

## From cosmopolitanism to planetary metonymy and back: some rhetorical considerations in World Literature.

### Foreword<sup>1</sup>

Cosmopolitanism may [...] be a project whose *conceptual* content and *pragmatic* character are not only as yet unspecified but also must always escape positive and definite specification, precisely because specifying cosmopolitanism positively and definitely is an uncosmopolitan thing to do.<sup>2</sup>

This sentence, which indicates the difficulty, if not the contradiction, to definitely delineate the concept of cosmopolitanism, contains two terms that constitute the structure of my analysis: the cosmopolitan *project*, in other words its conceptual content (its theoretical definition) and *pragmatism* (in this case, the concrete application of cosmopolitanism to the literary field).

Referring to a body of works that draws on the history of philosophy and the social sciences as well as to the theory and criticism of literature, we will try to show:

I. First, that any kind of cosmopolitanism constitutes a narrative project. To do this, we will need to clarify its conceptual assumptions and evolution. It should however be anticipated that what is at stake in the question of cosmopolitanism is the opposition between *Sameness* and *Otherness*. Also, on the basis of the observations made by Francesca Orsini in *Who are (or were) the Cosmopolitans? Thoughts from multilingual India*, we will consider if the «pluralist attitude comes before expression», or rather «if expressions and attitude work across purposes»<sup>3</sup>.

II. Secondly, I will turn to pragmatism and introduce the approaches to literary studies in a cosmopolitan (or worldly) key through a tropological study (particularly the tropes of metaphor and metonymy).

III. Finally, I will suggest considering the Third Landscape notion, introduced by the botanist and philosopher Gilles Clément, in order to read the contemporary literary experience in terms of a new form of cosmopolitanism.

### I. Project(s)

The issue at the core of cosmopolitanism, which has to do, as previously mentioned, with a perspective that involves the question of the relationship between Selfness and Otherness, is placed temporally and spatially, as well as linguistically. From the spatial point of view, any theoretical approach to cosmopolitanism tends to be universal (to speak in the name of a universal), though each approach is (or knows to be) localized. In addition, if the question of the relationship between Selfness and Otherness is considered in terms of differences, immediately raises an “ethical” question. In

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<sup>1</sup> The content of this article is the result of a course which I followed during the Seminar Faculty «Conceptualizing Cosmopolitanism and World Literature» at the Institute for World Literature (IWL; Harvard University) held by Professor Thomas Claviez in the year 2015. If it was not for his remarks, this essay would not have had been shaped as it actually is. I’m very grateful to him for his thought-provoking thesis about “metonymic community”.

<sup>2</sup> Pollock, Bhabha, Breckenridge, and Chakrabarty, “Cosmopolitanisms”, *Public Culture* 12 (3), 2000, p. 577; the stress is mine.

<sup>3</sup> Francesca Orsini, “Who are (or were) the Cosmopolitans? Thoughts from multilingual India”, *Cosmopolis and Beyond: Literary Cosmopolitanism after the Republic of Letters*, Trinity College Congress, Oxford, 18 March 2016, podcast: <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/who-are-or-were-cosmopolitans-thoughts-multilingual-india>

particular, it arises when we think in terms of reciprocity. As we shall see, one of the first thinkers who will not be diverted from this logic of difference and reciprocity is Emmanuel Lévinas, who notes that reciprocity has to do not with morality, but with the economy, because when we frame the Other in our understanding of ‘how he/she should be’, a kind of cost-benefit accounting immediately becomes apparent.

In other words, the recognition of the Other is incorrectly implemented in terms of mirroring (similarity to the Self), which excludes (and rejects) what the Self does not recognize.

Now, how has one gone from an idea of the cosmopolitan community to the idea of an elected corporation (the cosmopolitan bourgeois), and what is the term nowadays?

If we start from the etymology, the Polis is originally – according to Greeks – a body either struggling or protecting against the threat of aggression of the barbarians. Thus, what initially defines the community of the polis is the resistance (the antagonism) with respect to what is exterior/alien. The Cosmos is, therefore, all that the Polis has ruled out establishing itself as a community.

However, according to the Stoics, who were among the first theorists of cosmopolitanism in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Diogenes of Sinope, or the Cynic, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC had invented the term), the polis is defined by the common acceptance of a natural law, “rational” and universal, which tends to keep the precision and harmony of the universe. This “rational” is therefore present everywhere (and in every human being), making every place and the cosmos itself an immense state, and every human being a member of a cosmic community:

[...] we should not organize our daily lives around the city or the deme, divided from one another by local schemes of justice, but we should regard all human beings as our fellow demesmen and fellow citizens, and there should be one way of life and one order, just as a herd that feeds together shares a common nurturance and a common law.<sup>4</sup>

Roman culture inherited these ideas, but it connects them to a political project, that of the Empire, with the possibility of attributing a “*civitas universalis*” to all free men to be found there (edict issued in AD 212 by the Roman Emperor Caracalla). The Church, then, resumed this notion (the world is a Christendom, the only home for all) with Tertullian (155-23 AD) and transfers it, with St. Augustine, to the “*civitas dei*”, according to a more and more ecumenical project.

If in the classical emphasis is still placed on the world citizenship, in the modern era – which began with the Enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – the emphasis is instead placed on not feeling foreign. In this period the idea of cosmopolitanism is most successful, and happens, it is known, at the very moment when the concept and the reality of the nation-State are being consolidated. In the meantime, the era of Conquest and the affirmation of the first seeds of Liberalism occur, which during the 19<sup>th</sup> century will transform into Colonialism and Capitalism.

Cosmopolitanism serves reasons that are no longer (only) natural or moral, but also economic: to ensure the free market the world must be at peace. Kant publishes in 1795 the essay entitled *Perpetual Peace* which sets out a «*ius cosmopoliticum*» (Ak 8: 349-353) in the «Third Definitive Article for a Perpetual Peace», next to the «internal» (which promotes the republican constitution) and to the «international» (that promotes federalism).

