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EUROPE BETWEEN THE NATION AND THE GLOBE[1]

***Keywords**: European literature; translation; Las Casas; Yourcenar; Ionesco*
***Abstract**: In the post-Cold War era and amid the accelerating processes of globalization, Europe's literary cultures are becoming at once more integrated regionally and more dispersed globally. How should we understand the idea of "European literature" today? This essay argues that the nation remains the fundamental base of literary culture, but it must be understood in terms of a national market rather than a national language. A nation's literature consists of whatever works circulate within the nation, either in the original language or in translation. Examples as varied as Bartolomé de Las Casas, P. G. Wodehouse, Marguerite Yourcenar, and Eugene Ionesco can suggest something of the international variety that is regularly to be found within a national literary culture. What such cases show is that the national and the global are by no means opposed spheres. Instead, national literatures take on their full meaning when they are seen to be shot through with the international. "European literature" is best understood as the product of a dynamic interplay of the international within the national, and the national within the regional.*

Born in the nineteenth century during the heyday of nationalism, Comparative Literature took as axiomatic the existence of national literatures as the building-blocks of comparative study. Comparatists associated these national literatures closely with a national language, and the focus of their attention was largely on the relations of a few European literary great powers. These assumptions have been profoundly shaken in recent years by the opening up of the global literary canon and by the reshaping of our understanding of post-Cold War Europe. In our world of world-wide webs and transnational flows, how adequate is the category of "national literature" as a primary means to shape our courses and our research? And how should we think today of the regional configuration of "Europe"? Can we still speak of European literature in the singular, or must we rather speak only of European literatures? In either case, how is this entity to be understood in relations to the other regions beyond its increasingly porous borders?

For most scholars during the past two centuries, it seemed natural to take just a few national literatures as representing Europe, or even the broader category of "the West." Erich Auerbach subtitled his magisterial book *Mimesis* "the Representation of Reality in Western Literature," but he might more accurately have subtitled his book

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"The Representation of Reality in Western European Literature." Yet even that qualification would have been insufficient, since no smaller countries such as Portugal, Belgium, or Norway are to be found in his study. Really, *Mimesis* could almost as well have been subtitled "The Representation of Reality in Italy and France," home to no fewer than fifteen of his twenty chapters.

Auerbach's Europe had much the same boundaries in 1946 as Georg Brandes had set in 1872 for his four-volume *Hauptströmungen der Litteratur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* ("Major trends in nineteenth-century literature"). Though an ardent Danish nationalist, Brandes made no more than passing mention of Denmark or any of the smaller European countries, devoting himself instead to the study of literary relations in England, France, and Germany. This close focus on major-power Europeanism long remained typical in American comparative study as well as in Europe itself. In 1960 Werner Friederich, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and founder of the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, criticized American courses in "World Literature" for false advertising. As he noted, these courses weren't even trying to cover all of Europe, much less the entire world:

> Apart from the fact that such a presumptuous term makes for shallowness and partisanship which should not be tolerated in a good university, it is simply bad public relations to use this term and to offend more than half of humanity. . . . Sometimes, in flippant moments, I think we should call our programs NATO Literatures – yet even that would be extravagant, for we do not usually deal with more than one fourth of the 15 NATO-Nations. (Friederich 14-15)

Not that Friederich was advocating an enlarged field of study: to the contrary, he proposed abolishing the use of the label "world literature" altogether.

Nor did the vision of the world grow much larger in comparative study farther afield. As the comparatist Sukehiro Hirakawa has written of his education as in Tokyo in the 1950s,

> It is true that great scholars such as Curtius, Auerbach and Wellek wrote their monumental scholarly works in order to overcome nationalism. But to outsiders like me, Western Comparative Literature scholarship seemed to be an expression of a new form of nationalism – the Western nationalism, if I may use such an expression. It seemed to us an exclusive club of Europeans and Americans. It was a sort of Greater West European Co-Prosperity Sphere. ("Japanese Culture," 47)

This situation has changed dramatically in recent years, and both the globe and the map of Europe itself have opened up. The tight linkage of the nation and a single national language is loosening. Courses in British literature may now include Welsh and Irish works along with English ones, and scholarship on medieval Iberia gives extensive attention to Arabic, Hebrew, and Catalan writing as well as to Castilian. What Kafka called "kleine Literaturen" are now regularly discussed along with the "major" literatures of the major languages, and the dynamics of literary relations across Europe are being understood in new and more capacious ways.

