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Taming World Literature

In honorem Jüri Talvet

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The Periodical as a Strategy of Recognition for Small Literatures

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Abstract. This article addresses the topic of the visibility of small literatures in a world literature context. A brief outline of the discourse on smallness allows us to see how this topic has been assessed and handled by small literatures. In a second step, the paper investigates the initiatives taken to promote the circulation of the literary production of small literatures. The focus is on the role of the multilingual periodical with a transnational outlook. The main example, taken from the Luxembourg context, concerns the interculturally conceived bilingual periodical Floréal, published from 1907 to 1908. The article will argue that, despite its ephemeral existence, this periodical counts as one of the earliest attempts to promote Luxembourg literatures in French and German in a World Literature context.

Keywords: small literature, world literature, Luxembourg literatures, periodical, literary field, strategies of recognition, discourse on smallness

In 1977, György Gera, Hungarian *homme de lettres*, writer, translator and chief editor of the trilingual periodical *Le Livre hongrois*, did a survey of roughly one hundred writers, poets and editors from all over the world asking their opinion on the possibility of promoting the literatures of lesser known languages. In his invitation letter, Gera quotes Valéry Larbaud's famous statement of 1927 in which the French poet and writer deplores the general ignorance, in France, of literatures in smaller languages and advocates that specialists, translators and literature enthusiasts give them more attention (Boldizsár 1979: V). Among the many responses to the survey, that of Vercors, author of the classic *Le Silence de la mer* (1942), stands out in that he tries to explain the apparent 'imperialism' of major literatures in the world literature context:

> Personnellement, je ne crois pas du tout à une sorte de mépris inconscient des grands pays pour les petits. La théorie 'à grand pays grande littérature' n'est pas seulement simpliste, elle est raciste et, encore plus, absurde. La preuve en est que nombre des œuvres majeures dont l'existence a influencée la pensée humaine provient de ces petits pays : tchèques (Kafka), hongroises (Petöfi), danoises (Kierkegaard), norvégiennes (Ibsen), etc. Et de seulement citer ces quelques auteurs montre que lorsque une œuvre atteint une certaine hauteur,

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> il n'est pas de frontières ni de langues qui tiennent. Ce qui franchit mal les barrières, c'est ce qu'on pourrait appeler la seconde littérature, les œuvres encore de très bonne qualité mais, disons, dont l'influence sur la pensée mondiale est moins visible. Comme si, en face d'œuvres ni plus ni moins bonnes mais écrites en langue de grande circulation, elle ne 'faisait pas le poids', comme on dit. D'où l'impression d'une sorte d'impérialisme des littératures de grands pays aux dépens des petits. (Ibid. 85)

By insisting that it is language rather than quality that enables a work to travel beyond its context of origin, Vercors maintains that works written in major languages travel more easily than those of the same quality written in a lesser known language. The impression that there is an imperialism of major literatures over small ones derives, so Vercors contends, from this disequilibrium in the dissemination of literatures.

Of course, the idea of a link between major/small languages and the dissemination of literature had already been addressed in peripheral world literature areas since the late nineteenth century by such eminent world literature scholars as the Hungarian Hugo von Meltzl (1846–1908) and the Dane Georg Brandes (1842–1927), as we shall see further below. Whether the 'imperialism' of major literatures can be considered merely an impression, however, is questionable especially with regard to past and recent world literature scholarship. The terminology may have changed as contemporary theory draws on models from the world economic system but the dominance of the great central powers over peripheral areas of world literature is far from being a thing of the past. If, in the nineteenth and for most of the twentieth century, European scholars tended to see "world literature as radiating outward from metropolitan centers toward relatively passive provincial recipients" (Damrosch 2006a: 214), contemporary scholarship proceeds in much the same way, as Theo D'haen notes: "The theories of [Pascale] Casanova and [Franco] Moretti, in their 'irradiation' or 'diffusionist' perspective centred upon Paris, or Paris and London, cast Europe's minor literatures as purely re-active in relation to the 'centre' or 'centres' of Europe. [...] If anything, this has led to an ever growing marginalization, or perhaps we should say 'peripheralisation,' of Europe's minor literatures" (D'haen 2012: 153). Since Gera's survey and despite the new approaches and theories developed to account for the global scope of world literature today, the problems surrounding the visibility of small literatures in the world literature system have lost none of their significance.