Cosmopolitan law, Kant says, «shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality»<sup>5</sup>. As we can see, this law establishes a few limitations: as Kant states, «speaking [...] not of philanthropy, but of right [...] hospitality (*Wirthbarkeit*) signifies the claim of a stranger entering foreign territory to be treated by its owner without hostility. The latter may send him away again, if this can be done without causing his death; but so long as he conducts himself peacefully, he must not be treated as an enemy»<sup>6</sup>. In addition, the commercial dimension inherent in the attribution of this right is clear:

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *On the Fortunes of Alexander*, I, 6, 329A-B; see Long and Sedley, p. 429.

<sup>5</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden, Ein philosophischer Entwurf*, Königsberg, Friedrich Nicolovius, 1795; Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1995, vol. 8, pp. 349-353; English tr. *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, in Hans Reiss (ed.) *Kant's Political Writings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 102.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

It is not the right to be a permanent visitor that one may demand. A special beneficent agreement would be needed in order to give an outsider a right to become a fellow inhabitant for a certain length of time. It is only a right of temporary sojourn, a right to associate, which all men have. [...] In this way distant parts of the world can come into peaceable relations with each other, and these are finally publicly established by law. Thus the human race can gradually be brought closer and closer to a constitution establishing world citizenship.<sup>7</sup>

The Kantian project is thus a narrative based on an idea of teleological History (i.e. which tends to an ideal end); it is also a millenarian vision that believes in a coming time in which the differences will disappear permanently.

Before Kant, Johann Gottfried von Herder wrote some *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1791) which influenced not only Kant, but also Goethe, who, as we know, was among the first thinkers to affirm the need for a “World Literature”, by placing it in a cosmopolitan relationship. The concept of humanity (*Humanität*) for Herder is tied to a collective process (not an individual) of understanding between peoples and cultures, in which the *Menschheit* (the individual man) pursues dialogically free will.

Herder thus reconciles the defense of the national character, which he recognizes in every people and that he does not question but rather points out (speaking of “soul of the people” and elsewhere of “race”); however, he aspires to a shared spirit of humanity, that is, for him, the only true home and that it is not an abstract idea, nor political.

Herder writes in the period in which the evolutionism replaces historiography (the collection of the facts of history) in favor of History, which tells the contingencies (i.e. the multiple and random diversity) of the life of nations. In other words, from the romantic period on, History becomes a narration of the story of nations in organismic sense. Through History, the myth of the nation-State is built, which overcomes the various contingencies of the facts through “rationality”. In this sense, Herder can be considered a pre-romantic who has had a great influence among his successors.

Among them is Goethe, who is usually considered the first theorist of World Literature, although, as noted by Galin Tihanov, he was preceded by August Ludwig von Schlözer (1735-1809)<sup>8</sup>.

With Goethe we are in Weimar in 1827. His project is certainly cosmopolitan, but in an essentially cultural sense. Summing up a lot in light of Jérôme David’s remarks (*Spectres de Goethe. La métamorphose de la littérature mondiale*, 2011), Goethe meant the *Weltliteratur* as a process which involved, on the one hand, «the increasing interdependence of increasingly large cultural circles, radiating from large centers (cities) spread all over the world; secondly, according to Goethe, for the realization of “world literature” there was a need for a gradual branching of intellectual relations and exchanges between different points of the globe, where there were writers and critics sharing a certain suspicion of, if not the total disregard for, commercial success»<sup>9</sup>.

The metaphor is, simultaneously, that of waves emitted from different points of the globe, made gradually synchronous through a network<sup>10</sup> which shares the common recognition of a canon. A canon which could also come from very far away (for example from China) and that circulated mostly through translations. I quote here the famous passage in which Goethe sets out the idea of world literature:

I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men. [...] [W]e Germans are very likely

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>8</sup> Galin Tihanov, *Kosmopolitismus in der Diskurslandschaft der Postmoderne*, in Dorothee Kimmich – Shamma Schahadad, *Kulturen in Bewegung: Beiträge zur Theorie und Praxis der Transkulturalität*, Bielefeld, Transcript Verlag, 2012, p. 92.

<sup>9</sup> Jérôme David, *Spectres de Goethe. La métamorphose de la littérature mondiale*, Paris, Les priries ordinaires, “Essais”, 2011, p. 55; this translation and the next are mine.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

to fall too easily into this pedantic conceit, when we do not look beyond the narrow circle that surrounds us. I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach.<sup>11</sup>

As Jérôme David highlights, the metaphor of the wave and network differs from the idea of World Literature expressed by Franco Moretti<sup>12</sup>, who uses the wave metaphor, but that of the tree as well: according to Moretti, the tree branches stem from a common trunk and the wave spreads from a central point to the periphery, but always following the same direction (think of the waves caused by a stone thrown into a pond). As a literary example Moretti brings the three successive waves of translation of 'tree' Don Quixote (done between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries), which, in his opinion, gave rise to three different literary Europes<sup>13</sup>; while with Goethe we are rather in the presence of a handful of pebbles thrown into a pond, whose waves intersect; a sort of rhizomatic propagation from a common cutting (constituted by a common feeling of some intellectuals scattered all over the globe). The second great thinker of modernity to have spoken of cosmopolitanism (associating it to world literature) is Karl Marx, who shares with Kant a millenarian vision of History (that would end with the triumph of the proletariat), as well as the idea of antagonism. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, written with Friedrich Engels and published in Brussels in 1848, the world literature is called an «intellectual production» that, as the material one, will be «consumed», sooner or later, in every part of the globe. It will help you out from «national one-sidedness, and narrow-mindedness». The bourgeoisie is responsible for this cosmopolitan fruition of things and books. In the text, however, they will just predict this universal traffic, hailing it as a result of what we might call today globalization. They do not pass judgment either positive or negative with respect to this phenomenon. What matters to them is to photograph a trend that, in the Marxist project, still had to be overcome and to end with the advent of the Communist International:

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.<sup>14</sup>

We know that both the liberal and universalist projects hoped for by Kant and developed with colonialism and imperialism, as well as the Marxist project that has served the cause of the Soviet empire and the Chinese, have begun to show their limits in the early 60s of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Meanwhile, on a philosophical level, the deconstructionist current began to think that our contemporary world had come to the end of the great narratives supported by a project or an idea (François Lyotard, *The*

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<sup>11</sup> Johann Peter Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe*, tr. John Oxenford, San Francisco, North Point Press, 1984, p. 132.

