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The transnational literary field between (inter)-nationalism and cosmopolitanism

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Abstract

Various external and internal factors shape and condition the literary field: education, the book market, the nation state, political movements, international organizations (like UNESCO), and specific authorities such as prizes. These factors are examined in this article at different spatial scales: "international," "transnational," "global," "world," "cosmopolitan," which are defined in the first section of the article in order to identify the agents that participate in the formation and functioning of the literary field at these different levels, and thus enable us to better understand the mechanisms of scale-shifting. Three periods are then examined: the era of "inter-nationalism," running from the end of the nineteenth century to the Second World War, the period of "developmental" policy, during which the borders of the transnational literary field were extended beyond the Western world, and the era of "globalization."

Keywords

Literary field – globalization – internationalization - nationalization – transnational

1. Introduction

Transnational approaches have developed since the 1990s as a result of the criticism of "methodological nationalism" (Beck; Wimmer and Schiller). However, the national perspective is opposed alternatively to the notions of "international," "transnational," "global," "world," "cosmopolitan," without all these concepts always being rigorously defined and distinguished. Some preliminary definitions are thus required in order to distinguish the uses of these concepts for the history and sociology of literature. As we

shall see, the national does not necessarily stand in opposition to each of these terms. The use of these notions needs to be historicized and contextualized in different social and political configurations (Armitage). They function as what I call "axiological operators," which include notions such as "disinterestedness," "civilisation," "freedom," which give systems of cultural oppositions their "sense" in the two-fold acceptance of meaning and spatial orientation—in this case upwards and downwards, i.e. worthy and unworthy (Sapiro *Défense et illustration* 21). The social efficacy of such operators comes from their ability to symbolically unify systems of classification or heterogeneous types of hierarchies in value and institutional orders. They thus play a role in the struggles of cultural hierarchies and in the processes of upscaling or downscaling literary authority.

Considering these definitions helps us identify the agents that participate in the emergence and functioning of the literary field at the national, international, transnational and global levels, and thus to better understand the mechanisms of scale-shifting. The autonomy of the literary field is always relative and may vary according to the external constraints, that is to say the religious, political, economic and social constraints (Bourdieu *Field of Cultural Production*; Bourdieu, *Rules of Art*). These constraints will be considered here from a transnational perspective on different spatial scales (Sapiro *Le champ est-il national*; Sapiro *texts cross borders*). I shall analyze factors that shape and condition the transnational literary field and that favor or hinder its unification. These factors are education, the book market, the nation state, political movements, international organizations (UNESCO), and specific authorities of the transnational field (such as the Nobel Prize). These factors are imbricated but I shall try to distinguish them and to establish their temporality.

After the preliminary definitions, three periods will be examined: the era of "inter-nationalism," running from the end of the nineteenth century to the Second World War,

the period of "developmental" policy, during which the borders of the transnational literary field were extended beyond the Western world, and the era of "globalization." Internationalism means that the nation-states played a major role in literary exchanges and could foster or hinder cosmopolitanism. After the war, UNESCO implemented a translation policy in order to favor the cultural "development" of non-Western countries, and thus tried to organize the exchange at an international level. During the globalization era, the market forces became more dominant, and the cosmopolitan façade should not conceal the power relations and the unequal conditions of access to the transnational field.

2. Cosmopolitanism, internationalism, transnationalism and globalization

The Latin concept of *cosmopolitanism*, which was rediscovered during the Renaissance, preexisted to the establishment of the nation-state as the main political organization. It initially designated world citizenship and was employed in this sense by Kant in *Perpetual Peace* (1795) to define three domains of the law, the *ius civitatis* (the national civil law), the *ius gentium* (which concerns the international relations between states) and the *ius cosmopoliticum* (which concerns the Universal Human State, aiming at peace). More broadly, cosmopolitanism has come to designate the relationship between the local and the universal or between the domestic and the foreign, referring to an openness to other cultures, thus it serves as a positive "axiological operator." Sociologists Georg Simmel and Robert Merton used the term in this sense, for instance (Merton 441–474). More recently, Ulf Hannerz uses this term similarly, defining cosmopolitanism as the "willingness to become involved with the Other, and the concern with achieving competence in cultures" (239–40). Cosmopolitan was also employed to designate central cities that host immigrants and visitors from around the world, like Paris at the turn of the century. The cosmopolitanism of Paris was even more pronounced for the literary field, attracting pretenders from the peripheries who aspired to upscale their position (Casanova

Republic of Letters). Vienna, Geneva, and Brussels were also cosmopolitan cities, especially for literary, artistic and political life. While the national is not necessarily opposed to cosmopolitanism, nationalism definitely is. Cosmopolitan agents often came from aristocracy of higher-educated *bourgeoisie*, and it was against this cosmopolitan society, which was dominated in Europe in the eighteenth century by the French concept of *civilisation*, that, in Germany, for example, the middle class *Bildungsbürgertum* engaged in the building of a national literary field (Elias 29). After the French Revolution, aristocrat "*émigrés*" who flew abroad were attacked by the Republicans who claimed to embody the nation (at that time, nationalism was left-wing). Cosmopolitanism thus became a negative "axiological operator" from the standpoint of nationalism. On the left, it was identified with capitalism, whereas on the right (which appropriated nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century), it was associated with the Communist International. In both cases, Jews became the paradigm of the cosmopolitan, and they were all the more stigmatized as such. Their implication in the European avant-garde would also make them a symbol of decadence in the eyes of far-right nationalists. In the wake of the critique of methodological nationalism, cosmopolitanism has been revived as a positive axiological operator, being used especially by migrant authors who claim it as an identity (Xavier 95-96).

