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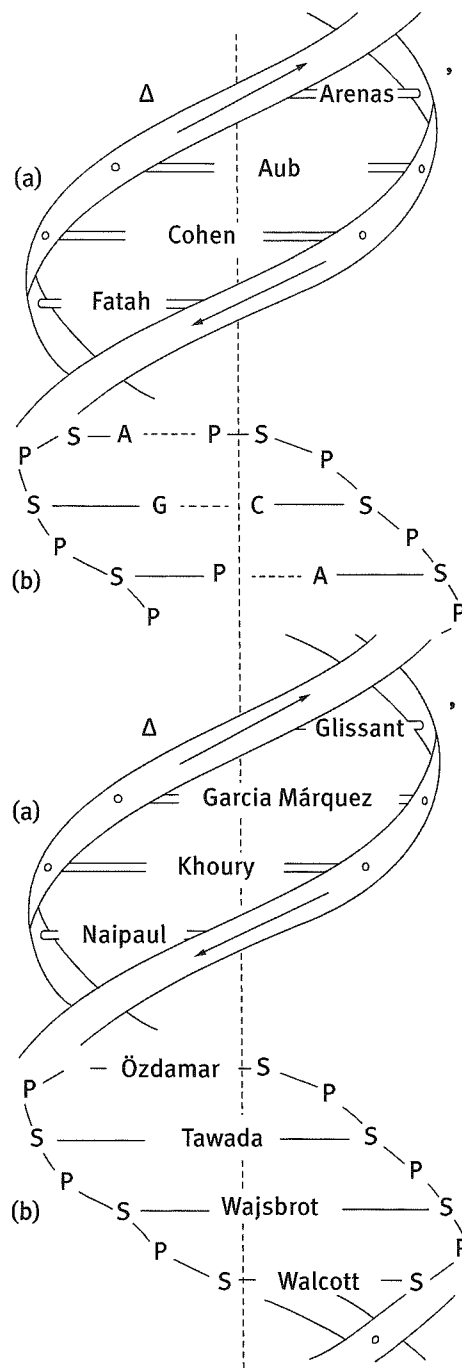
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WRITING- BETWEEN- WORLDS

TRANSAREA STUDIES AND THE
LITERATURES-WITHOUT-A-FIXED-ABODE

MIMESIS ROMANISCHE LITERATUREN
DER WELT

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Literature as Knowledge-for-Living, Literary Scholarship as Science-for-Living

dimensional globe to a two-dimensional map and thus to disregard the inevitable problems of cartographic projection. Spatialization has its price, especially when it ignores movement. By contrast, Walter Benjamin's arcades – to mention but one example – not only create spaces but in fact construct *mobile spaces*, as the passage ways of the German title of his *Arcades Project* (*Passagen-Werk*) already signals. Benjamin's mobile spaces create interWorlds that function like mobiles and that include passersby.

What is the value of these thoughts for literary analysis? First of all, they draw our attention to migrations and movements of the most varied sort which start to occupy center stage during the twentieth century. Especially the Literatures without a fixed Abode, which came into being during the past century without their existence really being noticed, set all elements and aspects of literary production in motion in far more radical and robust ways than had ever been done before. We witness now a vectorization of all (spatial) relations, including those of national literatures. Our theories and terminologies have to be responsive to this change. To analyze the Literatures without a fixed Abode, we need concepts that can articulate difficult vectoral processes. We still do not have any testable concepts of movement that correlate space and time in sufficiently complex ways to allow us to describe this vectorization with precision. This is why we have as yet no fully articulated *poetics of movement* to help decode the vectoral imagination of today's literatures in all its intricacy and multiplicity, so that we can retrieve from them the knowledge-for-living sedimented there in layers of overlapping movements. This is not to say that a 'vectoral turn' should now replace the spatial turn. Rather, we have to our attune critical analyses of cultural and literary phenomena more to the forms and functions of movement.

Karl Schlögel quips that the Baedeker is 'the basic form of area studies': 'area studies are the scholarly, specialized forms of that same knowledge, which millions of people make their own each year, always with the latest updates.... There is no more convincing evidence of people's interest in the world in which we live.'⁶⁴ Such witticisms cannot, however, hide the crisis in regional studies à la Baedeker. The reasons for this crisis are many, but they are no doubt related to the need for serious thinking about movement. What might area (or regional) studies look like after or beyond Baedeker? A response to this question requires some initial conceptual clarifications.

⁶⁴ Schlögel: *Im Raum lesen wir die Zeit*, p. 264–265.

Multi – inter – trans

**Disciplines*: Traditionally, centers for regional studies have both *multidisciplinary* and *interdisciplinary* foundations. On the one hand, there is the multidisciplinary side-by-side-ness of individual disciplines, with separate disciplinary anchors. On the other hand, there are interdisciplinary conversations among the representatives of various disciplines. This relatively static, indeed 'disciplined,' model should have as its complement a *transdisciplinary* structure, whose goal is not an interdisciplinary exchange among conversation partners who remain firmly rooted in a single discipline but a continual crosshatching of those disciplines. In this way, it becomes possible to render dynamic radically different areas of knowledge and to bind them more strongly and flexibly. It goes without saying that the advancement and the results of this 'nomadic' practice, which is transdisciplinary in the true sense, must be tested out in ongoing disciplinary and interdisciplinary exchanges.⁶⁵ In this section, I want to introduce concepts analogous to these terminological demarcations and translate them into the logics of different areas of research. Within each area's analytical framework, the differentiations I propose above can be rendered more precise with the help of three prefixes: 'multi,' 'inter,' and 'trans.'