<sup>12</sup> «Conjectures on World Literature», *New Left Review*, n. 1, January-February 2000, pp. 54-68.

<sup>13</sup> Jérôme David, *Spectres de Goethe*, p. 56; Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800-1900*, London, Verso, 1998, pp. 171-174.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, tr. Samuel Moore in cooperation with Frederick Engels, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967, pp. 83-84.

*Postmodern Condition, A Report on Knowledge*, 1979). Michel Foucault then showed, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, that we always move within discursive constructions; Jacques Derrida reiterated «that one of the gestures of deconstruction is to not naturalize what isn't natural, to not assume that what is conditioned by history, institutions, or society is natural»<sup>15</sup>. The most profound thinker in the deconstruction of Orientalism, Edward Said, added that today, «for the first time in modern history, the entire grandiose building of humanistic knowledge, resting on the classics of European letters, and with it the discipline of inculcated study formally to students in western universities, in forms familiar to us all, represent only a fraction of the real human relationships and interactions currently underway around the world»<sup>16</sup>.

If nationalism was narrative, is literature planetary instead? Or, in other words, is there something in literature that transcends national boundaries?

Because of spread and fruition and production of world literature (due to massive displacement of peoples), the notion of “third space” was introduced in the debate on cosmopolitanism which is the result, as said poetically by Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands*, of the «change-by-fusion, change-by-conjoining. It is a love-song to our mongrel selves»<sup>17</sup>.

The conjunction between different communities is considered an enrichment and, with it, the moral question, that is inherent of difference and confrontation/encounter between Self and the Other, is solved in terms of intercultural interaction. Hybridity is the key point, and it is often referred to migration, considered from the point of view of identity:

*The Satanic Verses* celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelisation and fears the absolutism of the Pure. *Mélange*, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world. It is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world.<sup>18</sup>

In the theoretical field, the thought of liberal cosmopolitanism that thinks in terms of Otherness and Sameness continues: Martha C. Nussbaum («Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism», 1994) reintroduce into the debate the idea of a universal rationality cultivated through education and realized in international cooperation with moral basis going beyond patriotism:

I believe [...] that this emphasis on patriotic pride is both morally dangerous and, ultimately, subversive of some of the worthy goals patriotism sets out to serve — for example, the goal of national unity in devotion to worthy moral ideals of justice and equality. These goals, I shall argue, would be better served by an ideal that is in any case more adequate to our situation in the contemporary world, namely the very old ideal of the cosmopolitan, the person whose primary allegiance is to the community of human beings in the entire world.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, we find Kwame Anthony Appiah's idea of cosmopolitanism. He spoke of “rooted cosmopolitan” and of “cosmopolitan patriot”:

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<sup>15</sup> Derrida defining deconstruction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgwOjjoYtco>

<sup>16</sup> Edward Said, *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969-1994*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1994, p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, New York, Penguin, 1991, p. 394.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism”, in *Boston Review*, October-November 1994, vol. XIX, n. 5, p. 3.

the cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of one's own, with its own cultural particularities but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people.<sup>20</sup>

Rooted cosmopolitanism opens the way to the next step taken by Homi Bhabha, invoking the need to overcome the dichotomies Me/Other, and to consider a "third space", that of "in-between" and hybridity, characteristic of the diasporic societies.

The hybridity, Bhabha says, is not only «the perplexities of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life»<sup>21</sup>, but «this interstitial passage between fixed identifications [which] opens up the possibility of a cultural [experience] that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy»<sup>22</sup>.

This opens the way – according to Bhabha – to an «international culture, based not on exotic multiculturalism or cultural diversity, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity»<sup>23</sup>. In the same years, from the French-speaking Caribbean area, Edouard Glissant introduced the term "creolization" (*créolisation*), which indicates the confluence of diversities in which they not only blend syncretically, but where an unexpected plus always arises from the diasporic encounter. Every culture is interconnected to another, according to the image of the archipelago, and every culture is at the origin *métissée* (mixed).

However it should be emphasized that many of the characters and the diaspora discourses are just anti-cosmopolitan: the cosmopolitan project is first of all criticized because of the assimilationist ideal, typical of the nation-State; then diaspora rejects the notion of "minority", often identified on ethnic grounds; finally the anti-cosmopolitanism is even more pronounced when a diaspora defines itself or is defined by others, as a religious Diaspora.

In recent years, a perspective that considers the phenomenon of migration not only in cultural and identity terms has been brought up by the works of Derrida, Lévinas and Agamben, who emphasize hospitality ethics inherent in cosmopolitanism.

All three are in agreement that the hospitality does not involve reciprocity (because reciprocity is, in some way, keeping an account).

In *Of Hospitality* (2000), Jacques Derrida plays on the difference between host/hostage<sup>24</sup>: in contemporary Western societies the Other is not equal, but equivalent (they do not take into account the singularity of the Other). Emmanuel Lévinas, in *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo* (1982; tr. 1985), affirms the irreducibility of the Other: the Other is absolutely Other. Nevertheless, one must be responsible for him/her. Lévinas makes a distinction between ethical moment and justice. The latter judges according to impersonal laws and thus assumes the impersonal identity, which is an abstraction. Justice is needed, but it is a betrayal of the ethical moment, which deals instead with an unmediated singularity or with a transcendent alterity. The conditional laws of hospitality are like justice; only the unconditional law of hospitality (that is above the laws) avoids pigeonholing the Other in an identity and is, therefore, ethical. Finally, radical hospitality implies a radical risk and should be avoided as a total perversion of hospitality.

Finally, Giorgio Agamben's observations relating to the fact that, in these times, politics becomes "biopolitics" and assumes, therefore, an "immune defence" from what is alien («the intimate enemy» according to Ashis Nandy<sup>25</sup>), lead to the affirmation, paradoxical even today, that,

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<sup>20</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitan Patriots*, in *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, ed. by Joshua Cohen, Boston, Beacon Press, 1996, p. 22 (an expanded version printed in *Cosmopolitanism: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. by Pheng Cheah-Bruce Robbins, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 91-114).