Although its broader use indicates that it has also become an "axiological operator," I shall reserve the notion of *international* for interstate relations—for instance, international conventions like the Berne Convention on literary property—and for organizations and policies based on a representation of the nation-states as such. The League of Nations founded in 1920 is one such international organization. Promoting internationalism as a positive axiological operator, it sought to pacify relationships between nation-states after the World War I had revealed the consequences of extreme

nationalism. The League of Nations had a Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, and in 1924 an International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation was established in Paris (Renoliet 1999; Sapiro *L'internationalisation* 122-129). It was replaced after the World War II by UNESCO, which is also an international organization. In this sense, internationalism is not opposed to nationalism, as it was built concomitantly with national identities (Thiesse *Création des identités nationales* 13). Political organizations, from parties to nation-states, are the main agents in the construction of internationalism, in which they implicate writers and intellectuals.

There are different kinds of international ideologies. The League of Nations reflected Wilsonian internationalism. UNESCO would promote a developmental internationalism in the conjuncture of decolonization. Political internationalism may take various forms depending on the underlying conception of the nation, which runs from an essentialist conception of the nation (the Fascist International) to an instrumentalist and temporary one (the Communist International), that is nevertheless also a framework for exchange and for circulation of models and people. These two internationals had very concrete expressions in literary life: they organized conferences like the 1927 Congress of Revolutionary Writers in Moscow, which was attended by writers from fourteen countries, or the fascist meeting in Malmö (Sweden) in 1951. Set up in 1926, the Union for Revolutionary Writers held its second meeting in Kharkov in 1930, but was dissolved in 1935 after the 1934 Kharkov Soviet Writers Congress. This congress imposed the aesthetics of socialist realism until the 1960s and formed a heteronomous international sub-field, with authorities such as the Stalin Prize established in 1949, journals, and publishers. Between these two extremes of communism and fascism, one must situate cultural alliances with sometimes essentialist connotations (like Pan-Germanism and Pan-Latinism), linguistic alliances (like the institutional International Organization of la

Francophonie, which regroups 88 states) and regional alliances based on geopolitical foundations (like Pan-Arabism, Pan-Americanism, and Pan-Africanism). They can adopt forms that are more or less institutionalized and intervene in literary life through various means, including aid, authorities such as journals, festivals, associations (like the *Association des écrivains de langue française*), and literary prizes (like the francophone prize Prix des Cinq Continents), in convergence or in competition with other political or economic forces (see, for instance, Bedecarré).

Whereas internationalism does not challenge the nation-states' sovereignty, institutionalized regional alliances may lead to the transfer of part of the states' power to a supranational governing body, as the case of the European Union illustrates (ALENA would be another example). These supranational entities may play a role in cultural and literary life through subsidies to literary cooperation and translation, like those offered by the Creative Europe program for culture, which provides "support to literary translation projects." These cooperation policies aim at building a common cultural identity, although this objective may encounter resistance from some intellectuals (Sapiro *L'internationalisation* 130-144). *Regionalization* is a current trend that has come to play a growing role in international relations and has created a new intermediate scale between the national and the international, which interferes with bi-lateral agreements in a way that still waits to be analyzed (for instance, the Latin-American association of sociology (ALAS), or the European Sociological Association; see Heilbron; Sapiro *Entre o nacional e o internacional*).

On a smaller scale (beneath that of the nation state), *regionalism* also designates a movement that promoted the revival of regional cultures after national unification. It also valorized dialects (like Breton) in which a peripheral literature was produced, a literature that was downscaled as minor by the nationalization of culture (Thiesse *Écrire la*

France). Like in the case of Catalonia, some of these regions pretend to achieve political autonomy and to form a new nation-state, which may impact the circulation of literary texts: for instance, when the Catalonia was invited to the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2007, the organizers were accused of fostering Catalan nationalism because they invited only authors writing in Catalan, and not those writing in Castilian.

Transnational designates organizations, networks, and fields that do not depend on nation-states, such as religious fields (Catholic, Jewish, Muslim), and they thus create competing configurations of circulation and mechanisms of upscaling or downscaling. Such organizations still have to negotiate their autonomy and their authority within the nation-state even when a central transnational institution exists, like in the case of the Vatican. Although they have lost authority in secularized countries, transnational religious authorities still exert—or at least try to exert—control over literary production. The Roman Catholic Church issued its *Index librorum prohibitorum* in 1559, which continued to be updated until 1961, condemning books for heresy, political subversiveness and immorality. The list included works by Rousseau, Voltaire, Sterne, Defoe, Balzac and Gide, whose work was entirely banned in 1952, just after his death in 1951, and after he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1947. In France, when religion was separated from the state in 1905, the Catholic Church reacted by establishing Vigilance Councils for labelling "good reads," all the while fostering a "Catholic Literary Renaissance movement," involving famous writers such as Georges Bernanos and François Mauriac, winner of the 1952 Nobel Prize (Serry). Catholic transnational networks also fostered the circulation of works and the upscaling of these authors abroad through journals such as *La Relève*, which was founded in 1934 in Québec and replaced in 1941 by *La Nouvelle Relève* – both played a role in the autonomization of a French

Canadian literary field, reminding us that the national literary fields were established by importing works from other cultures.