**Cultures*: When analyzing cultural phenomena, it is necessary to distinguish between the *multicultural* side-by-side-ness of different cultures that reside, say, in different urban spaces (neighborhoods or districts), and an *intercultural* living-with-one-another. The latter defines encounters of all sorts among the members of cultures who interact with one another without questioning that they belong to a given culture or cultural group. What I call the *trans-cultural* level is a critical extension of the path-breaking writings about *transculturalidad* by the Cuban ethnologist and cultural theorist Fernando Ortiz.⁶⁶ This level is distinct from the two previous ones in that it encompasses movements and practices that cross very different cultures: that is, people oscillate between cultures, thus making it impossible to discern stable affiliations with a single culture or cultural group.

**Languages*: Beyond monolingual situations in which one language clearly dominates the logosphere, one can primarily distinguish between the *multicultural*

⁶⁵ See also Ette: *ÜberLebenswissen*, p. 29–34.

⁶⁶ See Fernando Ortiz: *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho 1978. Originally published in 1940.

side-by-side-ness of different languages and linguistic spaces with little or no overlap and *interlingual* situations in which two or more languages engage intensely with each other. In contrast to an intralingual translation, which might be called, with Roman Jakobson, a 'rewording' within the same language, interlingual translations are transactions between two distinct languages.⁶⁷ Different from intra- and interlingual situations are translingual ones which refer to a never-ending process of linguistic transection.⁶⁸ In this situation, the high degree of linguistic interpenetration makes it difficult, even impossible, to distinguish one or more languages from each other. In the context of literary writing, a translingual practice would be one in which an author moves back and forth between different languages both in his or her work as a whole and within a single text. In the following chapters, I will further nuance these terms.

**Media*: Parallel to the above formulations, one might, one might distinguish *multimedial* situations, in which numerous media exist next to each other without any significant overlap or contact, from *intermedial* situation, in which different media come together in an intense dialogue without, however, losing their respective characteristics. In a *transmedial* situation, finally, different media interpenetrate in an incessant process of movement, crossing, and 'trans-lation.' Here, unlike in the previous definitions, it is impossible cleanly to separate multi-, inter-, and transrelational phenomena either spatially or temporally. This sort of transparency and definitional rigor offer ways of analyzing such areas of overlap and intersection more precisely.

**Temporalities*: Temporal processes can be structured in comparable conceptual ways. If *multi-temporal* processes concern themselves with the side-by-sideness of different temporal levels that exist independently of each other, then *inter-temporal* processes define the ongoing communication among different temporal dimensions that neither blend nor fuse. In keeping with this, *transtemporal* processes or structures refer to a ceaseless crisscrossing of different temporal dimensions. Such a movement creates a highly unusual kind of temporality whose transtemporal nature brings to the fore specific transcultural and translingual phenomena. With respect to periodization, suffice it here to refer to the

⁶⁷ See Roman Jakobson: 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation.' In: Stephen Rudy (ed.): *Roman Jakobson: Selected Writings*. The Hague: De Gruyter Mouton 1971–1985, vol. 2, p. 260.

⁶⁸ For different use of the term 'translingual' in the context of China see Lydia H. Lui: *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity – China, 1900–1937*. Stanford: Stanford University Press 1995.

four phases of accelerated globalization that structure economic, political, social, and, above all, cultural processes under colonialism and postcolonialism.⁶⁹ My examples in the previous sections and in the following chapters describe the phases of accelerated globalization from the perspective of different 'areas.'

**Spaces*: It is hardly surprising that spatial structures can be similarly divided: *multispatial* situations with poor contact coexist with *interspatial* structures with intense interactions. *Transspatial* structures come into being when different kinds of spaces are traversed and characterized by a dynamic pattern that will become conceptually more detailed in later chapters.

**(Travel) Movements*: In analyzing the writing practices of travel literature,⁷⁰ whose texts frequently oscillate between fiction and diction – a movement I call *frictional* – we must first distinguish among the different dimensions of a travelogue. In addition to the three spatial dimensions, there are temporal ones, as well as dimensionalities created by social structure, imagination, literary space, generic relations, and cultural space. Next, it is useful to differentiate among certain overdetermined scenes in a travelogue, notably departures, climaxes, arrivals, and returns. These scenes are part of basic figures of movement – such as circle, pendulum, star, or leaps – which suggest patterns to readers and influence the movement of their own hermeneutics. Especially relevant for the study of the highly complex field of Writing-between-Worlds, these nuances allow for the spatiotemporal exactness of textual analyses.

