歷東洋又西式，神遊畫意與詩情。
吾華風物誰憐惜，永念前賢欲去兵。
(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 13)

During his visit of the park, which contains several sections devoted to a specific cultural region, Chang merely discovered installations inspired by Italian and Japanese culture (Zhang Yiren, 2010, comment 2 on p. 13), without any reference to Chinese cultural elements. For a Western visitor this fact might not even be recognizable, because he or she probably would not be able to clearly distinguish between Japanese

13 This expression refers to the mythical emperors Shennong 神農 (also called Yandi 炎帝, or “Red Emperor”), and the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 黃帝), who are seen as earliest ancestors of the Chinese bloodline, and also originators of Chinese culture, like in the expression “Children and grandchildren of the Red and the Yellow Emperor” (*Yan Huang zisun* 炎黃子孫).

14 “Eastern Ocean” (*Dong yang* 東洋) is a traditional Chinese metaphor for Japan and its surrounding areas.

and Chinese cultural objects, as they all are subsumed under the label of “(Far) Eastern culture”. Furthermore, we should note that the Butchart Gardens in Vancouver have originally been designed by the Japanese landscape architect Kishida Isaburō 岸田伊三郎 at the beginning of the 20th century (Dick, 2004, p. 89), and thus have a direct historical connection to Japanese culture. But Chang Yi-Jen, who believes in the traditional spherical model of cultures with national cultures as units, naturally feels irritated. The motif of “abolishing the weapons” refers to a quote from the Analects of Confucius (*Lunyu* 論語): In case the sovereign of a state faces the dilemma to be forced to discard either weapons or food or the trust of his subordinates, Confucius would recommend to get rid of the weapons first (Legge, 1991, p. 254). Chang Yi-Jen finds himself in the awkward situation that, on the one hand, the Chinese won the war against the Japanese in 1945, but, on the other hand, the “Eastern”-themed sections of the park are monopolized by Japanese cultural objects. In the fourth verse, the wording “we forever remember” (*yong nian* 永念) shows that Chang himself still firmly adheres to the pacifist vision of Confucius, who suggested renouncing the weapons before everything else, even though this antimilitaristic stance obviously might come with the price of having less political influence abroad. This is particularly relevant, since Chang remembered well his personal trauma caused by Japanese troops invading China in 1937.¹⁵

Here follows another example of a poem playing with a change of perspective:

Strangers from a Foreign Place
 Strangers in California from a foreign place
 just from our China they come?
 Can't they dwell on the island in the ocean?¹⁶
 Where on the horizon do they find a home?
 The old tree-bark scale was corrupted by the timber worm,
 the far-off dream has compassion with the hidden flower.

15 See the poem *60th Commemoration of the Resistance Against the Japanese after the “Incident at the Marco Polo Bridge” on July 7, Jinian Lugouqiao Qi Qi kang Ri liushi zhounian* 紀念盧溝橋七七抗日六十周年 from 1997 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 151f.).

16 Obviously referring to Taiwan.

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Stepping across the paths in the forest,
the clouds accompany us on the way leading far afield.

《異鄉客》

加州異鄉客，爭徒自吾華。
海島寧非寄，天涯那是家？
老鱗傷蠹木，遠夢惜幽花。
踏遍林間路，雲送路轉賒。

(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 39)

The poet observes the foreigners in California and is surprised that they all seem to come from China (which—according to Chang—includes Taiwan). Not all of those fleeing Mainland China dwell on Taiwan, but are scattered around the globe, which creates a feeling of displacement. The picture of a primeval forest with secret localities hidden between trees serves as poetic background image for travelers bound for unknown locations in the far distance. Our poet is, on the one hand, a Chinese individual cast away in foreign lands, but, on the other hand, a stranger in California feeling lost in a foreign realm. This reflects the sensation of the members of the Chinese diaspora, living in a foreign cultural environment in the United States, as well as the author being equally lost in Taiwan, displaced far from his home in Mainland China.

Another example of cultural pessimism can be found in the following piece:

Our Chinese Culture

The way of Confucius and Mencius today is no longer put into practice,
people from the West desire to fetch the Daoist classics.

Our Chinese culture claims to be flourishing and rich
but all we see are palaces of Chinese cuisine in every place.

《吾華文化》

孔孟如今道不行，西來人欲取真經。
吾華文化稱隆盛，但見烹調處處城。

(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 39)

For over 2000 years, Chinese culture has been dominated by the ideas of venerated Confucian thinkers like Confucius and Mencius. But nowadays, Westerners interested in Chinese traditional thought would rather lean towards the Daoist tradition (consisting of texts like the *Daode jing* 道德經 by Laozi 老子), which—from a Confucian perspective—is considered to be quite vulgar, or even heretic. Still worse, when visiting Western cultural environments, one could easily get the impression that Chinese food is the only remnant of the great Chinese cultural tradition, a shadow of its former glory.

To sum up, from the perspective of Chang's self-perception, Western and Eastern cultural spaces are considered to be separate spheres (and Eastern culture, furthermore, should be subdivided into Chinese and Japanese cultures as separate entities), which are in permanent competition and serve as symbols of national pride. Transculturality appears, here, insofar as foreign places, personal names and cultural characteristics are seamlessly integrated into the verses.