However, as Bourdieu argues in the case of Belgium, peripheral national literary fields are not entirely autonomous from their linguistic centers, which, partly because of colonialism, but also because of hegemony, form transnational literary fields (*Existe-t-il une littérature belge?*). Their concentration around central cities depends on the publishing field. In addition to literary agents, publishers are major players, who usually specialize in one language and seek to extend their market beyond the national borders, competing for territories of distribution with the most dominant ones asking for worldwide rights in the language (Sapiro *texts cross borders* 86-87). As a matter of fact, the most internationally recognized Belgian or Québec authors publish in Paris, like the African or Maghrebian ones (Ducournau: 309-345; Leperlier 78). The same is true in all other linguistic areas, that is to say the English, the French, the Spanish, the German, the Portuguese, and the Arabic, which thus function as transnational literary fields. These power relations are constantly challenged, but the transnational can also be instrumentalized in national struggles, either for converting transnational symbolic capital locally, or for rejecting it as "foreign," "western," "inauthentic," etc. The unification of a transnational literary field in a linguistic area may, as already mentioned, be enforced by political authorities, like in the case of the institutional Francophonie, which founded its own literary prizes (Bedecarré).

The concept of the transnational is also well-suited for informal networks or gatherings, like the avant-gardes (for instance the surrealist or situationist movements) who usually aim at transcending both national and disciplinary borders, and more broadly for intellectual networks, journals, and conferences. It is, furthermore, relevant to designate the circulation and appropriation of literary works in other countries (on

surrealism, see Ungureanu). Beginning in the 1990s, in the wake of the critique of methodological nationalism, the transnational has become a positive "axiological operator" in the social sciences and the humanities, inviting a reframing of geographic and cultural boundaries and changing analytical scales.

I shall also use the concept of *transnational literary field*—or alternatively the *transcultural* literary field—at a broader level, including translations, to designate what Casanova calls the world republic of letters (*Republic of Letters*). Since the eighteenth century, argues Casanova, this field escapes national borders, but has to affirm its autonomy from national, international, supranational, or transnational political and economic forces. The literary field has gained autonomy from the state and from the market, but this autonomy is only relative (Sapiro *Literary Field*). The literary field depends partly on the state, which determines the limits of the freedom of expression, but also on the writers' social status (regarding social benefits) and the kind of support they can expect (financial support, fellowships, tax policy and so on). In authoritarian states, having a status as a writer implied, as a counterpart, serving the regime by spreading its ideology, also on the international level. Writers' unions in Communist countries were official organizations that played a major role in international exchanges within the Communist Bloc as well as with Western countries where similar bodies existed (for instance, the *Comité national des écrivains* in France), in the same way, the official societies of authors of Western countries organized formal cultural exchanges within the West and beyond.

The literary field also depends on markets that follow transnational logics. The book market is structured both by linguistic areas and by states through taxes and customs, literary property, and the limiting of free speech. Unlike the art field (Buchholz), the global circulation of books requires us to include the conditions of translinguistic

exchanges within what has become a *global market for translations*. The main agents of these exchanges are, thus, translators, publishers, literary (co)agents, scouts. The main institutions are book fairs. However, the book market is also regulated by international conventions such as the Berne Convention, adopted in 1886, or the more recent TRIPS agreements (Trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights) signed in 1994 by the World Trade Organization in order to circumvent the Berne Convention (especially the clause on moral rights).

Globalization is originally an economic concept, which can be applied in a fruitful way to the book market. By the 1970s, it became a watchword for the opening of borders to the free circulation of goods, a dynamic that was driven by the United States via the GATT agreements. This concept became a positive "axiological operator" and was introduced into Anglophone academic research without a serious critique of the notion and its origins. In the Francophone area, by contrast, it first served as a negative axiological operator that was identified with "mondialisation."

The use of the concept of globalization also interrogates the geographic borders of this market. Whereas, as we saw, the linguistic areas constitute markets where books can circulate without being translated if the political borders are open, the translation market for contemporary literature that developed after 1850 was mostly circumscribed to Europe and the United States until the 1950s. Although these borders have been extended since then, as we shall see, some areas like Africa are still excluded from these exchanges. Under which conditions, then, can we speak of a *global literary field*? While the unification of a global book market favored the circulation of literary works across the globe, specific authorities are required for an autonomous global literary field to emerge, such as literary critics, literary prizes, and literary festivals. We shall see how such specific authorities appeared at the national, international, supranational and transnational

levels. However, since the notion of "global" would suppose that this field unifies all cultures, I shall rather speak of the *transnational (or transcultural) literary field*.