Why TransArea Studies?

How can one use the conceptual model I outline above for transareal (literary) scholarship? This question is enormously important for the future development of so-called area studies. Following the conceptual nuancing of the relations between culture and language, space and time, medium and discipline, let me try to capture actual spatial movements in detail. To begin with, I want to distinguish among five different levels. Movements on the *translocal* level occur between urban or rural places and spaces of limited expanse – landscapes and cityscapes in Bharati Mukherjee's sense.⁷¹ At the *transregional* level, we find mo-

⁶⁹ See Ette: *Weltbewusstsein*, p. 25–27.

⁷⁰ See Ette: *Literatur in Bewegung*, p. 21–84.

⁷¹ See Aciman: *Letters of Transit*, p. 47.

vements between certain landscapes and/or cultural spaces that are either smaller than nations or constitute manageable units situated between nations. I call *transnational* movements among different nation-spaces or nation-states. *Transareal* movements, by contrast, occur between different areas, such as, for instance, the Caribbean or Eastern Europe. *Transcontinental* movements are passages from one continent, such as Asia, Africa, or the Americas, to another. It is easy to see how the dynamics at each level can be further subdivided according to the type of movement, that is, into *multi-*, *inter-*, and *transnational* models.

Movements contribute decisively to the ways in which (living) spaces are constituted and invested with meaning. The internal relations within a given space are of key significance in connection with an external set of relations that connects one space with another. To give a concrete example: the Caribbean can be understood in its specificity only when one's historical analysis includes the diverse inter-island communications *and* the web of the Caribbean's external relations with different European (colonial) powers, their American possessions, Africa, the USA, China, and India. If a given space is effectively characterized by relevant movements in the past, present, and, prospectively, the future, then the combination of the five different levels I suggest above can tell us much about political, cultural, and particularly literary phenomena.

An initial example, which I will develop more in chapter 6, shows just how multifaceted such a combination can be. In Emine Sevgi Özdamar's novel *The Bridge of the Golden Horn* (*Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, 1998) the cities of Istanbul and Berlin overlap such that, for the protagonist, a translocal urban movement appears in a transnational and, at the same time, transareal context in which both national and areal borders are crossed. But there is more: If we look at the young woman's movements between the European and the Asian parts of Istanbul, which are crucial to the novel's plot, then her daily commute across the Bosphorus also appears as a transcontinental movement, even though it remains below the national and even the regional level. The partition of Istanbul also mirrors the partition of Berlin, so that the frequent back and forth between the western and eastern parts of Berlin, in the context of two nations that, prior to 1989, still belonged to antagonistic blocs, turns out, at the local level, to be a transnational *and* a transareal movement. As I demonstrate in chapter 6, these movements have far-reaching consequences for the configuration of space and perception in Özdamar's novel.

Let me dwell on the local level a little longer. Although the migratory, economic, and social relationships between a village in Chiapas and a neighborhood in Los Angeles exist in transnational and transareal contexts, they bring

these two levels into focus from the perspective of a translocal pattern of movement that is at once rural and urban. If one considers comparable translocal relations, for instance between Cuban exiles in Miami and their original families in the Cuban province of Oriente, one can already on the translocal level discern a pattern of movement that creates a dynamic interWorld of (North) American and (Latin) American studies. Although this inerWorld is indispensable for understanding these areas and their studies, it tends to be eclipsed for disciplinary reasons as frequently as the fact that such movements constellate the American continents as a hemispheric space.

The constitution of regional spaces often occurs with the help of boundaries, as is the case in Sherko Fatah's novel 'In the borderlands' (*Im Grenzland*, 2001) where a smuggler frequently crosses the borders between Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. Such crossings subvert and *at the same time* solidify existing borders, and they set in motion a complex dialectic of spatial construction through oft-repeated (even if, as in this example, prohibited) patterns of movement.⁷² An example from French literature further demonstrates this dynamic of transregional border crossings: Cécile Wajsbrot's *Beaune-la-Rolande* (2004) and *Mémorial* (2005), on which I will comment in chapters 2 and 8. Both texts have transregional settings in which a particular landscape south of Paris and the region around Auschwitz are superimposed upon one another. They connect not only the first-person narrator's train journey but also the train tracks that lead from the internment and concentration camp in France to the extermination camp in today's Poland. The transnational and translocal levels are transregionally interwoven into a single landscape whose physical appearance brings into view the survival of the Shoah. Here, transregionality, as a connection between two landscapes that are at once distant and yet oddly proximate, becomes a powerful literary strategy. In these texts, the transregional patterns of movement transmit an image familiar to an individual's sense of space, which is much more intense than it would have been on the more abstract transnational level.

Transregional relations at a transareal and, at the same time, transcontinental level also characterize the political efforts that then-Brazilian President Lula da Silva initiated in May 2005, and which led to a joint summit of the Latin American countries and the states of the Arab League in Brasilia. While in the political realm, the transcontinental and transnational south-south relation occupied the center of attention, the transareal level was perhaps more important for the strengthening of Arab-American cultural relations.