Rather than appraising the contemporary situation however, this paper will look at how the topic of visibility was handled by small European literatures in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

When addressing the peripherality of small literatures, it is worthwhile to venture beyond the dominance discourse of the centre(s) and to confront it with the discourse of smallness developed, over time, by small literatures themselves. The discourse is not only highly revealing of their inner trials and tribulations but it also informs us on the attempts to promote their production abroad. As we shall see, the rather negative tenor of the discourse stands in stark contrast to the energetic and dynamic spirit of the editorship of periodicals and journals.

Some of the new vistas on world literature put forth in recent decades enable us to consider the activity of smaller literary fields in terms other than passiveness and to reevaluate the attempts made to enhance the international visibility of their production. And since, according to David Damrosch, world literature can be understood as a "mode of circulation and reading [...] as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material" (Damrosch 2003: 5), this raises interesting perspectives on the function attributed to transnational multilingual periodicals or journals towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Given that, at that time, small literary fields often still lacked a well-established publishing sector, periodicals and journals became an important platform for publication. Moreover, if their outlook was international from the start, they turned out to be an effective medium for works to "circulate beyond their culture of origin" and consequently to reach "beyond [their] home base" (ibid. 4).

In the following, I propose a summary outline of the discourse on smallness in peripheral European literatures by paying special attention to the determining role of such aspects as space, age and language. This outline will provide the necessary background to showcase the role attributed to the periodical in a small literary field, as will be briefly shown by the reference to Hugo von Meltzl's *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*. My main example, taken from the Luxembourg context, concerns the interculturally conceived bilingual periodical *Floréal*, published from 1907 to 1908. I will argue that, despite its ephemeral existence, it counts as one of the earliest attempts to promote Luxembourg literatures in French and German in a world literature context.

The discourse on smallness: an outline

The discourse on smallness is multifaceted and reflects on such various topics as belatedness, lack of visibility, fear of provincialism, etc. Furthermore, if it is concerned on the one hand with interrogating the condition of smallness it grapples, on the other, with literature being denied a cosmopolitan dimension from the central powers that be.

With regard to the condition of smallness, it is important to understand to what extent it is shaped by the belief that small literatures lack both the momentum and the space to reverberate beyond their context of origin. Territory and location often occupy centre stage in the discourse. Unlike Vercors, who dismisses the assumption that a large country necessarily produces a major literature ("à grand pays grande littérature"), small literatures do subscribe to the notion that the small size of a country inevitably limits the capacity of its literature to reverberate across borders. Rather than being understood as a dissemination problem though, this limited international visibility was often interpreted as a sign that the production was lacking in literary qualities. When addressed by the discourse, this issue of the perceived interdependence of space and creative impulse or genius is usually also linked to small literatures' passiveness and reactiveness, as can be seen for instance in the following statement by the Luxembourg author and critic Mars Klein: "Ein kleiner Raum agiert nicht. Er reagiert. Reagiert auf die in grossen Räumen formulierten Ideologien und die daraus abgeleiteten (diktierten oder angebotenen) geopolitischen und kulturpolitischen Konditionen" (Klein 1988: 2). Klein mainly stresses the orientation offered to small literary cultures by the dominance of major ones, but there is also an indirect hint at the universalist perspective on literary norms imposed by major literatures. The latter tend to see themselves as 'prototypes', reducing those literatures that do not conform to their standard to mere imitators or epigones of the 'original' (Jusdanis 1990: 14).