The notion of *World literature* could be used to refer to those works that are recognized as part of this global literary field. This notion (re)emerged around the 1990s, echoing that of "world music," but having its own references and tradition since Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, which facilitated its adoption as a positive axiological operator both in the book market ("world fiction") and in scholarship, where it served to construct a new paradigm for comparative literature and for literary history (Moretti; Damrosch). The conception of world literature oscillates between a narrow definition that designates only the canon of works that have achieved the status of world classics, and a broad one, including all works that have circulated beyond national borders (Damrosch). However, even in this broader conception, the notion of "world" is not a synonym of "universal." While they may be regarded as more "universal" than those which do not circulate, as pointed out by Casanova (*Republic of Letters*), this universalism is often associated with the idea of representativeness of a specific culture, whether national or regional, and the notion of world literature is itself associated nowadays with cultural diversity. In this sense, it is not a synonym of cosmopolitanism either, though it may include cosmopolitanism when it is considered as related to a specific experience of geographic mobility, such as in the case of African authors. And it would, of course, include postcolonial literature. On the other hand, commercial world bestsellers, located at the pole of large-scale circulation in the transnational literary field, are seldom considered by scholars as world literature, as they obey market logics rather than literary criteria. Therefore, in this sense, "world literature" could be opposed to the (commercial) "global novel," rather than to national literature.

3. The (inter-)nationalization of culture

Until the end of the eighteenth century, the common cultural base of the European Republic of Letters was classical education. Latin was its *lingua franca*. In the eighteenth century, French became the language of culture for the European aristocracy, it was the language of aristocratic cosmopolitanism. National literary fields, starting with the German, were partly built against this elite cosmopolitanism, which was considered superficial: German intellectuals from *Sturm und Drang* opposed *Kultur* and *Bildung* to the French *civilisation* (Elias). Herder's anti-universalist stance was meant to challenge the French cultural hegemony (that was supported by Frederick II) by asserting the diversity—and, thus, the equal status—of cultural identities, which were expressed in different languages (Casanova 75-81; Thiesse *Création* 34-43). This symbolic revolution would enable the aspirations of young nations for political and cultural recognition to gain legitimacy and assert their authenticity based on folk culture, like the Ossian poems "discovered" and published in 1762 by the Scottish poet James Macpherson (Thiesse *Fabrique*), thus laying the foundation for the inter-national model that would emerge in the second half of the 19th century. At the same time, Goethe (who stages in *The Sorrows of young Werther* the reading of the Ossian poems, to which Herder had introduced him) also theorized the concept of *Weltliteratur*. It included both the classics, which should continue to serve as models, and literatures in other languages, with which exchanges should take place. This can definitely be and has been regarded as a new form of cosmopolitanism.

While the European republic of letters was gaining autonomy from the religious field, the common classical heritage began disintegrating in the nineteenth century. The main cause of this disintegration was the nationalization of culture and of education, which was parallel to their democratization. Nevertheless, classical studies remained a

substantial part of secondary education until the mid-twentieth century; consequently, it continued to nourish literary culture. However, the conditions of access to classical education was limited to a small elite: in France for instance, while the primary education was made compulsory for all children, until 1933 tuition was charged to attend high school. Around 1900, only one percent of young men in a given age-class would get the baccalaureate. This access was also very limited for women, whose schools were separate and did not prepare for the baccalaureate before 1924. The relation to classical texts in their own cultural tradition also concerns writers in non-Western cultures, such as the Arab, Chinese, and Japanese authors. However, in these countries, modernization occurred in large part through the importation and adaptation of Western models that were hybridized with local materials. This process underlies what Franco Moretti has called the "Jameson law" (163). In colonized countries, it started more as an exportation process from the colonizer, who imposed the Western classics upon the colonized through the channel of education. Education toward the dominant culture and language produced literary works in French, English, German, Portuguese, but this production, however original and innovative, was marginalized in the global book market and even in the linguistic area, because the colonized areas lacked publishers and booksellers, and the literacy rates were still very low. Nevertheless, this extension would soon challenge the national borders of the literary fields in the colonizing countries (Ducournau; Leperlier).

While thriving on "folklorized" reinterpretations of popular local traditions, the construction of national identities took place in a transnational process of circulation of a model from one country to another: the list of items that composed these identities included a language, a literature, "typical" paintings and musical works, and so forth (Thiesse *Création*). This construction allowed dominated cultures to gain autonomy from dominant ones (in particular from French culture). It resulted in the formation of an

international space of competition between nation states, which was defined on a cultural (national) and territorial basis, first at the European level and then on a global scale (Casanova *Republic of Letters*). The states, either democratic or authoritarian, played a significant role in this competition by introducing protectionist measures for national firms and the organized professions, and by providing financial support to the national cultural production and to its exportation abroad. Eager to compete with the French and German cultural hegemony, Mussolini's fascist government, for instance, actively supported the translation of Italian literature (Rundle 68).

The construction of national identities entailed a nationalization of the literary field which engendered cultural xenophobia and the rejection of foreign elements that competed with national ones, but it also entailed the building of an inter-national space which was achieved in the interwar period with the creation of the League of Nations. Embodying the Wilsonian political conception of internationalism, the League of Nations conceived of cultural exchanges as a means to pacify the relationships between nations after the dramatic experience of the First World War.