<sup>21</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The location of culture*, London and New York, Routledge, 1994, p. 314.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>24</sup> Jacques Derrida-Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality. Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, tr. by Rachel Bowlby, Stanford (CA), Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 125.

<sup>25</sup> Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Loss of and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983.

in the context of the inexorable decline of the nation-State and the general corrosion of traditional legal-political categories, the refugee is perhaps the only imaginable figure of the people in our day. At least until the process of the dissolution of the nation-State and its sovereignty has come to an end, the refugee is the sole category in which it is possible today to perceive the forms and limits of a political community to come. Indeed, it may be that if we want to be equal to the absolutely novel tasks that face us, we will have to abandon without misgivings the basic concepts in which we have represented political subjects up to now (man and citizen with their rights, but also the sovereign people, the worker, etc.) and to reconstruct our political philosophy beginning with this unique figure.<sup>26</sup>

The asylum seeker as the ultimate “*homo sacer*”: he/she «may be killed and yet not sacrificed», existing within the juridical order only by being actively excluded from it<sup>27</sup>.

Giorgio Agamben made these observations in the 90s rethinking of Anna Harendt’s experience; the contemporary transit camps were few and the flow of refugees not so massive.

In more recent years, Etienne Balibar can emphasize the rise in the West of an “inverted cosmopolitanism” that he describes in these terms:

Globalization turns its back on the cosmopolitan perspectives sketched out by the Enlightenment and embodied in its contemporary heirs (Habermas), and instead presents itself as inverted cosmopolitanism. Intensified communication, heightening of mutual dependencies, relativisation of the meaning of borders and the gradual emergence of a shared political and cultural space does not lead to mutual recognition or to an awareness that we are all part of the human race; instead it leads to an intensification of intolerance and destructive urges rooted in demands for more or less invented – and thus all the more indestructible – collective identities. One could of course object that this inversion of perspective arises because globalization is inextricably linked to phenomena of domination and competition, which betray its imperialist nature. However, this kind of comment does not help one iota to solve the problem or even to provide a better description of it.<sup>28</sup>

Even more recently, a magazine that went online in March 2016 (*Europe at the crossroads*) highlights the “managed inhospitality”: its purpose is to wonder about

why it is that some of the distinctive features of Europe’s relatively recent past – be it the attachment of its citizens to the social rights and protections of the postwar era or the fresh memory of the horrors resulting from state-sanctioned xenophobia in the interwar period – did not act as a more powerful deterrent? Or, to put it differently, when and under what circumstances did the social compromises of welfare capitalism as well as the much-vaunted association of European unity with human rights lose their currency among the managers of European affairs?<sup>29</sup>

In conclusion to this first part, which explored diachronically the concept of cosmopolitanism from a theoretical point of view, it can be said that space and language are two essential elements to consider issues related to cosmopolitanism without falling into the narrative of a project based on a pre-conceived notion of the Human (be it liberal, Marxist, teleological, millenarian or humanitarian).

In this regard, in France, in January 2015 the seminar *Littérature et cosmopolitisme: discours, poétiques, pratiques, circulations* (équipe de recherche de l’ENS-Ulm) held by Catherine Mazauric

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<sup>26</sup> Giorgio Agamben, “We Refugees.” *Symposium*, No. 49 (2), Summer 1995, p. 115, tr. by Michael Rojce.

<sup>27</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, tr. from Italian by D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Etienne Balibar, *The return of the concept of “race”*, translation Helen Ferguson, This text was originally presented in the form of a “Lezione pubblica” at the Modena Philosophy Festival on 15th September 2006, [http://www.springerin.at/dyn/heft\\_text.php?textid=2097&lang=en](http://www.springerin.at/dyn/heft_text.php?textid=2097&lang=en)

<sup>29</sup> Michel Feher, “The Critical State of the Union”, *Europe at a Crossroads*, n. 1, March 2016, <http://nearfutureonline.org/the-critical-state-of-the-union/>

occurred with this abstract entitled «Entre ethos cosmopolite et murs identitaires: une littérature “sans papiers”?» («Between cosmopolitan ethos and identity walls: an “undocumented” literature?»):

Age “without borders” for goods, images, ideas and certain social groups (including many intellectuals and men of culture), era of mass migration, the globalization today is also that of an assignment to a location for much of the world’s population, based on the erection of legal, regulatory, material barriers increasingly drastic to its mobility. In this context of transition towards an uncertain post-national age, “undocumented” migrants personify the advent of a crosscutting subject, emblematic herald of new “bottom-up” (“*par le bas*”) cosmopolitanisms. These constitute spawning areas with Otherness, places of invention for new forms of mobile and plural territoriality of resistance to bio-politics conducted worldwide. The examination of a transnational body of contemporary literature (from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century till today) dedicated to illegal migration highlights nevertheless the areas of tension between a possible renewal of the cosmopolitan ideal and the observation of the structural persistence or practical permanence of long-lasting identity logic coming to thwart it. Beyond the transposition of the social world, some literary narratives try to say the “in-between” and to formulate a renewed ethic of “closeness”.<sup>30</sup>

This description of this Seminar first identifies the “in-between” of the “third space” with “bottom-up” cosmopolitanism (*par le bas*) implemented by the migrants and especially by the undocumented (thus resuming the distinction Sameness/Otherness and, above all, reversing/inverting the elitism that has marked the topic since Goethe's cosmopolitanism); on the other hand, it focuses on the need for a new ethic of proximity implemented by some literary works, as if a cosmopolitan attitude came before expression. Moreover, this inverted cosmopolitanism highlights a *corpus* of literary texts focused on diasporic authors and internationalist ideologies based on geopolitical notions (i.e. panafricanism<sup>31</sup>), or on the testimonial narrative of what I would call “deportspora literature”<sup>32</sup> (that is, according to Peter Nyers who has termed this kind of «abjected diaspora» in the political science field, «transnational corridors to expulsion»<sup>33</sup>).

In the next sections of this essay we will try to verify if expressions and attitude could work across purposes in the planetary literary space.

## II. Pragmatism

What the global turn can tell us in terms of literary studies?