The Francophone Swiss writer Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz's use of the aquamarine metaphor lays bare the conviction that the effect small literatures can ever aspire to is to produce insignificant ripples on the ocean of world literature:

> Un petit pays est-il condamné par sa petitesse même à ne pas connaître la grandeur? Les petits pays ont une activité qui est à leur taille, c'est-à-dire une petite activité. Et les pensées ne tardent pas, elles-mêmes (eussent-elles à l'origine des dimensions différentes), à se proportionner, étant causes, à leurs effets, qui ne peuvent être grands. C'est ainsi que les vagues sur le Pacifique prennent singulièrement plus d'ampleur que sur la Méditerranée. (Ramuz 1979: 33)

Ramuz's statement conveys the impression that the exiguity of the space of a small literature acts as a natural barrier to enter the world beyond its constricted confines. Even before world literature was expressly discussed in terms of geopolitical power relations[1] (Hroch 2000: 9), small literatures have been aware of the asymmetrical power distribution between the centres and the peripheries. Because the dissemination across the border was limited, given the lack of a strong

[1] Admittedly, this has been the case ever since Goethe introduced the term of 'Welt-literatur' in 1827 which built on the recognition of the birth of a 'Weltmarkt' of literature. (Pizer 2000: 214).

institutional and developed editorial apparatus, interliterary communication was perceived as an asymmetrical exchange in which major literatures entered the space of small ones whereas the reverse was rather an exceptional occurrence.

Apart from space, the age of a literary culture is deemed equally relevant. Indeed, the fear of belatedness harks back to the late rise of the small nation states after the Vienna Congress of 1815 and the subsequent 'delay' in the emergence of their literature. In those nations that correspond to Miroslav Hroch's pattern of 'nations without history' (Hroch 2000: 9), the development of national movements, characterised by philological, scholarly and literary activities, occurs when in most major literatures, the process of nation-building is already completed[2]. Furthermore, the recognition of a literature's existence depends on whether or not it is considered modern, a condition determined by the age of a literature. "La loi temporelle de l'univers littéraire", writes Pascale Casanova, "peut s'énoncer ainsi: il faut être ancien pour avoir quelque chance d'être moderne ou de décréter la modernité. Il faut avoir un long passé national pour prétendre à l'existence littéraire pleinement reconnue dans le présent" (Casanova 1999: 129). Deprived of noble lineage and missing the necessary ancestry (read tradition), the conviction of belatedness is deeply ingrained in the discourse on smallness, as illustrated by the following statement by the Luxembourg essayist Corina Mersch: "Une culture mineure livre, pendant des siècles, une bataille perdue d'avance, car même ses avant-gardes arrivent trop tard, lorsque tout a été déjà dit : les 'têtes de série' doivent intervenir dans une partie où les jeux sont faits, les vedettes doivent assister à un spectacle où les fauteuils d'orchestre sont réservés, etc." (Mersch 1999: 38).

But the asynchronicity underlying the development of small and major literatures (Kundera 1993: 230) is seldom given consideration when the topic of belatedness is discussed. As a consequence, the late rise of small literatures and their engagement in the nation building process resulted in their being perceived as focusing on national issues mainly.

[2] Jacques Le Riders' description of the belatedness of the nations and literatures of Central Europe is also valid for small nations and literatures in Western Europe: "'Retardés' du fait de leur assujettissement à des grands ensembles impériaux (allemande, habsbourgeois, russe, ottoman), ces pays n'accèdent à l'unité nationale ou au sentiment d'appartenance nationale qu'au XIX^{e} siècle. 'Retardé' signifie souvent 'interrompu' : la prise de conscience nationale au XIX^{e} siècle cherche alors à renouer avec une époque antérieure – plus ou moins légendaire – d'indépendance et de puissance. Cette prise de conscience nationale passe par la redécouverte et la codification, voire l'invention, d'une tradition culturelle et d'une identité linguistique" (Le Rider 1998: 24).

> Dissimulées derrières leurs langues inaccessibles, les petites nations européennes (leur vie, leur histoire, leur culture) sont très mal connues ; on pense, tout naturellement, que là réside le handicap principal pour la reconnaissance internationale de leur art. Or, c'est le contraire : cet art est handicapé parce que tout le monde (la critique, l'historiographie, les compatriotes comme les étrangers) le colle sur la grande photo de famille nationale et ne le laisse pas sortir de là. (Ibid. 231)

In this assessment, Milan Kundera contests the almost axiomatic gesture of both the agents and the observers of small literatures which consists of denying them the capacity to achieve 'literary worldliness' (Damrosch 2011: 307) or to have an impact on the wider literary world on the grounds that their concerns can only ever stretch to those of the nation-state. The ascription of purely 'national' and by extension political concerns to small literatures has been perpetuated ever since the centre decreed this to be the case, such as when Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari contend in their model of minor literatures that "Le second caractère des littératures mineures, c'est que tout y est politique" (Deleuze, Guattari: 1975: 30). Statements such as these, proclaimed from such an authoritative position as that enjoyed by Deleuze, inevitably influence the discourse on small literatures. Quite apart from the fact that this view participates in their politicisation, it also proceeds to an unwarranted restriction of their thematic and aesthetic scope[3].