⁷² See Eva Horn et al. (eds): *Grenzverletzer: Von Schmugglern, Spionen und anderen subversiven Gestalten*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos 2002, p. 7–22.

Traditional area studies tend either to disregard such transareal patterns of movement or to minimize their importance. For patterns of movement that go beyond a given familiar area often seem less relevant so long as they do not affect centers in either Europe or the USA. The eclipsing of Arab-American relations is a good example here. It is often the case that disciplinary 'jurisdictions' claim that there are deficits in the perceptual pattern either of entire branches of research or of regional studies centers. While Arab-American relations are present in the literatures of Latin America, they do not appear on the radar screen of regional studies that have only disciplinary or at best interdisciplinary moorings. For such centers function much like a Baedeker guide in that they concentrate exclusively on their respective area; beyond that, they may consider how their area relates to their institutions' own locations in Europe or the USA. As chapter 7 seeks to demonstrate through readings of novels by Gabriel García Márquez and Elias Khoury, the transareal interWorlds of the Arab-Americas are of far-reaching interest to transareal research, because the knowledge stored in this literature may very well provide correctives to familiar disciplinary patterns of perception.

This book attempts to sound the depths of the complex combinations of all these different conceptual levels and, in addition to examining transareal relations, determine the transcultural, translingual, and transtemporal patterns of movement connected with them. The future of area studies is not in the Baedeker but lies in an opening onto *TransArea studies* in which area-related competencies connect with transdisciplinary research practices. The Literatures without a fixed Abode, with their fascinating ways of Writing-between-Worlds that national literary studies notice only in passing, offer rich resources for such research and, at the same time, a boundless reservoir of knowledge (for living). It is the responsibility of literary scholarship to recover and protect this treasure. For this reason, a transareal orientation is of great significance for literary studies. If one were to distinguish transareal literary studies, which joins the different disciplines within the framework of *TransArea studies*, from the traditional approaches of Comparative Literature, one might say that the latter engages in static comparisons of the politics, societies, economies, and symbolic production of countries that it pits against each other. Transregional research, by contrast, focuses more on movement, exchange, and processes of transformation. For *TransArea studies*, routes and vectors matter more than spaces; shifting borders matter more than static ones; and relations and communication matter more than territories. Our times are times of inter-nets. They demand mobile and relational, transdisciplinary and transareal concepts of knowledge produc-

tion, along with terminologies and methodologies capable of articulating movements better.

Like Adorno, Horkheimer, and Auerbach, Benjamin chose a figure in motion. But for his angel of history, unlike for Odysseus, the way back home, the path leading to an original paradise, is barred. And yet, the angel's gaze is no less averted from home than that of the crafty Greek. Storms push both figures; both rove while still having a point of orientation. Yet, whereas the homecoming homeless figure is still granted the possibility of a final homecoming to Penelope's loom, which makes his erratic and disconnected wanderings circular, Klee's angel, in Benjamin's eyes, has only the possibility of moving toward a stormy impending progress. For the Angelus Novus, progress(ion) becomes a regression toward the future without return, erratic yet still perfectly linear. Above all, this figure of movement, and in motion, is estranged from his own will, much like 'science's progress has become almost independent of what we *want* to do,' as Hannah Arendt stressed in her reflections on power and violence.⁴⁹

Auerbach's philological and world-literary reflections; Horkheimer and Adorno's critical philosophical-scientific fragments; and Benjamin's historico-philosophical and progress-critical theses show to what extent the dimension of homelessness pervaded knowledge (production) in the mid-twentieth century. They also demonstrate in how fundamental a way homelessness had imprinted itself on writing, thinking, and even life itself for a long time. Through evermore brutal wars and mass pogroms, anti-Semitism and the Shoah, homelessness had become the rule. When one considers how ineluctably their own life experiences were intertwined with their historical circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the generational experience of authors such as Hannah Arendt, Victor Klemperer, and Werner Krauss would be refracted, in transgenerational ways, in the lens of later reflections on persecution and exile, migration and internments. Homelessness has continued in changed historical and socio-cultural circumstances since the end of the twentieth century, the century of migrations. The dialectic of enlightenment still operates as a dialectic of homelessness. Even as other figures of motion come into being at the end of the twentieth century, Odysseus and the Angel of History by no means disappear. If home is a state of having escaped, then escape is a way to image and imagine one's homeland, to capture it in a (moving) picture. In fact, it is many ways.

If the state of exception is the rule and the concentration camp is a bio-political paradigm of modernity, then homelessness, in a time when the storm continues to blow Benjamin's Angel of History ever farther away from Paradise become as collective experience of living-without-a-fixed-abode. Even though lite-

⁴⁹ Hannah Arendt: *Macht und Gewalt*. Munich: Piper 1970, p. 86.

rary explorations of the supposed state of exception in the era of postcolonial theory increasingly call attention to phenomena such as diaspora and exile, migration and transmigration, it will still be a long while before the literatures of homelessness – or better, the Literatures without a fixed Abode – will be understood and recognized as more than just peripheral parts of global literatures. If we are to attain an adequate understanding of literary writing in the twenty-first century, we have to adjust not only the concept of history but also the concepts of literature and literary history which are connected with history in a fundamentally complex way. There is no doubt that these global literatures will increasingly have to be understood as Literatures without a fixed Abode. The wings of Benjamin's angel are still spread open wide, and the storm has increased in intensity. It may well be that, faced with such forces, neither the present concept of history nor those of literature and literary scholarship are sustainable any longer.