In a very illuminating recent intervention at the Oxford Conference about *Cosmopolitanism and beyond*, Gisèle Sapiro has shown that the terms internationalism, transnationalism, global and world should not be understood to be in opposition to the national perspective. She took a pragmatic approach from an historical and sociological point of view.

She starts by taking into account the actors of the literary field at a national and transnational level, in the wake of Bourdieu’s theories about the competition of symbolic capitals linked to specific criteria and rules of the game. Bourdieu’s considerations had been prolonged by Pascale Casanova in her well-known essay *La République mondiale des lettres*. We will recall just some of Casanova’s statements related to cosmopolitanism.

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<sup>30</sup> Original version: <http://www.transfers.ens.fr/Litterature-et-cosmopolitisme-discours-poetiques-pratiques-circulations?artpage=4-5>.

<sup>31</sup> See, among others, Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Here some examples of what I would call “deportspora literature”: Bertina Arno-Michalon Anissa, *Numéro d’écrou 362573*, Marseille, Le bec en l’air, 2013; Hakan Günday, *Daha*, Şişli, Istanbul, Doğan Kitap, 2013 (*Encore*, French tr. from Turk, Paris, Galaade, 2015, *Prix Médicis 2015 étranger*; English tr. *More. A novel*, tr. by Zeynep Beler, New York, Arcade Publishing, 2016).

<sup>33</sup> Peter Nyers, “Abject cosmopolitanism: the politics of protection in the anti-deportation movement”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 6, 2003, p. 1070.

In *The World Republic of Letters*, Casanova starts from two epigraphs which derive respectively from Paul Valéry's quote of civilization as "capital" (probably increasing for centuries), and from a Frederick II of Prussia's military metaphor: he says that the gap in certain genres of German literature has to be obtained «by [their] own efforts» in order to «raise national glory»<sup>34</sup>.

Pascal Casanova expands these two concepts in order to describe what she calls «the international Republic of Letters»<sup>35</sup>, its game and its politics:

1. *economy* of literature, seen as a *capital* and throughout *capitals* (considered in their geopolitical sense); literature is, in this case, a source of *contention* in a common battleground;
2. *violence*, that is to say competition between nations and languages (or *struggle* to become a centre or to obtain a recognition in the central banks which grant credit – throughout belief – to peripheries).

Casanova aims to describe «the world of letters as *actually* operates» and to clear up «literary belief» (or "poetic" interpretation of critics *and* authors in pure aesthetics), that always «observes – according to her - the very mechanism of literary domination»<sup>36</sup>. Homogenization is here taken as a matter of fact, and not as a problem.

But, as Fernand Braudel noticed, literary boundaries and their form of communication do not coincide with those of the political and economic world<sup>37</sup>. This is very important when Casanova tries to demonstrate that Paris is an example of literary centrality. The prestige of certain languages (that she calls «Literariness»<sup>38</sup>) is not in their sociological centrality, but it depends on the position that a certain language, throughout what she calls «ideas and things»<sup>39</sup>, is able to reach. Ideas are «forms, sounds and techniques»<sup>40</sup> and we will see later what these *things* are.

She then traces a history and a map of the formation of international literary space, which coincides with the formation and development of the first European States.

What she calls the «bourse of literary values»<sup>41</sup> depends on the *age* of a National literature and on the *milieu*, that is to say all literary authorities continually renewing their literary *patrimony* (there is a cumulative and teleological idea of culture). There are quantitative indicators, measuring the «stocks of National capital»<sup>42</sup>: these are the "things" mentioned before: among them there are the number of translations, of polyglots and publishers – she calls them «cosmopolitan intermediaries»<sup>43</sup>, but also «exchange brokers»<sup>44</sup>. They constitute an «invisible society»<sup>45</sup>, at the same time the most national and the most international. So cosmopolitanism is here not merely linked to circulation of ideas, but also to circulation of goods in a socio-economic and global perspective. Thirdly, a literary capital is linked to credit and belief given to the value of this asset.

All that gives rise to a process of literary consecration, or excommunication (sometimes obtained through plagiarism charges, especially for the peripheral writers<sup>46</sup>).

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<sup>34</sup> Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, tr. by M.B. DeBevoise, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 2004, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Le temps du monde*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1979; *The Perspective of the World*, tr. by Siân Reynolds, Berkeley-Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1992, vol. III, p. 18.

<sup>38</sup> Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, cit., p. 359.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> In the francophone literature, the case of the Malian writer Yambo Ouologuem is very illuminating. His first novel *Le Devoir de Violence* (*Bound to Violence*), won in 1968 the prestigious Prix Renaudot; but later some plagiarism charges arose among critics. As it has been showed, Ouologuem played in his novel an unexpected «literary game that used combinations of the European novel and African epic in order to palliate a European audience at the end of the French

Thus, the cities where literary resources are concentrated become places where belief is incarnated. These capitals are twofold: they exist both in imagination (they are therefore mythical) and in the reality of the measurable effects they produce.

In late 20<sup>th</sup>-century Paris, two sets of apparently antithetical properties combined: it symbolized the political liberty of the revolution (political values) and it was a place of tolerance and asylum (hospitality values), thus becoming a «new Babel»<sup>47</sup>, a “cosmopolis”. But it was also the capital of elegance and intellectuality.

Casanova then proposes a new method of interpretation based on structural relation and domination: national literary and linguistic patrimony supply a sort of an *a priori* definition of a writer; he/she will transform this capital, by rejecting it, or by conceiving him/herself in opposition to it – like Samuel Beckett did. So, in trying to characterize a writer's work, one must localize it with respect to two things: the place occupied by his native literary space within the world literature, and his own position within this space. So Casanova calls for a «dual historicization»<sup>48</sup>.

Pascale Casanova's vision avoids openly taking into account the question of Otherness: she relegates 'otherness' to the peripheral areas of the centres, which are to decide whether or not grant them recognition and legitimacy.