As already mentioned, there is the issue of the literary language to be considered. Whereas Kundera talks of the inaccessibility of smaller languages, Georg Brandes, writing at the end of nineteenth century, highlights the latters' lack of prestige and leverage, when he maintains: "But whoever writes in Finnish, Hungarian, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Greek or the like is obviously poorly placed in the universal struggle for fame. In this competition he lacks the major weapon, a language – which is, for a writer, almost everything" (Brandes [1899] 2009: 63). 'Worse' still than writing in a language deprived of symbolic capital is writing in several literary languages. The geocultural location of small literatures on cultural and linguistic cross-roads or their history of domination by foreign/neighbouring nations[4] often led to the coexistence of several languages in their literary cultures which, more often than not, gave rise to a history of power struggle of societal and literary multilingualism, a struggle in which not all of the languages possessed the same prestige. Add to that the Goethean dictum, paraphrased by Brandes in his 1899 essay "*Weltliteratur*", that "it is impossible to write anything of artistic value in a language other than one's own. On that, everyone agrees"

[3] For deconstructions of the Deleuzian model, see Casanova 1997 and Gauvin 2003.
[4] See Hroch 2000 and Cornis-Pope, Neubauer 2004.

(ibid.), small multilingual literatures were once again at a disadvantage as they fell short of conforming to the authoritative monolingual norm of major world literatures. As Yasemin Yildiz has argued in her seminal work *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition* (2012), the emergence of the paradigm of monolingualism and the subsequent consecration of writing in the mother tongue in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in "a disavowal of the possibility of writing in nonnative languages or in multiple languages at the same time" (Yildiz 2012: 9).

All these aspects contributed greatly to the limited visibility of small literatures in the world republic of letters. However, as stipulated above, the literary periodical turned out to be a valuable strategy for their international recognition. In his research on Belgian periodicals, Paul Aron has demonstrated their key function in a literary field whose institutionalisation is still in process. Here, they tend to take on a leading role in the legitimation process, especially if the editorial apparatus of a literary field is underdeveloped or experiencing structural problems (Aron 1997: 110).

Moreover, in a spatial perspective, the periodical with an international outlook was in fact a useful tool to overcome the impediment of territorial exiguity. As Karen Vandemeulebroucke has shown, the nature of the periodical is such that it can act as a (trans)-national space (Vandemeulebroucke 2008: 116): while remaining locally anchored, it crosses borders both literally, by circulating internationally, and metaphorically, by admitting foreign literature into its pages (ibid. 119). Conceived of as a meeting place for authors of various national provenances, the periodical is also instrumental in claiming literature's autonomy from national ideology while at the same time helping those authors associated with it to delineate a distinct literary identity. Again, this is particularly important in a context lacking literary institutions and where the literary activity is still in search of recognition and legitimation.

The *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*

The most prominent initiative representative of the strategy of recognition outlined above is undoubtedly the *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*. This very first journal of comparative literature, edited from 1877 to 1888 by the Hungarian comparatist Hugo von Meltzl in Cluj, has entered the annals of comparative literature history as one of the earliest attempts to revive Goethe's idea of *Weltliteratur* and, as indicated by its title, to extend it to a truly global scale. At the same time, it was also set on promoting peripheral Hungarian literature in a world literature context.

Of Transylvanian origin, the polyglot Meltzl (1846–1908) teamed up with the last Hungarian polyhistor Samuel Brassai (1800–1897), co-editor of the journal until 1883. The journal, which released around one hundred issues, comprised essays, reviews, overviews on contemporary world literature, polyglot accounts on the Hungarian poet Petöfi, Schopenhaueriana, discussions on the nascent discipline of comparative literature, etc. (Berczik 1978: 92–93) The editorial decision to print the journal's title in no less than ten languages clearly shows how much store the editors set in polyglottism, which is also reflected in the international set-up of the editorial board which included members from Hungary, Germany, England, France, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Portugal, Iceland, Sweden, Poland, the USA, Turkey, India, Egypt and Australia.