Literatures without a fixed Abode

Within the globalized, but by no means egalitarian, literary networks of the world, the Literatures without a fixed Abode are occupying a large and increasingly important space. At the end of a century marked by migrations on an unprecedented scale, migrations due to war, famine, economic pressures, and ecological catastrophes as well as political, racist, and sexist persecution, developments occurred that have gradually transformed, and continue to do so at an accelerated pace, the maps of world literatures in transit from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. Planetary systems of communication and transnational labor markets; fundamentalist religious wars and 'ethnic cleansing;' globalized money markets and mounting numbers of economic refugees, along with other phenomena too numerous to mention here have all created a situation in which the previous centers have been pushed out to the periphery and the former margins have moved in toward the centers where they have become culturally active. But in contrast to the globalization of 'disaster triumphant' evoked in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the globalization of democracy and justice has yet to arrive in our age of migration and interdependence.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ See the very different approaches of Otfried von Höffe: *Demokratie im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*. Munich: Beck 1999; Matthias Albert: *Zur Politik der Weltgesellschaft: Identität und Recht im Kontext internationaler Vergesellschaftung*. Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft 2002;

Our metropolises in particular have become focal points of multicultural, intercultural, and transcultural movements, by which I mean various kinds of cultural side-by-sideness, exchanges among clearly distinguished cultures, and the sort of nomadic interactions that cross different cultures. Even in cases where such phenomena overlap and intersect with each other, it is crucial, and in fact unavoidable, in any study of world literatures that we differentiate conceptually among the movements of cultural side-by-sideness, coexistence, and entanglement or crosshatching. Otherwise, we run the risk of conflating the opposing vectors of cultural homogenization and heterogenization and of underestimating their complexity.

The unavoidable crossing of linguistic boundaries frequently disturbs political and cultural borders. Taking recourse to Hannah Arendt, Giorgio Agamben draws attention to the fact that what has put the 'originary fiction of modern sovereignty' in a crisis in the context of modern nation-building is the rift of the 'continuity between man and citizen, *nativity* and *nationality*.'⁵¹ This fissure became increasingly visible during the twentieth century. Refugees, stateless persons, and migrants destabilize assumptions about processes of identity formation based on the nation state, which are predicated on the 'naturalness' and 'self-evident' character of supposedly homogeneous (cultural, religious, and linguistic) communities. Literature has played an especially vital role in the creation and the discursive subversion of imagined communities.

For quite some time now, the mother tongue into which someone is 'born' has no longer automatically been the same language that a given writer uses as her literary language, either long-term or sporadically. One can migrate to a foreign national literature much like one can migrate to a foreign country. Belonging to two or more national literatures or writing in various languages either serially or simultaneously is no more unusual in our day than changes in citizenship and holding several passports. Even if they differ in degree and kind in the various literary regions of the world, such phenomena are no longer rarities and have not been for some time now. Precisely in zones of dense globalization, these developments are emerging on such a massive scale that the construction of homogeneous 'national' spaces for culture and literature seem not just outdated; they are part of a conscious, deliberate re-nationalization. But what does all

and Nancy Fraser: *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition*. New York: Routledge 1997.

51 Giorgio Agamben: *Homo sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press 1998, p. 131.

this mean in a world where the nation can no longer be a 'philological homeland?'

These developments give Goethe's concept of 'Weltliteratur' a completely new meaning, one that clearly goes beyond ideas of both the nation state and national literature, even if the latter concept continues to affect important aspects of literary production, reproduction, distribution, and reception. The literatures of the world are less settled and have increasingly adopted nomadic patterns of thinking, writing, and perceiving. To this vectorization of literary production corresponds in literary criticism and scholarship an increased sense of spatial and, at times, intercultural and transcultural mobility. For various reasons, as my examples have shown, the USA have, at least since the mid-twentieth century, become not exactly a *melting pot* but, the most important *meeting point* and platform for developments in the worldwide literary network, and not only in the sense of the famous *salad bowl*. In a sense, the USA have inherited the mantle of France and particularly Paris, which, as Henri Michaux once put it, was 'the homeland for those who did not have a homeland.'⁵² Eloquent testimony to this fact is the enormous number of intellectuals, writers, scholars, and scientists from all corners of the world who come to the USA for either short or extended stays or live on both sides of the Atlantic or the Pacific.