An ambitious first attempt to reconceive the boundaries of European literature can be found in Annick Benoit-Dusausoy and Guy Fontaine's *History of European Literature* (2000), to which a hundred and fifty scholars contributed. As the editors say at the outset, "A persistent obsession with nationhood, limiting an author to one particular area, linguistically and geographically, is a mindset, passed on to us by the nineteenth century, that dies hard" (xxvii). In place of nations, the volume offers pan-European movements (Humanism, the Enlightenment, Romanticism), genres (the traveler's tale, the picaresque novel), and broad themes (sensibility and genius, Woman and Myth). Though still somewhat top-heavy in its representation of French writing – the Marquis de Sade, for instance, is given major-author attention, unlike Friedrich Schiller or Alexander Pope – Benoit-Dusausoy and Fontaine's volume represents a major shift from most earlier practice, freely interspersing Hungarian, Romanian, and Dutch writers among the great-power figures. Discussing the Symbolist movement, for example, the contributors include the Czech Karel Hlaváč, the Greek Konstantinos Hadjopoulos, the Swede Vilhelm Ekelund, the Hungarian Jenö Komjáthy, the Bulgarian Ivan Vazov, and the Flemish August Vermeylen along with such standard figures as the French poets Rimbaud and Verlaine, the German Stefan George, and the English aesthetician Arthur Symons (498-502).

The *History of European Literature* is impressive in its sweep, and yet it is difficult to sit down and read through. The hundred and fifty contributors worked largely in isolation from each other, and the results are often more disconnected than one might wish in a book devoted to showing the interconnectedness of Europe's literary cultures. Further, by so firmly bracketing the long-emphasized category of the nation, Benoit-Dusausoy and Fontaine's volume ends up scanting a major ground of much literary production, often making exaggerated claims for the European importance of little-known figures whose real sphere of activity and influence was local. The volume's thematic categories such as Woman and Myth sometimes seem to be catchalls that have been created to paper over the absence of any substantial connection among far-flung authors and works. The book often becomes a blizzard of names and passing references, not always revealing much beyond the sheer fact – certainly worth knowing – that there were Icelandic Humanists and Hungarian Symbolists. Ideally a reader of the volume will be inspired to look into some previously unknown names, but the book often starts to shade over from a history into an encyclopedia.

Is there still a productive place for the category of the "national literature" in contemporary European literary studies? As early as 1827, Goethe promoted the idea of world literature by asserting that "national literature today is a rather unmeaning term . . . there now arises a world literature, and everyone must work to hasten its approach" (Goethe 132). Today we live in the global world that Goethe foresaw two centuries years ago; are our separate literature departments ossified relics of nineteenth-century nation-building, with its tendentious equation of a nation and a national language? Should we relegate the concepts of "British" and "French" and "Romanian" literature to the ash-heap of history and embrace the expansive world of a "republique mondiale des lettres" or at least a common market of European literature?

Certainly we need to understand national traditions as profoundly shaped by transnational processes. Writers often read a great deal of foreign literature, sometimes even in preference to their own. With very few exceptions (Old Kingdom Egypt, Sumerian literature up to the Old Babylonian period), individual literatures are never chthonic self-creations, but take shape within a much broader international framework. Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett already emphasized this point in 1886 in his pioneering study *Comparative Literature*. There Posnett traced the growth of literature from the clan to the tribe to the city-state and ultimately to the nation. He included a chapter on world literature, but not at the end: he placed it *before* his chapter on national literature, insisting that Goethe was wrong to see world literature as a newly emergent phenomenon. Posnett argued that a true world literature first arose in the Hellenistic world under the Roman Empire, long before the birth of the modern nation-state. Posnett was surely right in this, and yet the converse is also true: as distinct national cultures and national markets have developed in the modern era, world literature has come increasingly to be sustained within them, taking different forms and serving differing purposes in the different cultural spheres in which it is published, marketed, and read.