Her definition of this international literary space as “Republic of Letters” is very thought-provoking: Republic is a peculiar cultural French notion which implies those ideals of the French revolution (freedom, equality and brotherhood) which led the imperial yet republican France (the *métropole*) to invoke the right (*droit*) and the duty (*devoir*) to colonize the world. Casanova briefly recalls that Pierre Bourdieu defined this French attitude as an «imperialism of the universal»<sup>49</sup>, but she chooses this label as the title of her sociological approach to literariness. Maybe is she unconsciously incarnating the “law of the land”? In any case, it is important to take into account that any definition and purposes of the new notion of World Literature (that is to say, the impulsion given by David Damrosch to these studies) are certainly influenced by what we could call the “law of the world”, that is to say the growing internationalization and mobility both of the public (readers and students) and of the academics (critics and teachers: for instance Debjany Ganguly, the Indian author of *This Thing Called the World: The Contemporary Novel as Global Form* teaching at the University of Virginia, the Italian Franco Moretti teaching at Stanford, the African V.Y. Mudimbe at Duke...).

Finally, this way of thinking in terms of *rights* and *duties* seems to be central in the elaboration of the idea (and projects) of cosmopolitanism. And we paradoxically find this double bind also in Derrida's text *Cosmopolitanism and forgiveness*, when he speaks about the so-called “cities of refuge” founded by the “International Parliament of Writers” in terms of duty and right... to hospitality:

The name ‘cities of refuge’ appear to be inscribed in gold letters at the very heart of the constitution of the International Parliament of Writers. Ever since our first meeting, we have been calling for the opening of such refuge cities across the world. That, in effect, very much resembles a new *cosmo-politics*. [...] In committing ourselves thus [...], we have doubtless meant more than one thing, as the case for the name ‘parliament’. In reviving the traditional meaning of an expression and in restoring a memorable heritage to its former dignity, we have been eager to propose simultaneously, beyond the old word, an original concept of hospitality, of the duty (*devoir*) of hospitality, and the right (*droit*) to hospitality. [...] If we look to the city, rather than to the state it is because we have given up the hope that the state might create a new image for the city.<sup>50</sup>

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colonial era, thereby exposing the artificiality of this game» (Susan Gorman, «Don't Let Yourself Be Made Game Of»: Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir De Violence* and the Game of Genre», *Postcolonial Text*, vo. 4, n. 2 (2008), p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, cit., p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34; Pierre Bourdieu, «Deux impérialismes de l'universel », in C. Fauré et T. Bishop (ed.), *L'Amérique des Français*, Paris, François Bourin, 1992.

<sup>50</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Cosmopolitanism and forgiveness*, tr. by Mark Dooley, London-New York, Routledge, 2001, pp. 4-5.

Once again, we ascertain the antagonism inherent to the issues related to cosmopolitanism. The relativity of the autonomy of the literary field has also been stressed, as we pointed out before, by Gisèle Sapiro<sup>51</sup>. In particular, she observed that «the cosmopolitan façade should not conceal the power relations and the unequal conditions of access to the transnational field» ruled by the scientific community (that is to say, once again, the *élite*), the book market (which «needs to include the trans-linguistic exchanges within what has become a global market for translation»), and education (for instance «humanist culture imported from the dominant culture»), as well as the models<sup>52</sup>, sometimes imported through several mediations – Sapiro recalls the example of Jewish literature, which imported French forms mediating them from Russian translations of French literature). And she concludes with the «original hybrid nature of national literatures [that] can lead us to relativize the idea that cultural *métissage* is uniquely a result of globalization. The national identities were built out of *métissage*».

Due to the market laws and as a result of the colonialist heritage, most of the time the linguistic areas are transnational and sometimes language counts more than national belonging: as Sapiro noticed, «in 1993 the French government modified the condition for exporting translations from the French to other languages: it was now authors writing in French (and not just French authors) that could get support».

Is that the proof of the existence of literary cosmopolitanism, or rather the confirmation of the dependence of the literary field on the context? As Iurii Lotman already affirmed back in 1970: «The entire sum of historically determined artistic codes which make a text meaningful is related to the sphere of extra-textual relations»<sup>53</sup>.

So, is cosmopolitanism just a narrative teleology or a myth? Is it just a metaphor standing for a project always having pragmatic purposes?

Is it perhaps better to try to overcome the oppositions (centre-periphery, tradition-innovation, Sameness-Otherness, identity-hybridism, nationalism-cosmopolitanism, local-global) in order to reconfigure the shape of literary planetary cosmopolitanism.

To do that, in the next part of this essay we will recall some suggestions pointed out by Thomas Claviez in order to rethink cosmopolitanism not (only) in a metaphorical way and to propose a new manner of considering the world within the margins.

### III From metaphors to metonymy and back.

In the essay *Traces of a Metonymic Society in American Literary History*<sup>54</sup>, Thomas Claviez observes that so far, communities and societies have been defined in metaphorical terms, according to the belief that members of a community share a third («what members of a society have in common»<sup>55</sup>). This third is to be taken not in the sense of Bhabha's "in-between", who associated it to identitarian hybridity, but rather in the sense of a social contract, in which everyone gives away some of his/her prerogatives for the common good, surveilled by a sort of Leviathan<sup>56</sup> and its avatars. Traditionally,

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<sup>51</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, *The transnational Literary Field: Between (Inter)Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism* (Keynote address), *Cosmopolis and Beyond: Literary Cosmopolitanism after the Republic of Letters*, Trinity College Congress, Oxford, 18 March 2016, podcast: <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/transnational-literary-field-between-internationalism-and-cosmopolitanism-keynote-address>. All the following quotes are transcriptions of her speech.

<sup>52</sup> «In cultures that belong to the periphery of the literary system (which means: almost all cultures, inside and outside Europe), the modern novel first arises not as an autonomous development but as a compromise between a formal western influence (usually French and English) and local materials» (Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature", cit., p. 58).

<sup>53</sup> Iurii M. Lotman, *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1970; *The structure of artistic text*, tr. by Ronald Vroon, University of Michigan Press, 1977, p. 50.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Claviez, *Traces of a Metonymic Society in American Literary History*, in Winfried Fluck et al. (eds.), *American Studies Today*, Heidelberg, Winter, 2014, pp. 299-322.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

this paradigm has also served as a term for exclusion: those who do not share that common ground are, by definition, not members of that community.