The driving force behind the journal, indeed its fundamental idea, was "the reform of literary history, a reform long awaited and long overdue which is possible only through an extensive application of the comparative principle" (Meltzl [1877] 2009: 42). The editors sought to enhance the principles of the nascent discipline of comparative literature, which they saw as the only efficient way to emancipate Goethe's cosmopolitan conception of *Weltliteratur* from the service of narrow nationalistic concerns it had been reduced to by literary history (Damrosch 2008: 48). It is undoubtedly for this reason that, in his statement of intent, Meltzl put so much stress on the autonomy of literature and the distancing from ideology: "Es gibt kein sichereres Kennzeichen wahrer höherer Bildung als Vermeidung aller patriotischen sowie auch übrigen confessionellen, namentlich religiösen Ausbrüchen im Leben [...]. Wir Culturmenschen, zunächst Bürger einer grösseren Gemeinde sind mehr als Glieder des durch farbige Schlagbäume begrenzten Vaterlandes [...]" (Berczik 1978: 93)

The aims pursued by Meltzl were manifold. Intended as "a meeting place of authors, translators and philosophers of all nations" (Meltzl [1877] 2009: 43), the journal endeavoured to overcome the nationalism of the great European powers by widening the field of world literature to include masterpieces of other cultures and especially by representing literatures of smaller countries (Damrosch 2006b: 102).

Meltzl was also acutely aware of the consequences the power struggle between Europe's major literatures was having on the visibility of smaller literatures and saw in comparative literature a valid tool to introduce the latter into a larger international context: "Our secret motto is: nationality as individuality of a people should be regarded as sacred and inviolable. Therefore, a people, be it ever so insignificant politically, is and will remain, from the standpoint of comparative literature, as important as the largest nation. The most unsophisticated language may offer us most precious and informative subjects for comparative philology" (Meltzl [1877] 2009: 45). The equality of the world's literatures heralded here

is realised by the inclusion of essays and folksongs in Armenian, Gaelic, Aztec, Japanese and Chinese for instance, which where juxtaposed with texts in major world languages.

Hungary's cultural, linguistic and institutional borderland position was undoubtedly decisive in defining the scope of the project. While Meltzl's championing of comparative literature and the way he epitomised Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur* have been often commented upon, his agenda for the promotion of Hungarian literature is generally less at the forefront.

However, and this is perhaps the most important point with regard to our present concern, despite the world literature focus, Meltzl was determined to make his project directly relevant to his home ground, as Arpad Berczik underlines:

> Der Redakteur wollte mit seiner Zeitschrift zwei literarische Aufgaben bewältigen: einerseits war er im letzten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts, also zur Zeit der literarischen Einengung Ungarns um die Hebung des Niveaus des heimischen Schrifttums durch Bekanntmachen der ausländischen Literaturen und um die Erweiterung des Horizonts seiner Landsleute bemüht, andererseits wünschte er die ungarische Literatur durch den – seiner Meinung nach – bisher einzigen weltliterarisch würdigen magyarischen Dichter Petöfi in die Weltliteratur einzuführen. (Berczik 1978: 92)

Thus, while the international circulation of the journal was intended to promote the international reception of Hungarian literature, the national circulation was supposed to provide local writers with new creative impulses, an aspect that, as we will see later on, is also at the forefront of *Floréal*.

Floréal in a world literature perspective

It may seem preposterous to compare the short-lived literary journal *Floréal*, which barely existed for a year and only involved twelve issues, with the global scope of Meltzl's *ACTA*. Indeed, *Floréal*'s scope was much more modest and its world literature dimension is only indirectly hinted at. Nevertheless, despite its ephemeral existence, it counts as one of the defining instances in Luxembourg's cultural history of the first half of the twentieth century, not least because it acts as a kind of prequel to the construction of Luxembourg's hybrid identity at a time when, in European cultural discourses, cultural and linguistic purity were heralded as the cornerstones of national identity. More importantly, it signals the decisive moment consisting of the open recognition of the importance of writing in non-native languages (here German and French) in a literary field that has been grappling to come to terms with its multilingual situation.