Writing-without-a-fixed-abode undermines national borders. Rather than challenge the existence of these borders, it frequently multiplies them. Such writing opens up the concept of national literature through the growing presence of a literature that one often subsumes under that highly unsatisfactory rubric of 'migrant' literature. In an article about the Spanish translation of Emine Sevgi Özdamar's German-language novel *Life is a Caravanserai* (*Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*, 1999),⁵³ Juan Goytisolo, who had forsaken his native Barcelona to make his first home in the Arab world, stressed how, for many years, he had been at pains to call attention to the fact that Turks would soon write a significant portion of German literature, writers from the Caribbean and the Maghreb would pen a major part of French literature, and Pakistanis would author a large share of English literature.⁵⁴ This fact has been incontrovertible for some

52 'La patrie de ceux qui n'ont pas de patrie.' Henri Michaux: 'Lieux lointains.' In: *Mercur de France* 1109 (1956), p. 52.

53 See Emine Sevgi Özdamar: *Life is a Caravanserai, Has Two Doors, I Came in One, I Went Out the Other*. London: Middlesex University Press, 2000. Among other honors, Özdamar received the Austrian Ingeborg Bachmann Prize in 1991.

54 Juan Goytisolo: 'On Emine Sevgi Özdamar.' In: *New York Times Literary Supplement* 12 (1994); see also Ette: *ÜberLebeswissen*, p. 227–52.

time now, even if the general consensus among national academic institutions and the media is still to dismiss such developments as marginal. Goytisolo's prognosis has come true in an astonishingly short period of time. It represents an important, if by no means the only, reality of contemporary writing at the start of the twenty-first century. Özdamar, who grew up in Turkey, said in an interview conducted on the occasion of her being awarded the Kleist Prize that languages 'are like instruments, you make music with them, vary them,' adding: 'National pride gives me hives. It's enough to say that I was born here or there. Nothing more. You would really have to have at least twenty passports; one never knows what country is going to be the enemy of what country next. Or a world passport. Or none at all.'⁵⁵ Similarly, the Algerian-born writer Assia Djébar noted in a lecture on her novel 'Strasbourg nights' (*Les nuits de Strasbourg*), which was written in French in Louisiana in 1997 and whose action takes place in two different time frames in French-Alsatian-German Strasbourg:

Without a place to call home, without the need for an origin: for at least twenty years, I've enjoyed my nomadic existence; I felt comfortable and sometimes even at home in Barcelona, Venice, Freiburg im Breisgau, or in the metropolises of northern Europe, in Paris, where I arrived, which I wanted to discover. [...] When a man or woman comes to Europe from points south and writes European literature, is that not a kind of reverse 'exoticism'? For us, the counterpart or parallel of Europeans' 'Orientalism' would be 'Occidentalism' – a temptation: why not?⁵⁶

As a casual aside, Djébar signals here that European literature is no longer the sole *chasse gardée*, the private preserve, of Europeans. Her remark that her 'writing longed for *other places*' in no way implies a desire to be territorialized as other in the literary terrain, but, rather, the wish to create a literature that cannot *easily* be territorialized. The rebellion against time-honored lines of demarcation is patently obvious here, even though (or especially because) her writing deals intensively with specific places, for example, Strasbourg during the period when the French troops had evacuated it (September 1939 to June 1940), thus tackling a subject that has been largely avoided in both French and German lite-

⁵⁵ 'Sprachen sind ja wie Instrumente, man musiziert mit ihnen, kann abwechseln.' 'Von Nationalstolz kriege ich Allergien. Es reicht doch zu sagen, ich bin da oder dort geboren. Mehr nicht. Überhaupt, man müsste mindestens zwanzig Pässe haben, man weiß ja nicht, welches Land sich als nächstes mit welchem verfeindet. Oder einen Weltpass. Oder keinen.' Emine Sevgi Özdamar: 'Wir wohnen in einer weiten Hölle (interview with Nils Minkmar).' In: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* (December 21, 2004), p. 23.

⁵⁶ Assia Djébar: 'Schreiben in Europa: Über den Roman *Nächte in Straßburg*.' Lecture at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, November 28, 1998.

atures. The Literatures without a fixed Abode cannot simply be evacuated because they thwart and unsettle traditional territorial lines in literature and philology inherited from the nineteenth century.

The development Goytisolo sketched and Djébar's writing embodies in its own way has picked up its pace since the end of the twentieth century. This acceleration should not, however, deceive us into thinking that national literary categories, ascriptions, and exclusionary mechanisms have either already disappeared or will disappear in the foreseeable future. Readers' outmoded categorical expectations, be they marked by an insistence of 'national' or 'one's own' culture, continue, along with difficulties within the literary industry and academic literary scholarship. As long as they do, Turks will continue not to consider the work of Özdamar part of Turkish literature; José F. A. Oliver's writing will remain on the outside of Spanish literature, as Spaniards see it; and Amin Maalouf's books will not be counted as Arab literature in the Arab world itself. Authors whose work can be classified as Literature without a fixed Abode are the preferred objects of expatriation from national literary (and, at times, nation-state) canons. Examples are legion. Rare exceptions, such as Yoko Tawada, who has published in German and in Japanese and has received awards in both countries, prove rather than disprove the rule of mutual exclusion.