4 Time Axis

4.1 Traditional Chinese Culture

Not surprisingly, there are several passages in Chang Yi-Jen's poems with references to traditional Chinese literature. Thus, the famous Tang dynasty poet Du Fu is explicitly mentioned twice in Chang's verses written during his visit to the United States in 1995,¹⁷ and even more often alluded to either by the motive of the Moon¹⁸ or, more specifically, by the seagull, which is a classic motif in Du Fu's poetry, as we have seen above. The seagull often appears in Chang Yi-Jen's poems, not least because this bird species is a frequent sight in the coastal regions of the United States.

17 *Waking up at Night, Ye xing* 夜醒 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 40) as well as *Addressing the Moon at Mid-Autumn Festival, Zhongqiu dui yue* 中秋對月 (Zhang Yiren, 2010), both mentioning Du Fu's style name (*hao* 號) Shaoling 少陵.

18 *Observing the Moon, Wang yue* 望月 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 38); *Zhongqiu dui yue* 中秋對月 (Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 40)..

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More important for Chang, however, is the motif cluster of the famous classical piece *Peach Blossom Spring* (*Taohua yuan* 桃花源)¹⁹ by the medieval poet and writer Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (?-427). The classical text recalls the story of a fisherman from Wuling 武陵 Prefecture (located in the modern Hunan Province), who during the Jin Dynasty 晉 (265-420) allegedly discovered the entrance to a secret place, hidden behind the source of a river. A group of people, who had fled from the brutal regime of the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC), were living there peacefully in a secluded area; for many centuries they had been separated from the outside world, without any knowledge of later dynasties (like the Jin, or even the Han 漢, 206 BC-220 AD). In Chang Yi-Jen's work, several motifs from this utopian piece appear on various occasions, in particular the notion of "refugees from the Qin" (*bi Qin ren* 避秦人), which is used by Chang Yi-Jen as a metaphor for Chinese people, who were forced to flee from the Communist regime in the 20th century. Examples for the topos of refugees from Mainland China include the following two poems by Chang:

The Sight of California

Our hard life and all these affairs make us sigh upon [seeing] the moving clouds.

Not to mention the springtime in the ancient realm at the Peach River.

When asked what I have seen in California,
half of the settlers are people fleeing from the Qin.

《加州所見》

勞生底事嘆行雲，莫話桃溪故國春。
若問加州何所見，離鄉半是避秦人。

(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 40)

Street Scenery

Under a brutal political regime, it is hard to figure out whom to trust.

We Chinese cherish our personal freedom.

On the street, I suddenly heard the sounds from my old homeland.

Half of them are refugees, who had left their country.

¹⁹ The original piece consists of a famous essay, followed by a (less famous) long poem. See Kwong (1989, p. 49).

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《街頭》

暴政難猜孰可親？吾華珍惜自由身。
街頭乍聽鄉音盛，半是離家去國人。

(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 39)

In fact, the allusions to the *Peach Blossom Spring* conjure up a space, where the time axis and the spatial axis begin to blur, as the utopian paradise from the Chinese past here is representing the United States of today. Nevertheless, he also met some Chinese compatriots living in the United States who had not fled the Qin:

The Couple Shouren and Xiujuan Guide Me Through New York and I am Especially Delighted of the Beauty of the Paintings Exhibited in their Home
... I am delighted to see that the skill of their paint brush has largely increased,
people floating on the seas are not fleeing from the Qin.

《守仁、秀娟夫婦導遊紐約尤喜其室畫作琳瑯》
……畫筆喜知功力進，浮家不是避秦人。

(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 12f.)

4.2 Contemporary Context

All the dimensions mentioned above are combined in the following poem triplet on the Statue of Liberty, dating from 1992:

*I was Inspired During a Visit of the Statue of Liberty in the New York Harbor and
Obtained Three jueju Poems*

The Statue of Liberty is sitting on a lonely island
a long way from normal people but on good terms with seagulls.
The torch brightens the sky, opening up clouds and mist.
[People from] all countries strive to get there, but the Ark²⁰ is small.
In the East, there is a country, formerly known as Qin.
Its people turned westward, worshiping the Goddess [of Freedom].

20 The “Ark” is the term from the Bible used for “Noah’s Ark” (*fangzhou* 方舟).

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After they had received the torch of freedom fire
they buried the body of the Goddess of Freedom at Tian'anmen Square.

The fisherman from Wuling tried to find the ford [again] but in vain,
in the old histories who would promote the brutal Qin?²¹
Wherever in the world there is a Peach Blossom spring,
at its entrance should be erected a [statue of the] Goddess of Freedom.