As was the case elsewhere, in the nineteenth century literary activity in Luxembourg focused on literature written in the mother tongue, *Lëtzebuergesch*, linguistically defined as a Moselle Franconian dialect. Lacking prestige in the trilingual set-up of the country, intellectuals and writers sought to explore its literary potential and to develop it into a literary language in its own right. At that time, Luxembourg, whether on the political or cultural level, was, as an entity created by the European superpowers in 1839, in quest of international recognition. All efforts were therefore dedicated to the task of conferring legitimacy to the nation and, as is characteristic for the century of nationalities, literature and language were conscripted to participate in this process. It goes without saying that the French and German literary languages were somewhat sidelined in this process.

The beginning of the 20th century coincides with a decisive shift in the approach and the perception of literary production in different languages in Luxembourg. While on the one hand, it marks the consecration of the great poets of the previous century Michel Lentz (1820–1893), Edmond de La Fontaine (1823–1891) and Michel Rodange (1827–1876), who had provided the mother tongue with its literary credentials, on the other, leading intellectuals turned their back on Luxembourgish (Tockert 1948: 251). The seed for the recognition of Luxembourg literature as a trilingual literature was sown, although literature in *Lëtzebuergesch* was much less in the limelight as was hitherto the case. In any case, the reorientation signals a more open embrace of linguistic multiplicity which went hand in hand with the pronounced aspiration for close literary exchange and contacts with the neighbouring literatures and the creation of the bilingual French-German *Floréal* bears testimony to this new transnational outlook.

As a publishing venture, *Floréal* needs to be seen in context and its emergence is in itself revealing of the state of the literary field at the time. As Germaine Goetzinger has noted, the periodical arose out of the tradition of the literary salons, cenacles and coffee house culture rather than from a professional cultural journalism initiative (Goetzinger 1985: 57). In his memoirs, Marcel Noppeney, one of the co-editors, fondly remembers the lively evening in the *Café du commerce*, located in the heart of Luxembourg City, where *Floréal* was conceived in early February 1907 (Noppeney 1957). Marcel Trébitsch has underlined the role of the structures of productive sociability, such as schools, movements, periodicals, cafés and salons, that, next to the more regulated and professional instances, determine the activity and the dynamic in a literary field[5]. In 1900, Luxembourg barely had a literary field to speak of: the publishing sector was

[5] Quoted in Aron 1997: 109.

almost non-existent, the literary scene was small and lacking in contours, there was virtually no literary criticism and there was no university either.

Given the institutional bareness of its contextual background, *Floréal* counts among the earliest definitive initiatives towards the establishment of the literary field. It is also for this reason that, as we shall see, it counts as a space where literary identity could be fostered.

Floréal was the brainchild of the Francophone writer Marcel Noppeney (1877–1966) and the Germanophone writers Frantz Clément (1882–1942) and Eugène Forman (1878–1955). From the outset, the idea was that the periodical should pay tribute to Luxembourg's polyglottism on the one hand and highlight its cultural mixity on the other. As noted above, at the turn of the century, leading writers turned their back on writing in Luxembourgish and adopted French and/or German as their literary languages, thereby contributing to the rise of Luxembourgish literatures in French and German.

This language reversal is clearly marked by the editorial decision to invite German, French and Belgian literatures into the pages of *Floréal*. In this sense, just like the *ACTA*, *Floréal* became a meeting place for authors from different countries. *Floréal* counted among its contributors not only leading Luxembourgish writers in German, such as Frantz Clément, Eugène Forman, Batty Weber (1860–1940) and Nikolaus Welter (1871–1951), and in French, such as Joseph Hansen (1874–1952), Marcel Noppeney, Paul Palgen (1883–1966) and Nicolas Ries (1876–1941), but also had an impressive array of international collaborators. Thus, Germany was represented by Richard Dehmel (1863–1920) and Johannes Schlaf (1862–1941), Belgium by Émile Verhaeren (1855–1916), and France by Henri Albert (1869–1921), Achille Ségard (1872–1936) and Paul Lévy (1886–1959). The texts, printed in the original languages, were generically very diverse and included poems, novellas, novel fragments, critical and linguistic essays, reviews, aphorisms, etc.