As already discussed, the League of Nations created an International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation to promote international cultural exchange between scientists, researchers, teachers, artists and other intellectuals, which included writers such as Thomas Mann and Paul Valéry. It embodied the new idea that culture should be part of international relations. However, the endeavor to favor cosmopolitanism did not prevent tensions and conflicts due to unequal power relations and rivalries between countries, especially between France and Great Britain which competed over cultural hegemony. At the same time, the autonomous international literary organization known as the PEN Club emerged. It was founded in 1921 in order to "promote friendship and intellectual co-operation among writers everywhere," to "emphasize the role of literature in the

development of mutual understanding and world culture," and to fight for freedom of expression, as PEN International President Jennifer Clement said in her opening speech at 84th PEN International Congress.

Competition and struggle over hegemony were also underlying aspects of the building of supranational cultural identities, for instance Pan-Latinism against Pan-Germanism. In France, the movement in favor of Latinity was led by reactionary and Germanophobic French writers who gathered in the Monarchist League *Action française* in 1908 around two writers, Charles Maurras and Léon Daudet. They defined Latinity as the basis of Western civilization, while German culture was seen as the product of Byzantine influence, thus as a Barbarian culture (Sapiro *Writers' War* 96-99). Conversely, the German extreme-right built a Northern identity in contradistinction to the Southern cultures. This type of supranational identity was opposed to cosmopolitanism.

Beyond this internationalization process, which reinforced the nationalization of culture and from which entire regions around the world remained excluded, the nation-states imposing legal and customs barriers were not, in fact, drawing strict borders. On the one hand, the differentiation of national literary fields occurred on the basis of a common, humanist culture and models imported from dominant cultures. On the other hand, the logic of market expansion, hegemonic ambitions, and colonialism are three factors that led to the formation of spaces of circulation and exchanges that extend beyond national borders.

4. The formation of a transnational literary field around a new world canon

Beyond the common reference that classical writings provided, national-language literatures were initially formed by translating works in order to construct a literary and editorial body of works in the national language which was being codified, and also, as polysystem theory has shown, by importing stylistic models. For instance, literature in

Modern Hebrew produced in Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century drew its models from Russian literature and what it borrowed from French literature was mediated by Russian translations (Even-Zohar). Acknowledging the original hybrid nature of national literatures should lead us to relativize the idea that cultural *métissage* is uniquely a result of globalization. The emergence of these national publishing fields was tightly related to the expanding access to education in the national language (Anderson). Translation became the main mode of circulation of texts by the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1878, an international association, the *Association artistique et littéraire internationale*, led by Victor Hugo, was created in order to unify and extend the laws on literary property to the world market for translations. This objective was accomplished in 1886 by the Berne Convention, which many countries joined at the beginning of the twentieth century, excluding from this market the poor and/or colonized areas who were condemned to plagiarism. Press agencies, literary agents and translators acted as intermediaries on this market.

Despite the multiplicity of actors on this competitive market—a factor of differentiation and heterogeneity from country to country—its progressive unification did not only occurr in a legal frame. The body of translated works proved often to be the same from language to language, and the works written in the oldest literary languages (notably French, English, German, and Russian) were upscaled into world masterpieces. A world canon thus emerged,which was reinforced by the foundation of the Nobel Prize in 1901. Nobel Prize winners such as Rabindranath Tagore, Thomas Mann, Sinclair Lewis, Ivan Bounine, and Luigi Pirandello were translated into other languages, fostering the isomorphism of the translation segment of the national literary fields in the context of the cultural competition between European countries. Nonetheless, there were still significant variations, and the reception of these works was different from place to place.

In France during the interwar period, in the context of intensified cultural exchanges, translations became organized in book series that were separated from French productions. Launched by Stock at the beginning of the twentieth century, one of the first series was called *Bibliothèque cosmopolite*and renamed after the First World War as the *Cabinet Cosmopolite*, indicating the positive value associated to the notion of Cosmopolitanism as an "axiological operator," although in a sense that was close to Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur*, implying the diversity of cultures and languages. It published Thomas Mann, who won the Nobel Prize in 1929, *Babbitt* by Sinclair Lewis, who won the Nobel Prize the following year, Erich Maria Remarque, Pearl Buck, Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, August Strindberg, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. These series were sometimes subdivided according to the country of origin. National identities were, along with genre, the main categories of classification in the upmarket sector (this was much less the case for popular literature that also circulated across countries). The prevalence of national identities was partly due to the intermediaries' linguistic skills, but it also relied on the identification between language and nation. These intermediaries also produced anthologies and panoramas of "foreign" literatures. The small publisher Kra-Le Sagittaire published anthologies of American, German, and Spanish literature, edited and introduced by critics specializing in these literatures. Denoël & Steele also launched a series of "Contemporary foreign novelists," which included volumes on American, Italian, and German novelists who were introduced to the French literary scene through this channel. Journals would dedicate special issues to foreign authors from a specific country or a language.