National literatures and world literature support each other in a kind of biofeedback loop, and the age of globalization gives us an opportunity to consider their intertwined relationship in a fresh way. The global gains particularity and cultural weight in the process, and the category of European literature becomes newly intriguing when it is seen as the meeting place of national and global literary movements and markets. We have habitually construed our national traditions in narrow and inconsistent terms, playing a kind of linguistic and geographic shell game that has policed internal and external boundaries alike. Our departments, survey courses, and scholarship have too often carried on reflexively the nineteenth-century equation of the nation and the national language. In the case of nations in which various languages were spoken, creating this equation meant marginalizing the minority languages or repressing them outright, as with the suppression of Hungarian in post-Austro-Hungarian Romania. Within the British Isles, English literature was defined linguistically as literature written in English: no Irish or Welsh needed to be studied, and even translations from those literatures were rarely given serious attention outside small specialized coteries. Similar exclusions were performed across the Atlantic. Until recently, American literature survey courses rarely included works written in Spanish, French, Yiddish, or Navajo. Conversely, however, on reaching the nation's borders, literary scholars would suddenly change their tune: now, the literary field suddenly became geographic and not linguistic at all, a shift that could enable us to cordon off "British" literature as a fundamentally separate entity from American or Canadian or Caribbean literature.

In many regions, the geographical imperative could then influence language in turn: if a language was too obviously transnational, the narcissism of small differences could be played up to turn dialects into separate languages. By this process "Danish" and "Norwegian" emerged around 1900 from a common Dano-Norwegian stock, in the 1920s H. L. Menkin became a best-selling author for his engaging, jingoistic studies of *The American Language*, and with the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1980s Serbo-Croatian was dismembered into the suddenly separate Serbian and Croatian languages.

Even today, I believe that we are only just beginning to do justice to the true transnationalism of our national traditions. In what follows, I would like to explore the consequences that may follow if we reconceive national literatures in a thoroughgoing way, not basing membership on a fatherland's *Muttersprache*, or on authors' passports, but on their works' effective presence within a nation's literary culture. We have always recognized the presence of a favored few migrant authors within national literary space: T. S. Eliot is regularly included in anthologies of British literature, even as Americanists justifiably continue to claim him as one of their own. And why not? Though he was born and raised in Saint Louis and received crucial intellectual formation during his years at Harvard, he made his career in England and even became a British citizen, exerting a tremendous influence on British literary life through his poetry, his criticism, and his editorial work for Faber and Faber. Yet what of Marie de France? Though this major medieval writer also made her career in London, and drew heavily on British Arthurian themes in her *lais*, for many decades she remained a wholly owned subsidiary of French departments, simply because she wrote in Anglo-Norman and not Anglo-Saxon or Middle English. And this, despite the fact that her very name means Marie *from* France – a name that no writer active in France would ever have had.

England's literary-historical monolingualism was actually never total. Though it was written in Latin and published in Holland, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* has always been understood as part of English literature, and the King James Version of the Bible is celebrated as a masterpiece of Renaissance English prose and verse. Yet such exceptions have been few and far between. If we think less about national languages and more about national markets, attending to what was being published and read in a given time and place, we will often find that the national literary space includes a far higher proportion of imported works than our survey courses allow. Cervantes was far more widely read in eighteenth-century England than was Chaucer, let alone *Beowulf*, whose sole surviving manuscript had yet to be discovered by a visiting Icelandic scholar seeking Scandinavian material. It is no coincidence that Laurence Sterne's opinionated hero Tristram Shandy, speaking of his favorite authors, doesn't name Chaucer or Defoe but instead praises "my dear Rabelais, and dearer Cervantes" (169). "Translations," as one English translator noted in 1654, "swarm more . . . then ever" (Sauer 276), and from the sixteenth century through the eighteenth, Spanish and French romances and plays would often have outnumbered home-grown productions in London booksellers' shops. Their plots, themes, and imagery made their way into English-language writing in much the same way as local material would do, adopted by writers who did not cordon off translated works in a separate mental folder from English-language originals. In this connection, it may be recalled that More's *Utopia* is indebted not only to Plato's *Republic* but also to the Peninsular literature of travel and exploration: More casts his narrative in the form of conversations – in Antwerp – with Raphael Hythlodaeus, a Portuguese sailor who has traveled to Brazil with Amerigo Vespucci and then branched out on his own for further explorations around the globe.

Beginning in the colonial period, the transatlantic book trade reinforced the interplay of the local and the foreign within the European and the nascent American national traditions. I would propose that an influential colonial author such as Bartolomé

de Las Casas should rightfully be seen at once as part of American and of European literature – British as well as Spanish. In the original Spanish, his *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552) is a major work on colonial Mexico and the Caribbean; in English translation, it circulated in England and the American colonies during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with literary as well as political results.