In the statement of intent for the first issue, Noppeney and Clément explicitly subscribe to the autonomy of literature when they write that "Der *Floréal* ist unabhängig und unparteiisch, keiner Konfession, keiner Fraktion, keiner Clique dienstbar. Er besteht ohne Geheimfonds und ohne Nebenregierung" ([Clément] 1907: 5). The independence from political, ideological and confessional matters is underlined in the title in the two languages which reads *Revue libre d'art et de littérature – Freie Rundschau für Kunst & Litteratur*. Furthermore, the editors dispensed with national borders of literatures and, rather than using such categories as 'International Literature' or 'Foreign Literature', the contributions by the Belgian, French and German authors stand alongside those of their Luxembourgish colleagues. In addition, the editors seem to have

thought in terms of language areas rather than national literature areas as the columns 'Deutsche Litteratur' and 'Revue critique' featured overviews of recent publications of literature in Germany, Austria and Switzerland for the first and Belgium, France and Switzerland for the second.

Floréal was intent on showcasing Luxembourg's cultural *métissage* or, to use the term proposed by the editors, its *Mischkultur*. *Mischkultur* is not only programmatic of the periodical's agenda of international collaboration but is self-consciously claimed as the identity concept of Luxembourg. The first volume is prefaced by two introductions, one in French and one in German and these two independent texts clearly announce the aim the periodical set itself. The introduction in German delineates the concept of *Mischkultur*:

> Die Gründer des Floréal sind der Ansicht, dass sich in unserem Lande eine ganz eigenartige Mischkultur in eigenartiger Weise äussern kann, und sie wollen in ihrer Zeitschrift diesen Äusserungen und dem Streben nach Äusserung ein Zentrum leihen. Unsere Monatsschrift ist zweisprachig. Zu begründen haben wir das kaum. Wir schulden zwei Völkern unser Hirn und sind stets zwei Völkern für ihre Anregungen dankbar. (Ibid.)

Both bilingualism and the influence of the French and German cultural and literary worlds on the local production are thus clearly highlighted. The inclusion of literature from Belgium, France and Germany was seen as an attempt to build closer relationships with the European cultural centres (ibid.: 6). Furthermore and not unlike the case of Meltzl's *ACTA*, the editors pursued a pedagogical goal as international literature was counted on to inspire local writers and to stimulate their creative impulse: "Der *Floréal* betrachtet es als eine seiner wichtigsten Aufgaben, die Luxemburger zur Ehrfurcht vor jeder freien und starken künstlerischen Produktion miterziehen zu helfen" (ibid. 5–6).

As a platform and international meeting place for authors and literatures, *Floréal* acted as a liminal space in-between cultures as it was understood as a threshold from whence intercultural transfer processes might proceed but were also already realised, or so it was implied, in the Luxembourg production, which drew its inspiration from the Belgian, French and German areas of influence.

However, it is in the introduction in French, penned by Marcel Noppeney, that the world literature perspective, albeit not explicitly voiced, makes itself felt. Noppeney defines the object of the journal as the endeavour to decompartmentalise Luxembourg literatures by taking them out of their national isolation in order to put them into a network of international exchange. When he talks of the "tentative de double décentralisation littéraire" ([Noppeney] 1907: 3), it is evident that *Floréal* was not only set on promoting exchange between the four countries involved. It was also designed to present an international readership with the "possibilité de se rendre compte de la place que le Luxembourg peut prétendre occuper en littérature" (ibid.). Incidentally, Meltzl offers an almost identical statement when he writes "[dass] der Deutsche und sonstige Europäer und Ausländer allererst aus unserem Journal ein treues Bild von der ungarischen Literatur par excellence erhalten wird" (Berczik 1978: 94).