These authorities contributed to the building of a transnational literary field and a new world canon which would replace the Greek-Latin canon by the mid-twentieth century. Authors like Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Horace, Plutarch, Seneca, Plautus,

and Tacitus, who were among the sixty most translated authors at the beginning of the 1930s, according to the UNESCO Index Translationum, disappeared from this list after the Second World War; Plato was the only one who remained. They were replaced by Tolstoy, Dickens, Dostoyevsky, and Balzac, to quote only those most consistently on the list of the thirty most translated writers (Milo 98-99).

However, the power relations within this transnational literary field are unequal (Casanova *Republic of Letters* 82-124). Indeed, while access to reading and writing was being democratized in many Western countries, the conditions of access to this world canon were unequal across countries. Except for the Bengali 1913 Nobel Prize winner, Tagore, no non-Western author was awarded the Nobel Prize until the 1960s. In order to access the world literary canon, one needs to be translated. But translation patterns are asymmetrical: works circulate mainly from the center to the periphery, and to be translated from a peripheral language to another highly depends on being translated at the center (Heilbron). Thus, central languages, and within these languages, central publishers, are endowed with a high consecrating power in the transnational literary field. Such is the case of the most prestigious French literary publisher, Gallimard (Sapiro *Strategies*). Looking at its 1936 catalogue, one can observe that works were all translated from European languages, apart from one from Tagore: one third of the novels were authored by British writers (mainly Conrad, Meredith and D. H. Lawrence); one title out of five by American ones (mainly Dos Passos and Faulkner); Russian followed (17.4%), then German (16%, with the *émigrés* T. Mann and Döblin); Spanish (4.6%) and Italian (3%), to cite only the most translated languages. The uneven share of works translated from different languages also reveals unequal circulation and a hierarchy of power relations. This reflects the amount of symbolic capital accumulated by different national literatures according to their antiquity and the number of works translated into other languages, a

hierarchy that was masked by the ideal of equality underlying the Wilsonian internationalism.

The opening of the world canon to non-Western authors was partly due to a program launched by UNESCO in the 1950s, supporting translations from non-Western cultures in order to catalyze "literary interpenetration." This program, which renewed attempts made by the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation in the 1930s, encouraged editors and publishers to translate classical and modern works from Asia and Latin America, expanding the borders of the world market for translations from Europe to the world, although whole areas like Sub-Saharan Africa were and are still excluded from this market.

5. Extending the canon to non-Western cultures: the UNESCO program of "representative works"

UNESCO was founded after the war to replace the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations. Pursuing the same objective of pacification, UNESCO also promoted a more "democratic" conception of "culture." In the first session that was held in November and December 1946, the General Conference of UNESCO considered that the translation and dissemination of classics was one of the best means to develop among different people "good will, understanding and mutual respect."[1] Consequently, in December 1946, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted the project of encouraging the translation of classics in various languages of the state members of the United Nations. This resolution (no. 60) was strongly related to the concept of "cultural development:" it aimed at supporting nations

1. The following section is based on the UNESCO Archives, Translation of Literature Surveys 803 A 52. It was written before Sarah Brouillette's book on *UNESCO and the Fate of the Literary* came out, but the present analysis adopts a different perspective (the role of UNESCO in the circulation of texts in translation and the making of the literary canon), though it is not incompatible (despite her more Marxist approach and mine being more Bourdieuan), and perhaps can be read as complementary.

deprived of facilities and resources to translate classics into their languages, an endeavor that would promote international cooperation and contribute to the more general goal of UNESCO to "raise the general level of culture among the people of the world". Entrusted with the task to recommend measures for this purpose, UNESCO defined four objectives: first, establishing a list of world classics; second, listing the existing translations in different languages; third, identifying the needs of each country, the lacunas and the books that should consequently be translated and disseminated; fourth, determining the measures that would help secure the translation and dissemination of these books. UNESCO envisioned playing a role in the coordination of these translation projects. Official representatives of all countries were invited to designate experts for establishing the lists. Criteria defining classical works were nevertheless formulated in order to avoid biases:

1. Any work, whatever intellectual field it falls in (literature, philosophy, science or religion), may be deemed a "classic" if it is considered truly representative of a culture or a nation, and if it remains a landmark in the history of human genius and in the evolution of Man toward civilization.
2. Notwithstanding it is the expression of a particular culture, the characteristic of a classic is that it passes beyond the limits of that culture and is representative of it not only within the nation but also in the eyes of other nations.
3. "Classics" appeal to the general educated public and not only to specialists.
4. Length of life being one of the characteristics of a classic, it is generally agreed that those works be deemed classics which have stood the test of time and have preserved their human value for generations. It is thus possible to agree, on practical grounds, that only works published before 1900 shall be deemed classics. As regards more recent works, UNESCO has in mind a further project for the translation and dissemination of the principal works of contemporary literature.
5. In principle, a degree of priority should be given to works likely to increase mutual understanding between nations, the feeling of human fellowship, and respect for national idiosyncrasies. (UNESCO Translation)