According to *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, «when we resort to metaphor, we contrive to talk about two things at once; two different and disparate subject matters are mingled to rich and unpredictable effect. One of these subject matters is already under discussion or at least already up for consideration when a speaker resorts to metaphor in the first place. This is the metaphor's *primary subject* or *tenor* [...]. The second subject matter is newly introduced with an eye to temporarily enriching our resources for thinking and talking about the first. This is the metaphor's *secondary subject* or *vehicle*»<sup>57</sup>. It would be tempting to read the figure of speech of metaphor in a... metaphorical way, that is to say applying the terms of primary and secondary subjects to communities. The *unpredictable* effects of mingling two *disparate* subjects at once in order to *temporarily enrich* our *resources*, of which one is primary and the other secondary, reminds us of Glissant's idea of *creolization*, in which, once again, the original hybrid nature of any national culture is underlined in metaphorical terms, and where the enrichment of the *métissage* is stressed (he also speaks about "archipelagic thinking", inviting us to see the world as a collection of interconnected islands/continents).

According to Claviez, to define the forms of community that we have to face in our contemporary world it would be more useful to take the trope of metonymy rather than metaphor. He recalls the definition of metonymy offered by the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*: «metonymy involves establishing relationships of contiguity between two things, whereas metaphor establishes relationships of similarity between them»<sup>58</sup>. Metonymy seems to avoid inclusiveness and prefer proximity (contiguity), even if, as Claviez observes, *radical* metonymy can only lead to misunderstandings and it is, in a way, impossible: «sheer spatial coincidence [...] cannot guarantee [...] to let the reader make the connection» between the vehicle and its referent when they «are not only contiguous, but also contingent upon each other»<sup>59</sup>.

Moreover, as Roman Jakobson stated, «metonymy [...] easily defies interpretation»<sup>60</sup>. Elsewhere he observes that interpretation is a metaphorical act: as Claviez recalls referring to Jacobson, «any meta-language (and interpretation is nothing else) is based upon the premise of a similarity and is thus inherently metaphorical»<sup>61</sup>. In other words, «the interpretation tries to transform what is seemingly contingent in a text into something that is explicable and that makes sense»<sup>62</sup>. We are looking for unity and, as David Lodge underlines in *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature* cited by Claviez, «when we interpret [a literary text], when we uncover its "unit" we make it into a total metaphor: the text is the vehicle and the world is the tenor»<sup>63</sup>. Perisman and Geaertz theories about metonymy as a "radial category" (according to cognitivist linguistics) illustrate the impossibility of radical metonymy: «whenever we put things into categories, we are able to identify those which are core "prototypical" members of the category, and those which are less central. So if we were to set up the category of "pets", a cat or a dog might be seen as prototypical (at least in the UK)»<sup>64</sup>. What happens then, when "prototypes" are culturally different, or rather when categories have opposite prototypical members? The boundaries between them

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<sup>57</sup> <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/metaphor/>

<sup>58</sup> Thomas Claviez, *Traces of a Metonymic Society in American Literary History*, cit., p. 301; *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, p. 206, ed. Chris Baldick, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 206.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>60</sup> Roman Jakobson, *Two aspects of language and two types of aphasic disturbances*, in *On language*, ed. Linda R. Waugh-Monique Monville-Burston, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 132.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Claviez, *Traces of a Metonymic Society in American Literary History*, cit., p. 304.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature*, University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 109.

<sup>64</sup> Jeannette Littlemore, *Metonymy: Hidden Shortcuts in Language, Thought and Communication*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, "Cambridge Studies in Cognitive Linguistics", 2015, p. 51

become fuzzy and sometimes impossible to discern. In some cases, poetry can work upon this impossibility in an aesthetical way: let's think of "images" in Surrealist poems.

So, from the conceptual point of view, Claviez underlines that «first of all, metonymy in itself is impossible; second of all, even if it were possible, we would not be able to decipher and interpret it but metaphorically, otherwise a communication breakdown would ensue. Strictly speaking, metonymy is nothing but a metaphorical (de)cipher(ment) of/for an unrepresentable contingency»<sup>65</sup>. Let's take again the idea of contingency related to metonymy via contiguity. Claviez recalls some definitions of contingency (from Hume, Leibenz and Quine) showing that contingency is always related, in contradistinction, with truth. And Claviez adds that contingency could be considered as «“fateful necessity”, where “fate” simply is a stand-in for an as-yet-inexplicable truth in disguise»<sup>66</sup>. Then he affirms that even if human history could be considered as an attempt to overcome social and natural contingency (that is to say, trying to explain, regulate and dominate it), modernity is «defined by an *increased* experience»<sup>67</sup> of it. Thus he enhances the following definition for contemporary communities:

As far as the concept of community – and its conceptualization as metonymic – is concerned, [in modern times] we do conceive of our immediate neighbour not as “fatefully necessary” [...]. More and more we experience our neighbours, and those who constitute our “community” indeed as contingent in the sense that all that connects us is that we are contiguous upon each other and, due to the absence of a third that might actually explain – fatefully or rationally – why we happen to be neighbours, we are indeed contingent upon each other in a radical sense.<sup>68</sup>

Do «Metonymic societies»<sup>69</sup> (that is to say societies that can't be explained in terms of unity) imply a “metonymical literature”? According to Thomas Claviez, this is the case of some of American Modern/ist works which are able «to keep those contingencies in check», namely Whitman's poetry and Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener*, masterfully analyzed by the critic in the last part of his essay<sup>70</sup>. In the next segment, we'll try to propose a metaphor (that is, an interpretation for cosmopolitan artistic expressions) that explains this third shared by more communities as contiguity via contingency.

#### IV In Search of Useful Metaphors

Sometimes, there are philosophical or scientific metaphors which, because of their intuitive accessibility and effective application in various sectors, enjoy ample success in the field of Humanities.

Let's think of the botanical metaphor of the “rhizome”: launched by Deleuze and Guattari in *Mille plateaux* (1980; tr. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*), it has become one of the keys to express and understand the dissemination of knowledge, language and practices in the global world. The concept of “creolité” already mentioned, introduced by Edouard Glissant at the end of the 90s to account for the archipelagic interconnections of the world, is a consequence of it.