Of particular interest is the second English translation of the text, published in 1656 (Figure 1). The translator, John Phillips – who was also an early translator of *Don Quixote* – evidently undertook the translation of Las Casas at the request of his uncle, John Milton, who had paid for his education, treating him almost as an adopted son. Though the *Brevísima relación* had been translated several decades before, a new version would be useful to Oliver Cromwell as he sought to counter Spanish hegemony in the New World. Having failed to do so by direct action – the Spanish soundly defeated a fleet he sent to the Caribbean in 1654 – Cromwell turned to textual means. In 1655 he published *A Declaration of His Highness, by the Advice of His Council, Setting forth . . . the Justice of Their Cause against Spain*, a tract which Milton translated into Latin for foreign consumption. Soon afterward, John Phillips was commissioned to translate Las Casas, as part of the propaganda effort to highlight the evils of Spanish misrule.

In an illuminating article, "Toleration and Translation: The Case of Las Casas, Phillips, and Milton," Elizabeth Sauer notes that in the introduction to his translation, Phillips echoes language that his uncle had employed in his *Observations on the Cruelties of the Irish*, a tract that Milton had written in support of Cromwell's violent suppression of the Irish rebellion of 1641. To a modern eye, England's Irish subjects might seem more readily parallel to the American Indians than to the conquistadors, but to Milton and to Cromwell the common term was Catholicism, and they sought to combat the insidiously spreading power of the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire then governed by Spain's monarchs.

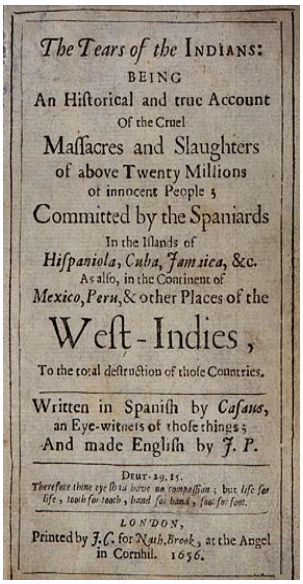
The Tears of the INDIANS:
BEING
An Hiſtorical and true Account
Of the Cruel
Maſſacres and Slaughters
of above Twenty Millions
of innocent People;
Committed by the Spaniards
In the Illands of
Hiſpaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, &c.
As alſo, in the Continent of
Mexico, Peru, & other Places of the
Weſt-Indies,
To the total deſtruction of thoſe Countries.
Written in Spaniſh by Caſaus,
an Eye-witneſs of thoſe things;
And made Engliſh by J. P.
Deut. 29. 15.
Therefore thine eye ſhall have no compaſſion; but life for life, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.
LONDON,
Printed by J. C. for Nath. Brook, at the Angel in Cornhil. 1656.

Figure 1. Title page to John Phillips's translation of Bartolomé de Las Casas's *Brevísima relación*

In translating the *Brevísima relación*, Phillips played up the human drama of the Spanish practices denounced by Las Casas. "The destruction of the Indies" – the region – becomes "*The Tears of the* INDIANS," and on his title page Mexico is subordinated to the large-type "Weſt-Indies," the area of primary English concern. The translation is illustrated with lurid images giving a pornography of violence. The caption to one fourfold image (Figure 2) makes explicit the link between politics and religion. The conquistadors are shown conducting an "inquisition for Bloud," and the hapless natives in the lower left panel sink under the weight of a great anchor, at once image of Spanish naval power and a religious *Ancora Spei*. The natives are lashed by a

demonic Spaniard, as though they are Jesus struggling to carry his cross to Golgotha. The persistent imagery of fire in all four panels strengthens the association between conquistadors and the Devil's infernal henchmen, visually echoing Phillips's preface, which declares that "it hath been the Satanical Scope of the Tyrant, To set all the European Provinces at Variance, and to keep them busie at home, that they might not have leisure to bend their Forces against his Golden Regions" (Sauer 279-80). Furthering the satanic theme, the strung-up body parts in the lower left panel associate the Spanish with the cannibalistic Aztec priests, widely viewed as minions of the Devil in his Mexican guise of Huitzilopochtli, god of war. One Spaniard is even shown cutting the heart out of his dismembered victim, Aztec-style. The overall effect of Phillips's presentation is very different from that of the Spanish original. For all the severity of Las Casas's critique of the conquistadors' excesses, his was a plea for reform within the Spanish imperial project. In John Phillips's hands, his book became something very different, a wholesale denunciation of Spanish rule, even of Catholic culture at large – a radical revision that would have shocked Las Casas himself.