One can note the evolutionist tonality of these criteria, in line with the development policy, i.e. the idea of a progress towards a unique "civilization," whereas

this evolutionist conception was being challenged since the interwar period by cultural anthropology which proposed instead the idea of a plurality of "cultures," a conception that Levi-Strauss would assert in his 1951 lecture at UNESCO on "Race and history."[2] At the same time, unlike the Greek and Latin classics, these new classics were conceived of as "representative" of a national culture (thus excluding minorities), all the while transcending this culture to represent it in front of other nations. This criterion embodies the inter-nationalist policy of the United Nations and of UNESCO. Thus, this program promoted the nationalization of the canon at an international scale. The third criterion is related to UNESCO's objective of cultural democratization, an objective which met the interests of the expanding cultural industries: accessibility to a large public as opposed to communities of specialists. There was wide agreement that requiring the date of publication to be before 1900, as the fourth criterion did, was arbitrary in character. Nevertheless, the condition was adopted to ensure that the "representativity" of the works transcended the historical circumstances of their genesis. The fifth criterion adds an ideological dimension, both humanist and pacifist. It was specified, citing the German classics, that the inquiry should not be limited to the member states of the United Nations.

These criteria provoked numerous commentaries from the member states' representatives. Some argued that it was difficult to define a "classical work." Others pointed to problems of translation, for which the bad professional conditions were blamed. The date of 1900 was found irrelevant for young nations such as Australia, and for this reason, a parallel program of contemporary works was planned.

Finally, the term "classics" was abandoned in favor of "great books," that is to say, "books considered as the most universal" (UNESCO Letter), a designation that was

2. On the debates on the definition of culture around and within UNESCO, see McDonald, 75-109.

in turn replaced by “representative works.” This category included now philosophy, the social sciences and the natural sciences (UNESCO *Resolutions* 23).

From 1948 to 1994, the UNESCO program for “representative works” published 866 books from all over the world, written in ninety-one different languages (Giton). This program fostered translations of non-Western works in Europe and in the United States. At Gallimard, for instance, two series were launched: *La Croix du Sud* for South-American literature, starting in 1952 with *Ficciones* (Fictions) by Borges, a translation which propelled its author into the transnational literary field, and followed, until 1970, by Arguedas, Cabrera Infante, Castellanos, Cortázar, Freyre, Roa Bastos, Sabato, Vargas Llosa, among others; and *Connaissance de l’Orient* for classics and contemporary works from Asian countries, beginning in 1953 (Sapiro *Texts Cross Borders*; Sapiro *Role of Publishers*).

Among the authors supported by the UNESCO program was Yasunari Kawabata, whose book *Snow Country* was translated into English, German, Italian and French between 1956 and 1960, and who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1968. The program also contributed to the boom of Latin American writers, among whom three won the Nobel Prize: Miguel Ángel Asturias in 1967, Pablo Neruda in 1971, and Gabriel García Márquez in 1982. But it was not before the year 2000 that a Chinese writer would be awarded this distinction (Gao Xingjian in 2000 and Mo Yan in 2012). And Naguib Mahfouz is the only Arab writer who has won the Nobel Prize to date (in 1988), despite the rise of Arabic literature in translation.

Apart from the two aforementioned collections, the opening of the Western transnational literary field to non-Western cultures can be observed in Gallimard’s main series for foreign literature *Du monde entier*. Between 1950 and 1960, the number of languages represented in the series rose from fourteen to twenty-three, and the number of

countries from twenty-three to thirty-eight. Although European languages are best represented, during these years one can find titles from Bengali, Hindi, Arabic and Hebrew. In 1972, the series *Du monde entier* could boast of 320 authors, sixteen of them Nobel laureates, representing thirty-five countries. By the end of the 1970s, new small independent French publishers started investing in the translation of works of peripheral languages and countries, an investment that boosted the competition around linguistic diversity in translation. In Gallimard's series *Du monde entier*, the number of languages represented will reach forty in the globalization period (between 1978 and 2010), including Chinese, Korean, Islandic, Serbian, Slovenian, and the number of countries fifty-seven (among which Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Venezuela and Uruguay).

6. Globalization and cultural diversity

The interest of Western publishers located at the centers of the global publishing field (such as Paris, London, New York, Frankfurt, Berlin, Barcelona or Madrid) in these authors from "peripheral" countries is a condition for their access to the transnational scene. Those most endowed with symbolic capital, like Gallimard or Knopf, have also the highest consecration power; being translated with Gallimard or Knopf (the first Western publisher of Kawabata) enhances one's chance both to get a literary prize and to get translated into other languages: apart from Borges, who was awarded in 1961, with Beckett, the new International Prize for literature, founded by the publisher Carlos Barral as an alternative to the Nobel Prize, Gallimard had also Asturias and Neruda on its list before they won the Nobel (Sapiro *Strategies*; Sapiro *Role of Publishers*).