What is important to underline here is the attempt to put an end to the isolation of both Luxembourg literature and Luxembourg writers. Moreover, the lack of public interest in local literary matters lent some urgency to the question of literary identity. As such, *Floréal* did more than provide authors with a platform where they felt they could belong. It also became a space where literary identity could be fostered. "In *Floréal*", writes Goetzinger, "haben sich in einer Art Notgemeinschaft [...] und auf schmaler Basis Autoren zusammengefunden, die in der luxemburgischen Gesellschaft keinen Ort fanden, der ihrem Selbstwertgefühl entsprochen hätte. Das Bestreben, den Luxemburgern literarische Kultur zu vermitteln, und die Überzeugung, dazu befähigt zu sein, hat sie zusammengeführt. Öffnung nach aussen vollzieht sich in Wechselwirkung mit dem Gewinn an Identität nach innen" (Goetzinger 1985: 61).

The adoption of French and German as literary languages is ultimately to be understood not only as a more open embrace of multilingualism and multilingual writing practices – a practice that, as noted above, was not universally accepted – but more importantly, as the desire to seek and cultivate international literary exchange. It is this same desire that lies at the heart of Goethe's notion of *Weltliteratur*: to transcend national parochialism through cosmopolitan cultural exchange (Juvan 2011: 74). Writing in German and in French rather than in Luxembourgish – the lowly *Mundart* – guaranteed a move away from parochialism. Because of the language's role in the nation-building process in the previous century, writers, through linguistic border-crossing, could avoid inscription in a national context only. Writing in French and German literally opened worlds, with regard both to international dissemination and a closer link to literary traditions other than one's own. And it should be noted that most of the Luxembourgish collaborators did become published authors in France and Germany and regular correspondents to French and German literary magazines and journals[6]. This transnational literary activity initiated by *Floréal* was going to be instrumental in establishing Luxembourg's intellectuals' self-perception

[6] See www.autorenlexikon.lu.

as mediators between Germany and France, an identity paradigm that subsisted until as late as the 1970s (Conter 2007).

Goethe's conception of world literature builds on the idea that it is a network of practices, media and institutions that enables the transnational circulation of texts, concepts, ideas, etc. Consequently multilingual transnationally conceived journals such as the *ACTA* and *Floréal* constitute highly valuable tools for literary dissemination and count as an important medium for supporting the international circulation of texts from small and peripheral literatures. It is in this respect that we can apprehend them as an indispensable tool in their struggle for wider recognition. The fact that in the two journals the local literatures were embedded among major ones was intended to prove the fact that, despite the anxieties and views generally voiced in the discourse on smallness, they had a legitimate place amidst the world's major literatures.

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Kirjandus on peaaegu piiritult mitmekülgne vaimuala, mis pole käsitatav pelgalt kauniskunstina, poeetilis-esteetilise elamuse looja ja vahendajana, vaid see on täitnud ühiskondades nii esmajärgulist religioosset-müütilist-kosmoloogilist, juriidilist, filosoofilis-semiootilist, eetilist, pedagoogilist, sotsiaalset ja sotsioloogilist, esteetilist, psühholoogilist, ajalooteaduslik-kroonikalist-asitõenduslikku, teaduslik-teoreetilist, poliitilis-ideoloogilist funktsiooni, nagu ka olnud põhitegur loomulike keelte püsimises elava, areneva ja teiseneva korpusena. Pole imekspandav, kui mitmesugustes ummikseisudes, millesse maailm ikka ja jälle on sattunud, usutakse seletajate ja väljapääsu osutajate rollis pigem ülemaailmse tuntuse pälvinud kirjanikke kui poliitikuid või erialateadlasi.

Jüri Talvet,
„Maailmakirjanduse kodustamise küsimusi"

Literature is an almost boundless spiritual-intellectual field, which in different historical epochs has not been acknowledged exclusively as beaux arts, belles lettres *– a source and a means of poetical-aesthetical experience –, but has had a primary function in the religious, mythical, cosmological, juridical, philosophic-semiotic, ethical, pedagogical, sociological, psychological, historical-documental, scientific-theoretical and political-ideological conscience of societies. Literature is, thus, an interdisciplinary field* par excellence, *by its very nature. It does not have the "innocence" of some other arts. It has been under a special watch and scrutiny of ideological and moral censors of all times.*

Jüri Talvet,
"The Reception of World Literature in Estonia.
Some Preliminary Remarks"

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