Figure 2. Illustration for *The Tears of the Indians*

If John Phillips drew on his uncle's tracts in framing his translation, *The Tears of the Indians* became a resource for Milton in turn, inflecting his portrayal of Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Often seen in terms of classical paganism, Milton's Satan is closely associated as well with Catholic imperialism. In Book 4 of *Paradise Lost*, Satan voyages from Hell to the "boundless Continent" of Earth, where he hopes to increase his "Honor and Empire with revenge enlarg'd, / By conquering this new World" (Milton 4.390-1). The tears of the Indians come to the fore as Adam and Eve contemplate their fallen bodies in their newly-sewn clothing:

> O how unlike
> To that first naked Glory. Such of late
> *Columbus* found th' *American* so girt
> With feather'd Cincture, naked else and wild
> Among the Trees on Isles and woody Shores.
> Thus fenc'd, and as they thought, thir shame in part
> Cover'd, but not at rest or ease of Mind,
> They sat them down to weep, nor only Tears
> Rained at their Eyes, but high Winds worse within
> Began to rise, high Passions, Anger, Hate,
> Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord . . . . (9.1114-24)

The tears of Adam and Eve, brought about by a Hispanized Satan, are the mirror image of the tears of the Indians caused by Phillips's satanic Spanish monarch, sower of discord in Europe in order to keep rivals away from his New World possessions.

As Elizabeth Sauer says, "The dialectical process of England's identity formation was decisively shaped through its religious, cultural, political and economic relations with Spain. . . . Textual representation, appropriation, and translation serve . . . as vital but neglected 'forms of nationhood'" (286). On this perspective, *The Tears of the Indians* should be considered as much an English as a Spanish work, significantly reframed by John Phillips in tone and in cultural-political intent for its English audience.

Such national reframing often happens at the hands of a work's foreign translators and publishers, but it can also be accomplished directly by authors themselves. A good illustration of such reframing can be found in a modern author who crossed the Atlantic repeatedly, like Las Casas before him, no longer in the service of empire but to cultivate his dual readerships in England and America. I refer here to P. G. Wodehouse, who shuttled back and forth between London and New York in the 1920s and 1930s to assist in productions of his plays and to keep up his contacts with British and American publishers. Particularly relevant here is Wodehouse's 1926 story "The Clicking of Cuthbert," which directly illustrates the co-creation of the national and the international.

In this story, a gloomy Russian novelist named Vladimir Brusiloff is making a lecture tour in America, his gloom profoundly deepened by the fact that at every stop he is assailed by ambitious, indistinguishable young novelists who insist on reading their manuscripts to him. Coming to a reception at the literary club hosted by a suburban society matron, Mrs. Smethurst, he rebuffs all attempts at sociability, his natural taciturnity increased by his discomfort with English ("He gave the impression that each word was excavated from his interior by some up-to-date process of mining"). The hero of the story, Cuthbert Banks – a talented golfer, recent winner of the French Open, but with no interest at all in literature – has come to this grim event solely in hopes of impressing Mrs. Smethurst's niece, Adeline. She, however, is smitten with an up-and-coming literary lion, Raymond Parsloe Devine. Significantly, Adeline informs Cuthbert that Devine's claim to fame is his vaunted European internationalism:

> "Mr. Devine," replied Adeline, blushing faintly, is going to be a great man. Already he has achieved much. The critics say that he is more Russian than any other young American writer."
>
> "And is that good?"
>
> "Of course it's good."
>
> "I should have thought the wheeze would be to be more American than any other young American writer."
>
> "Nonsense! Who wants an American writer to be American? You've got to be Russian or Spanish or something to be a real success." (Wodehouse 388)

Interestingly, Wodehouse continues to register the long reach of Peninsular prestige, as had Sir Thomas More and Laurence Sterne before him: in expecting an

American writer to be "Spanish or something," Adeline is vaguely recalling a recent talk at the club, on "The Neo-Portuguese Movement in Scandinavian Literature" – a perfect Wodehousian touch, that "Neo" (391).