While non-Western cultures had begeun to be included, access to transnational consecration was still not really open to minorities or female authors because of the unequal conditions of access to recognition in the national field (Sapiro *Texts Cross Borders* 90-92). It is only since the 1990s that the awareness of minorities, diversity, and

gender have modified the juries' choice, which is illustrated by awarding the Nobel prize to Toni Morrison and Herta Müller in 1993 and 2009 respectively. At the same time, the perception of literary works through national categories started to be challenged by the consecration of the postcolonial writers. Nevertheless, beyond the specific strategies that were needed in order to gain international attention, those which Graham Huggan has described as the "postcolonial exotic," these writers have to be published by major Western publishers in order to be recognized in the greater literary market (on the case of Indian writers, see Narayanan). Only they have a chance of getting consecrated, like Wole Soyinka, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1986. Ultimately, the growing cosmopolitanism of the literary field conceals a high degree of centralization and a concentration of the power of consecration in central cities and in the hands of the most prestigious publishers and agents. The most well-known Japanese contemporary writer Harushi Murakami, for instance, has an American agent.

Diversity and the growing interest in non-Western cultures thus characterizes the period called "globalization." However, its wide appropriation by cultural producers and academics as a positive "axiological operator" that promotes intercultural exchanges beyond the nation-states borders relies on an ignorance of the conditions of its adoption as a watchword to replace "development" in order to favor the opening of borders to the free circulation of goods (Wallerstein). For those who denounced the triumph of market logics, "globalization" became identified with "standardization." Starting in 1986, a debate arose concerning the GATS negotiation, which was aimed at extending the liberalization of exchanges to the trade in services, including immaterial goods, i.e. cultural products. As a result, in 1992, the European parliament adopted a resolution in defense of "cultural exception," a notion that would be soon replaced under the auspice of UNESCO by the broader and less elitist notion of "cultural diversity" (Gournay). In 2001,

UNESCO promulgated a universal declaration on cultural diversity, which stipulates that cultural diversity, which was understood as a factor of development (notably economic), "constitute[s] the common patrimony of humanity" (UNESCO Declaration). Denying the capacity of market forces to preserve cultural diversity, the declaration claims exception for cultural goods and services "because they are bearers of identity, values and meanings," and they therefore must not be considered like other merchandise (*ibid*). In 2005, the declaration gave rise to the Convention on cultural diversity, aiming to harmonize the measures of the protection of cultural goods and services at the international level (Bustamante: 349-401). Although literature was not directly concerned by these agreements, the dynamics of globalization favored the intensification of translations in the world. Indeed, the number of translations rose by fifty percent between 1980 and 2000 (Sapiro *Globalization* 423).

The emergence of multinational corporations in the book market contributes to the unification of this global market. Literary agents also play a prominent role in this unification. Nevertheless, the national classification of literary works continues, parallel to genre, to be a performative category of perception at the pole of small-scale circulation of the publishing field, defined by Bourdieu as the pole where esthetic criteria prevail over sales in assessing the value of a literary work (Bourdieu *Conservative Revolution in Publishing*). Contrary to the pole of large-scale circulation, which is dominated by the English language, at this pole one still speaks of "French literature," "German literature," "Italian literature," "Chinese literature," and so on. This reflects the historical importance of the national identities in the emergence and structuring of the transnational literary field. These categories presented an obstacle for minorities, who were already marginalized in their respective national fields, to gain attention in the transnational field.

Nevertheless, the promotion of diversity and of postcolonial authors has started to have an impact on national policies. For instance, in 1993, the French government modified the conditions for supporting translation from the French to other languages; it was no longer French authors but authors writing in French that could get support. This opening of the cultural policy reflected the evolution of the French editorial production. Looking at the nationality of the authors whose books were translated into English and published in the United States between 1990 and 2003, one observes a very high level of diversity. There are more than thirty nationalities represented, including authors from former colonies (Sapiro *Translation and Symbolic Capital* 330-31). This observation questions the very notion of French literature, proposing, instead, a more accurate term, "literature in French." When France was invited as the guest of honor at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2017, French organizers did decide to promote the French language and to invite non-French authors writing in French. The invited writers, however, were all published by publishers located in France. Around twenty non-French francophone publishers were also invited by the *Bureau international de l'édition française*, but they occupied a marginal place in the event. .

Finally, since the 1990s, literary festivals have become cosmopolitan literary gatherings (Sapiro The Role of *Festivals*; Weber). However, since they depend partly on the power relations in the book market, authors invited to international festivals are also mostly published by Western firms.

7. Conclusion

As I have tried to show, the national is not systematically at odds with the international, the transnational, the supranational, or the cosmopolitan. In all of these cases, it depends on the way identity is defined. One can distinguish more or less essentialist notions of identities from conceptions of identity as multiple, as a product of socialization, and as

being susceptible to evolution, especially thanks to intercultural encounters. While nationalization favored the upscaling of national authors from diverse countries to an inter-national space, the conditions of access remained unequal: most of the authors of the newly-formed canon originated in the oldest European countries, excluding non-Western authors as well as minorities within these nations and the colonized. The UNESCO program for "representative works" promoted the upscaling of non-Western authors and their inclusion in this Western canon, still relying on an inter-national model. The national framing was challenged by the ideology of globalization, cosmopolitanism and cultural *métissage*, which promoted minorities and cultural diversity. Nevertheless, writers from "peripheral" countries still need to be published or translated in central places by publishers endowed with a high amount of symbolic capital, which means that they need to have a dominant Western literary agent or publisher, in order to gain visibility at the scale of the transnational literary field

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