Writers who have no permanent residence in a land that is supposedly their 'own' often have a difficult time escaping such exclusionary mechanisms. Both serial (cultural and literary) border crossers – branded variously as border-violators, smugglers, or spies, as vagabonds, nomads, and mercenaries, as freebooters, refugees, and double agents – are borderland dwellers who have always had problems being recognized in those countries where they live at any given point. It comes as no surprise, then, that representatives of the Literatures without a fixed Abode – in contrast to those authors whose work can easily be assigned to a single national literature – tend to be considered suspect and subversive.

And yet, it is increasingly difficult today to dismiss migratory literature and other forms of the Literatures without a fixed Abode as exceptions and to exclude them on that basis. Moreover, national institutes of cultural foreign policy, such as the Goethe Institut and the Instituto Cervantes, have long recognized that literary 'nomads' allow them to score points abroad and publicly exhibit (and aesthetically prove in persuasive ways) the openness of their respective societies. Until now, however, the philologies have not yet articulated concepts that would do justice to phenomena and developments that have been widespread and frequent within the international literary industry for some time now.

The point of my discussion of Auerbach's preliminary reflections on a philology of Weltliteratur was to show that the conceptually contrasting notions of 'national literature' and 'world literature,' which we have inherited from the nineteenth century, are no longer adequate for addressing events that, in the wake of the totalitarianisms, wars, and persecutions of the twentieth century, the Shoah in particular, have fundamentally changed what we consider 'normal' in thinking and writing and have made migratory writing into an international mass phenomenon. The limits of existing concepts, which Auerbach seismographically registered against the background of his own life-experience, demand conceptual changes and flexible academic specializations that can do justice to the vectoral imagination of literary writing and to the dynamic dimension of artistic production on as many levels as possible. What is at stake is not to apply Goethe's famous dictum, that 'national literature has little to tell us today' and that the 'era of Weltliteratur' is dawning, to the changed conditions of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries but to adapt that dictum critically and creatively to altered conditions. In light of our fourth phase of accelerated globalization, it is now time to interrelate the diverse literatures of the world in innovative ways, to set them in motion conceptually by including the Literatures without a fixed Abode, and to focus attention on dynamic figures of movement in the context of a fractal, discontinuous and, as it were, post-Euclidean geometry of literary production and reception. The following chapters are devoted to showing how this might be done.

What I mean is that, in the future, we should direct our attention more to phenomena of literary translation and transmission and, from this 'external' perspective, shed light on the entrenched instances of individual (national) literary fields. Simultaneously, we need to understand literary languages and territories as migratory spaces for 'foreign' languages and 'foreign' cultures, as spaces in which we glimpse the 'foreign' as part of 'our own' without, however, losing its 'foreignness' altogether. It is especially important to explore how writing displaced in translocal, transnational, or transareal ways establishes a sense of home in other places and, by doing so, transforms and enriches the host (literary) language, a process on which Walter Benjamin reflects in 'The Task of the Translator.' To see such processes only as signs of either cultural homogenization or hybridization is conceptually impoverishing. One of the key tasks of contemporary literary studies should be more precisely to document and analyze the multiple patterns of movement that occur between these two poles.

The Literatures without a fixed Abode increasingly came into their own during the late twentieth century, without everyone actually being aware of this

development. Their maturation set in motion all aspects and elements of literary production in a far more radical and enduring ways than ever before. We are now witnessing a broad-based vectorization of all sorts of relations, which also affects the structures of national literatures. Because postmodernity weakened the temporal foundations of our thinking and writing, spatial concepts increased in significance. Today, then, our attention should be focused on movement and migration as distinctive traits of the literatures of the world. We need a fully articulated poetics of movement to help us decode the varied and complex literary figurations of the vectoral imagination behind much of today's writing. Beyond literary themes and content, vectorization comprises various (re)presentational forms of movement; on a global scale, it also extends to a wide spectrum of readers and their movements. That we can, as a result, no longer territorialize cultures in an unreflected, unselfconscious manner by no means applies 'only' to non-European or so-called postcolonial symbolic production. Rather, we must vectorize literary production and reception to understand cultures as always in motion and to be able to discover the historically accumulated coefficients inscribed in actual patterns of movement.

With their varied overlays of space and movement, the literatures of the world allow us to observe, and playfully test, from different, simultaneous perspectives, processes of inclusion and exclusion, traditions and breaks with traditions, along with sequences of multi-, inter-, and transcultural events. The literatures of the world mediate a planetary consciousness that corresponds to the state of affairs of our time. They make available a life knowledge (or biosophia) that reveals reductionist mappings – in which homogeneous cultural blocs stand in hostile opposition suggestive of what Huntington called a 'clash of civilizations' (1996) – to be ideological parts of a hegemonic strategy that persistently pushes politics by other means.