Confident that he will shine before the visiting Russian, Devine waxes eloquent in praise of the novelists Nastikoff and Sovietski; yet he has not reckoned with the fact that, like many writers, Brusiloff despises his national rivals, admiring only the safely dead Tolstoy. Brusiloff roundly declares that "I spit me of Sovietski" and "Nastikoff no good," and then in a startlingly metafictional moment he reveals that the only contemporary writer he esteems is Wodehouse himself: "P. G. Wodehouse and Tolstoy not bad. Not good, but not bad" (394). Humiliated, young Devine retreats in shame. "It is too much to say that there was a dead silence," the narrator observes; "there could never be that in any room in which Vladimir Brusiloff was eating cake" (395). The way is now clear for Cuthbert to make his mark on the gathering and thereby win Adeline's admiration.

Lacking any literary knowledge, however, Cuthbert is at a loss to enter into the conversation, but then Brusiloff asks a question that his cultured hostess cannot quite comprehend. Mrs. Smethurst has inquired whether he has met many prominent Americans during his lecture tour, and Brusiloff mentions having met several, but then expresses his regret that "I have not meet your real great men – your Warragen, your Bennigin. . . . Have *you* ever met Warragen and Bennigin?" Mrs. Smethurst is ashamed that she doesn't recognize these names, apparently of two American writers she's never heard of. Her problem is partly linguistic – Brusiloff's heavily accented English mangles the names – but also cultural, for Mrs. Smethurst knows nothing of the cultural sphere that Brusiloff has in mind. It turns out that Brusiloff is a golfing enthusiast, and the mystery men are two of America's leading golfers, Walter Hagen and Ben Hogan. In the entire gathering, only Cuthbert knows their names. He diffidently steps forward to solve the riddle, and mentions that he was partnered with Hagen "in last year's Open." Finally Brusiloff comes to life, delighted to have met the famous "Cootaboot Banks," and takes Cuthbert aside to trade stories about putting:

> It was one day I play at Nijni-Novgorod with the pro against Lenin and Trotsky, and Trotsky had a two-inch put for the hole. But, just as he addresses the ball, someone in the crowd he tries to assassinate Lenin with a rewolwer – you know that is our great national sport, trying to assassinate Lenin with rewolwers – and the bang puts Trotsky off his stroke and he goes five yards past the hole, and then Lenin, who is rather shaken, you understand, he misses again himself, and we win the hole and the match and I clean up three hundred and ninety-six thousand rubles, or five dollars in your money. (396)

You'll note here Wodehouse's tremendous comic facility with varieties of global English: Brusiloff's Russian-American dialect ("rewolwer," "it was one day I play") is leavened with British golfing language ("just as he addresses the ball") and pure Americanisms ("I clean up"). He can mix several dialects in a single outburst: "My dear young man, I saw you win ze French Open. Great! Great! Grand! Superb! Hot stuff,

and you can say I said so!" (396). Brusiloff's great compatriot Mikhail Bakhtin could hardly have found a better example of dialogistic heteroglossia even in Dostoevsky.

I have long admired this story for Wodehouse's skill at mixing varieties of global English, but I have only recently come to realize how nationally specific the story is as well. On downloading a generous selection of Wodehouse works onto my Kindle, I discovered that the MobileRerefence *Works of P. G. Wodehouse* contains a very different British version of "The Clicking of Cuthbert" from the one I'd read in my American collection of Wodehouse's stories. In the British version, the story is not set in America but in England, and Raymond Parsloe Devine's Russianness makes him more *English* than any other English writer. This is surprising: Wodehouse regularly published his books on both sides of the Atlantic, often with new titles and adjusted spelling, but ordinarily a British setting would remain British, and an American setting would stay American. Why this change of national tradition?

In this story, the plot hinges on Cuthbert's ability to disentangle Brusiloff's slurred names, and the humor of the scene depends on the reader's amused recognition of the prominent golfers once Cuthbert decodes Brusiloff's utterance. If we failed to recognize the golfers' names, we would be relegated to the unfortunate position of the clueless Mrs. Smethurst, a figure of mockery in the story. Evidently, Wodehouse felt that he couldn't count on his readers on one side of the Atlantic to recognize the names of golfers on the other side. And so in the English version Brusiloff inquires not about Warragen and Bennigin but about "Arbmishel and Arreevadon," whom Cuthbert identifies as Abe Mitchell and Harry Vardon. In the service of this local specificity, Wodehouse shifted his story across the Atlantic (either from America to England or vice versa, depending on the order of publication), enrolling Raymond Parsloe Devine in his new readers' national literature. It is clear, then, that however faux-Russian or Neo-Portuguese Devine may be, the transatlantic Wodehouse himself was keenly aware of the national specificity of his different audiences.