《謁紐約港自由女神像有感得三絕句》
自由女神處孤島，不近凡人友鷗鳥。火炬燭天雲霧開，萬邦爭赴方舟小。
東方有國古稱秦，人向西天拜女神。傳得自由薪火後，天安門葬自由身。
武陵舟子問前津，舊史誰披說暴秦。世有桃源何處是，源前應立自由神。

(Zhang Yiren, 2010, p. 13)

We should note that the English words “freedom” and “liberty” commonly correspond to the same word in Chinese (*ziyou* 自由). Chang Yi-Jen still vividly remembers his impressions from reports on the events on Tian'anmen Square in 1989, where a group of students erected a statue called “Goddess of Freedom” (in Chinese called *Ziyou nüshen* 自由女神, just as the “Statue of Liberty”), mimicking the Statue of Liberty, which was eventually destroyed by military forces on Tian'anmen Square. On the one hand, Chang marks “liberalism” as “Western thought”, but, on the other hand, he still connects this political philosophy to the *Peach Blossom Spring*, which proves that he is very sympathetic towards it. The poet equals Communist China to the Qin dynasty, whereas Noah's Ark symbolizes the safe haven provided in the United States. The frequent use of *Peach Blossom Spring* motifs provides an axis rooted in Chinese tradition, yielding verses that are transcultural at their very core, bridging the most famous symbol of “Western” values—the Statue of Liberty—directly and consciously to a utopian scenic image from the Chinese cultural past.

21 In the traditional historiographic writings of China, from the Han dynasty to the Qin, the Qin would always be considered as a negative example of an inhuman and brutal dynastic reign, doomed to failure.

5 Conclusion

Doing research on Chang Yi-Jen's poetry is rewarding, as it grants insight into a modern classicist poetry tradition from Taiwan, which since the 1990s—unlike the “old cadre style” (*laogan ti* 老幹體) from the PRC—could develop free from any political and ideological burden. From the few samples I have given it can be seen that this type of classicist poetry represents a serious and creative lyrical style, able to deal with complex political and sociological issues of present times.

With his Mainland Chinese background and his good ties to conservative circles in Taiwan and, furthermore, his strong preference for traditional Chinese *shi* and *ci* poetic styles, Chang Yi-Jen seems to be one of the most archetypal “Chinese” poets in contemporary Taiwan. Nevertheless, we can observe distinct transcultural characteristics in his verses, often displaying the author's ability to deal with “Western” cultural assets in a playful approach, while the subjectivity of a Chinese perspective is still maintained. Especially in the very central piece on the Tian'anmen Incident, we find very strong symptoms of transculturality. Even though there are only a few explicit references to “Western” values, like the notion of liberty/freedom (*ziyou* 自由), they are not exclusively applied to Western people, but are valid for Chinese as well.

Additionally, we can observe transgressions of temporal boundaries. I have presented examples of Chang's poetry from his three “poetic” visits to the United States. The first visit is focused on touristic spots, but also overshadowed by remembering the events on Tian'anmen Square in 1989; poems from the second visit dwell on his loneliness, whereas the third visit mainly is concerned with family, friends and colleagues. However, all these poems evoke a feeling of being out of time, constantly alluding to the past and the present. This could be described by the term “transtemporality”, which—especially in the case of China with her huge cultural discrepancy between past and present—translates directly into transculturality. Observing the existence of different cultural levels within the same geographical region adds a new perspective to enrich the theory building of transculturality.

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But limits to transculturality are discernible as well: The author is firmly rooted in his own cultural background and experiences, which he perceives as being monocultural, and despite being an observer of the United States, he is still strongly influenced by iconic impressions of “Western” culture, and steadfastly sticks to the perspective of being a Chinese, who has no real home, which is an awkward situation typical for Kuomintang expatriates in Taiwan, as well as for the Chinese diaspora in many places of the world.

Another limitation is caused by the poet’s restricted knowledge about Western culture. We have observed that Chang Yi-Jen’s perception of America is mostly limited to certain icons comprising just a small part of the cultural memory of the Americans themselves. A major reason for this circumstance certainly is Chang’s personal background. Even though he was one of the most renowned Taiwanese professors of Chinese literature at his time, his generation of Sinophone academics employed in their research a hybrid methodological background, combining the traditional scholarship from Imperial China with a modernized approach developed in the 1920s and 1930s. At that time, Chinese scholars borrowed ideas from the Western academia, but hardly did engage in a serious exchange with Western scholarship in the field of traditional Chinese literature. Just like Chang’s teacher Ch’ü Wan-li (Qu Wanli 屈萬里, 1907-1979), a famous scholar specialized in “(Confucian) canonical studies” (*jingxue* 經學),²² Chang Yi-Jen spend a huge amount of work to do research on the Chinese cultural heritage, but almost never would cite a Western source in his research articles and books. In short, an exchange with Western culture did not take place on an academic level.

It would be interesting to do further research comparing Chang’s work with lyrical pieces from other Chinese poets, who wrote classicist pieces on their visits to the United States. One example would be Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 (1848-1905), who, during his stay in San Francisco in the 1880s, wrote several verses on his encounters (Huang Zunxian,

22 Displaying a high level of reverence towards teachers is another part of this academic culture, as can be seen in some essays Chang Yi-Jen wrote to prize Ch’ü Wan-li’s poetry, personal character and scholarship (Zhang Yiren, 2010a, pp. 7-15).

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1995-2002, pp. 655ff). But doing this task would require to compose another research paper.

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[received March 31, 2020
accepted June 10, 2020]