It is no coincidence that Horkheimer and Adorno see in the peripatetic figure of the crafty migrant Odysseus the embodiment of a 'knowledge which comprises his identity and which enables him to survive.'⁵⁷ This survival knowledge, which had to reorient itself and incorporate new tactics at a time when the Enlightenment had taken a turn toward totalitarian violence, results from the movements the 'knowing survivor' performs as he is tossed about in a Homeric world of alien, yet familiar powers. In the hermeneutics of this nomadic figure of the migrant, survival knowledge is encoded without necessarily being tied to authorial intent or even consciousness. This knowledge is accessi-

57 Horkheimer/Adorno: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 47.

ble to us even today and can be acquired from outside of its original context. The very figures of movement inscribed in the figure of roving Odysseus facilitate the process of translation and acquisition because they contain a spatio-temporal weave of movements structured as an itinerary. As a spatial model of understanding, this weave can be re-experienced in other spaces and times, and it can be transferred as knowledge-for-living to the narrative structures of one's own life. The Scar of Odysseus may well suggest that such a transfer cannot succeed without loss and injury. The complex processes of which I speak here are, as a rule, painful and, with regard to the Shoah, infinitely agonizing.

The reception and acquisition of knowledge-for-living (and surviving) continues to generate knowledge-for-living that can be injected into a society – and herein lies a good part of literature's political potential. A more intensive engagement with the Literatures without a fixed Abode in the context of the literatures of the world can define new areas of knowledge and spheres of activity for the various philologies. They can be explored once a predominantly static view of academic disciplines gives way to more flexible forms of specialization. Understanding the present phase of accelerated globalization as an extension of the earlier historical sequence of accelerations and decelerations, and recognizing in our ordering of knowledge the history and thus the shape of currents of knowledge, might promote new insights into literary and cultural processes within fractal spaces of movement beyond, among other things, the Goethean dichotomies of national and world literatures. A critical extension of Erich Auerbach's challenging reflections to the twenty-first century, my considerations in this book hope to contribute to such a new understanding from the philological (or literary-critical) perspective of the sciences-of-and-for-living.

Figures of vectoral imagination in Shoah literature

The historical development of the Literatures without a fixed Abode experienced a sharp increase with the rise of Shoah literature in the twentieth century. Shoah literature constitutes one of the most important traditions of the *littératures sans domicile fixe* and *literaturas sin residencia fija* in that it reversed the previously tabooed confluence of anti-Semitism, the Shoah, and totalitarianism even beyond the context of National Socialism.⁵⁸ Even the founding of the state of Israel and the associated project of a quasi-global reterritorialization

⁵⁸ Hannah Arendt was the first to break the taboo in her today still fascinating book *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*. Munich: Piper 1991.

have in no way weakened its importance.⁵⁹ The additional waves of emigration and immigration triggered at the time in the Middle East had worldwide effects that are still with us.

Hannah Arendt's study of the concentrationary universe (*univers concentrationnaire*) ended with the prognosis that 'concentration camps and gas chambers' would continue to endure far beyond the existence of National Socialism and other totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century: 'Just as in today's world totalitarian tendencies can be found everywhere and not only in those countries with totalitarian rule, these central institutions of total power could very easily survive the toppling of all those totalitarian regimes with which we are familiar.'⁶⁰ The existence and infamy of concentration camps neither began nor ended with the atrocities of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, and Mauthausen. Nor did the *univers concentrationnaire* cease to exist with the liberation of these camps. As numerous studies have shown, concentration camps have persisted throughout the twentieth century and even into the present day in many regions of the world. It is for good, though not uncontested, reasons that Giorgio Agamben termed the concentration camp itself a 'biopolitical paradigm of the modern.'⁶¹ Understandably, then, Shoah literature has become not only a trans-generational but also, at the same time, a transcultural and transhistorical phenomenon.

Faced with the imminent deaths of the last survivors of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps, present debates about the Holocaust and the Shoah have increasingly focused on testimony, an area where all discussions and research about concentrationary universe intersect.⁶² Paul Celan's oft-cited verse 'No One Bears Witness to the Witness' has become a major reference point for a debate about the access to and legitimacy of eyewitness accounts that is far from over. Agamben remarks that, 'from a historical perspective, we know, for example, the most minute detail of how the final phase of the extermination

⁵⁹ See Sidra de Koven Ezrahi: *Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press 2000.

⁶⁰ '[E]s steht zu fürchten, dass die Konzentrationslager und Gaskammern nicht nur eine Warnung, sondern ein Beispiel bleiben werden. So wie in der heutigen Welt totalitäre Tendenzen überall und nicht nur in totalitär regierten Ländern zu finden sind, so könnte diese zentrale Institution der totalen Herrschaft leicht den Sturz aller uns bekannten totalitären Regime überleben.' Arendt: *Elemente und Ursprünge*, p. 942–943.

⁶¹ See Agamben: *Homo sacer*, especially Part three, 'The Camp as Biopolitical Paradigm of the Modern,' p. 119–180.

⁶² For an extensive overview of research on this theme see Segler-Messner: *Archive der Erinnerung*, p. 14–23.

This book proposes that there is no better, no more complex way to access a community, a society, an era and its cultures than through literature. For millennia, literature from a wide variety of geocultural areas has gathered knowledge about life, about survival, and about living together, without either falling into discursive or disciplinary specializations or functioning as a regulatory mechanism for cultural knowledge.

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