"The Clicking of Cuthbert" is thus very clearly a work of British literature in one of its versions and of American literature in its other incarnation, much as Las Casas's *Brevísima relación* becomes a British work in John Phillips's version. A T. S. Eliot in reverse, Wodehouse deserves to be considered an American as well as a British writer. He spent more years living in the United States than in England, published widely in American magazines from 1915 on, and even became an American citizen. Yet to my knowledge, he is found exclusively in British literary guides and anthologies and not in any American ones.

To see Wodehouse in this double way would already be an improvement over the narrow nationalism that is still far too prevalent in our literary studies, but we can also cast our net more broadly, conceiving of our national traditions as including works on a broad spectrum of national and linguistic belonging. From the time *Lolita* hit the bestseller lists in the mid-1950s, Vladimir Nabokov has been recognized as an American as well as a Russian writer. American studies of Nabokov regularly take into account his earlier Russian-language works, which themselves entered American literary culture once they were translated by Dmitri Nabokov under his father's watchful eye. Yet what of

Marguerite Yourcenar? Like Wodehouse and Nabokov, she emigrated to the United States relatively early in her adulthood, and she spent most of her working life in this country. She never shifted from French to English, however, and continued to set her novels and memoirs in Europe. It is understandable that European critics should emphasize her French and Belgian identities over her experience in her adopted country, but we misrepresent her work if we consider her exclusively as an eternal European.

Yourcenar moved to the United States in 1939, and she lived in America for the dozen years preceding the publication of her masterwork *Mémoires d'Hadrien* (1951), a book she had begun years before in France but then set aside, returning to it in 1949. I have earlier argued that we shouldn't gauge a national literature simply by writers' passports, but in fact Yourcenar became an American citizen in 1947, and so she was indeed an American writer, legally speaking, when she composed her most famous work; she continued to live primarily in Northeast Harbor, Maine, until her death in 1987. Like Marie de France before her, she has been discussed almost exclusively by French scholars, who tend to treat her American sojourn as a charming aberration in a cultural wasteland that can have had no significant impact on her writing. Yet Yourcenar not only lived with her American lover Grace Frick for four decades but also traveled widely in the United States, praising its expansive breadth to her friends – "If I were you I would start by hitchhiking to San Antonio or San Francisco," she wrote to one friend; "It takes time to get to know this great country, at once so spread out and so secret" (Savigneau 197). She collected African-American spirituals in the South and translated a volume's worth of them, published under the title *Fleuve profound, somber rivière* (1964). She translated Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* into French, and later translated James Baldwin.

These active relations to American literature and culture go largely undiscussed by Yourcenar's French critics, and are all the more neglected by Americanists, who so far as I know have never written about her at all. Yet it is likely that Yourcenar's American experiences enriched her meditations on Hadrian's far-flung empire and informed her hero's bemused tolerance of minority populations such as the Jews in Roman Judea. Living in Connecticut and teaching at Sarah Lawrence College as she worked on the *Memoirs of Hadrian*, Yourcenar was surely gathering impressions from her students as well as information from the library at Yale University, where she conducted the extensive research that underlies her great novel. Even her relative disengagement from much of American culture can be seen as contributing to her Olympian portrayal of the Roman emperor. As Edmund White shrewdly noted in a review of Josyane Savigneau's Yourcenar biography, "Yourcenar's aloofness at Sarah Lawrence sounds remarkably like Vladimir Nabokov's at Cornell" (White). Both Nabokov and Yourcenar, it may be noted, lectured on comparative literature at their respective colleges, and in the very years that Nabokov was gathering local color for *Lolita* at Cornell, Yourcenar was plotting out her universalized portrait of Hadrian in Connecticut and Maine. Her choice to settle in the United States, she later said, "is not that of America against France. It translates a taste for a world stripped of all borders" (Savigneau 197) – a particularly American take on life at the time of works such as Kerouac's *On the Road*.

In her afterword to *Memoirs of Hadrian*, Yourcenar wrote of resuming her long-abandoned novel while on a transcontinental road trip of her own, by train, in February of 1949:

> Closed inside my compartment as if in a cubicle of some Egyptian tomb, I worked late into the night between New York and Chicago; then all the next day, in the restaurant of a Chicago station where I awaited a train blocked by storms and snow; then again until dawn, alone in the observation car of a Santa Fé Limited, surrounded by black spurs of the Colorado mountains, and by the eternal pattern of the stars. Thus were written at a single impulsion the passages on food, love, sleep, and the knowledge of men. I can hardly recall a day spent with more ardor, or more lucid nights. (Yourcenar 328)

Ever sensitive to place – she became an environmental activist in her later years – Yourcenar here draws inspiration from the expansive American landscape, at once local and universal (surrounded by the black spurs of the Rockies and the eternal pattern of the stars), both linked to the landscape and separated from it, "alone in the observation car of a Santa Fé Limited." Not long before Nabokov would work on *Lolita* while pursuing butterflies in Colorado, she continued to write her novel while touring New Mexico with Grace.

Yourcenar's American experience inflected her novel on many levels, and the *Mémoires d'Hadrien* entered American literary space in turn when it was published in New York in 1954. It came out in the lucid translation lovingly prepared in Northeast Harbor by Grace Frick, corrected on a nightly basis by Yourcenar, who (rightly or wrongly) prided herself on possessing a greater command of English prose style than her American companion. *The Memoirs of Hadrian* received glowing reviews around the country and stayed on *The New York Times* best-seller list for twenty weeks from December 1954 through May of 1955. It was eventually edged off the list by a varied group of American and imported novels, including Françoise Sagan's *Bonjour Tristesse,* Thomas Mann's *Confessions of Felix Krull,* and – very different in provenance and tone – Mac Hyman's *No Time for Sergeants*. *Lolita* was in press during those months, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that Nabokov was intrigued by his fellow émigré's portrayal of a philosopher-king and his passion for his handsome young lover, Antinous. The popular success of Hadrian's fictional memoir helped pave the way for Nabokov's next project, the tragicomic commentary-memoir of the deposed Zemblan monarch Charles X. Kinbote.

If the relatively isolated and inbred American literary space is profoundly transnational, this is all the more true of Europe, with its many closely connected countries, their literary capitals linked by networks of railways and highways, marriages and love affairs, book tours and book fairs. Yet even with writers whose binational identity is well recognized, the circulation of their work in European literary space is rarely given full attention. Consider the case of Eugene Ionesco. He is rightly identified as both a Romanian and a French writer, but a dual identification is not really enough. His works not only circulate widely in other national spaces in Europe: in important instances, his plays entered other European spaces even before they premiered in France

and usually much later in Romania. To take the case of his most famous play, *Rhinoceros* received its first performance in August of 1959 in the form of a broadcast in English by the BBC. Its first full staging then took place two months later, in October 1959 – again not in France but in Düsseldorf, in German translation. The English translation was staged a month later, not in Europe at all but in Toronto. Only in January 1960 did the play is receive its first French production. Even then it would be far too simple to describe *Rhinoceros* as a purely French work, since three months later it was performed *simultaneously* in French and in German. Over the course of 1960 it was also staged in England (directed by no less a figure than Orson Welles), and also in Gdansk, Prague, Vienna, Italy, Oslo, and Tokyo. *Rhinoceros* extended its transnational reach in the ensuing two years to Broadway, Greece, Israel, and Uruguay.

Rhinoceros can thus be understood as a quintessentially European work, circulating from the outset throughout European literary space and, more selectively, elsewhere in the world. Equally, its highly individualized productions in these different countries contributed importantly to the various national spaces within which it was performed. Thus, there is every reason to consider Ionesco as part of Italian as well as French literary culture today. *La Cantatrice Chauve* – inspired by Ionesco's surrealist reading of the exercises in his English grammar book – has established itself as a seemingly permanent fixture at the Théâtre de la Huchette in Paris, where it has run continuously since 1957. Yet its Italian avatar, *La Cantatrice Calva*, is comparably prominent in Italian cultural space, having enjoyed more than two thousand performances at Turin's Teatro delle Deici since 1958, and clearly becoming a major influence on Italian playwrights such as the Nobel Prize-winning Dario Fo.

Examples as varied as Bartolomé de Las Casas, P. G. Wodehouse, Marguerite Yourcenar, and Eugene Ionesco can suggest something of the international variety that is regularly to be found within a national literary culture. What such cases show is that the national and the global are by no means opposed spheres. Instead, national literatures take on their full meaning when they are seen to be shot through with the international. "European literature" is best understood as the product of a dynamic interplay of the international within the national, and the national within the regional. Seen in its transnational and global dimensions, European literature gains a new kind of distributed coherence, and becomes a newly vital force field of study: "Hot stuff," as Wodehouse's Vladimir Brusiloff would say, "and you can say I said so!"

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