It seems to me that, among the notions advanced recently in the field of social sciences, the one of the “Third Landscape” can offer us a fruitful introduction to understanding the cultural exchanges and realities (literary or artistic) hitherto defined by terms borrowed from the spheres of identity and territorial roots (nationality).

This way of taking territorial divisions and belonging into account seems to me, in this day and age, reductive. In other words, we can no longer neither envisage the multiplicity of cultural

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<sup>65</sup> Thomas Claviez, *Traces of a Metonymic Society in American Literary History*, cit., p. 306.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 307-317.

expression mainly from the anchoring of an author or an artist to his/her own country of origin, nor to his/her condition of expatriate. That said, it is necessary to consider the situation of enunciation of those who express themselves.

Metonymic societies are informed by, but not contained in globalization. In other words, it is possible to adopt an epistemological perspective that goes beyond the notion of globalization (historically determined, the avatar of the expansion project inaugurated by the modern and colonial era) to open up to the idea of considering the existence of «situated knowledge»<sup>71</sup> capable of combining the local and the global.

The theoreticians of this perspective, including, at least, Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano and Boaventura de Sousa Santos, invite to deny the global mono-cultural vision (which affects the dimension of knowledge, i.e. time perceived as linear, naturalization of differences and parameters responding to productivity needs), to adopt a plural «ecology of knowledges». This ecology would be able to deconstruct the «coloniality of power» in the contemporary forms of «global coloniality», adopting, in its place, a «critical border thinking as the strategy or mechanism towards a decolonialized “transmodern world” as a universal project that moves us beyond Eurocentrism and fundamentalism»<sup>72</sup>.

Border thinking, universal anti-systemic project and Third Landscape have, in my view, a very close relationship, which makes us to think about contemporary “cosmopolitanism” in its metaphorical *and* metonymical dimension.

In the attempt to escape from the national framework and from the framework of globalization, it is perhaps productive to approach the literary field with new instruments that can overcome the logic of binary oppositions of the usual dichotomies: modernity-tradition; literacy-orality; identity-anonymity/alienation; native-diasporic/unrooted; centre-periphery; hegemony-marginality; North-South.

The *Third Landscape Manifesto* written in 2004 (and, so far, not translated in English) by the gardener, landscaper, botanist, entomologist, ecologist and French writer Gilles Clément may perhaps offer us a new metaphor that could be useful in order to consider a literary landscape difficult to grasp in depth by the categories mentioned above.

Let us therefore examine this text, which, it must be remembered, is addressed to botanists and landscapers, as well as to institutions.

## V. Lessons from the *Third Landscape Manifesto* (2004)

Gilles Clément’s *Manifesto* opens with three programmatic epigraphs:

Undecided fragment of the global garden, the Third landscape consists of all the places abandoned by man. These margins assemble a biodiversity that is not – to date – listed as wealth.

Third Landscape refers to the third-state (not third world). Space expressing neither the power nor the submission to the power.

It refers to the pamphlet by Siesyes in 1789:

«What is the Third State? – All.

What has it done so far? – Nothing.

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<sup>71</sup> Ramón Grosfoguel, “Developmentalism, Modernity, and Dependency Theory in Latin America”, *Nepantla. Views from the South*, vol. 1, issue 2, Durham, Duke University Press, 2000, pp. 347-374

<sup>72</sup> Ramón Grosfoguel, “Transmodernity, border thinking, and global coloniality. Decolonizing political economy and postcolonial studies”, *Humandee, Human Management and Development*, July 4th 2008, <http://www.humandee.org/spip.php?article111>

What does it aspire to become? – Something.»<sup>73</sup>

Some other terminological details and some conceptual additions taken from the *Manifesto*: the «left behind (délaissé)» arises from the unattending of a formerly exploited place<sup>74</sup>; these places do not have an assigned function<sup>75</sup>; they express neither the power, nor the submission to power<sup>76</sup>; they are not preserved nor monitored and tend to be suppressed or reduced<sup>77</sup>; they are the «vestiges of a polyculture»<sup>78</sup> that reveal the artificial nature of what appears to be “naturally” present (for example, «forestry holdings, the grass of cattle farms»<sup>79</sup>); they are fragments of landscape very dissimilar among themselves, but have one thing in common: «all constitute a territory of refuge for the diversity»<sup>80</sup>; they are mobile and dynamic, both through the interplay of internal exchanges and through interaction with the surrounding environment<sup>81</sup>; their future is unpredictable, their evolution inconstant<sup>82</sup>; they escape the idea of heritage which would condemn the Third Landscape to its own disappearance<sup>83</sup>; however, they change form and proposition by the play of the market and by the political game<sup>84</sup>.

The Third Landscape is opposed to the natural reserves, namely to those unexploited areas which, for multiple reasons (difficulty or cost of access, destination to sacred use), are outside the «anthropized territory»<sup>85</sup>; it is also opposed to primary ecosystems, that correspond to spaces that have never been subject to exploitation and are increasingly reduced<sup>86</sup>; finally, «the boundaries of the Third Landscape are the boundaries of the Planetary Garden, the limits of the biosphere»<sup>87</sup>.

In the last paragraphs of the Statute of the Manifesto, we read that «the Third Landscape acquires a political dimension by its content, by the stakes involved in diversity, by the need to preserve it - or to maintain its dynamics»<sup>88</sup>; it «coincides with administrative delimitations on a temporary basis»; moreover «the maintenance of its existence does not depend on wise men, but on a collective conscience»<sup>89</sup>.

As for the issues/stakes of the Third Landscape and its relation to culture, it is stated respectively:

- [...] the Third Landscape can be seen, passively, as a refuge territory, and actively as the place of possible invention.

- the Third Landscape is a reservoir of all planetary genetic configurations; the Third Landscape represents the biological future.<sup>90</sup>

It would be important

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<sup>73</sup> Gilles Clément, *Manifeste du Tiers Paysage* (2004), p. 1. This and the successive quotes have been taken from the PDF format of Gilles Clément's *Manifesto* uploaded by Clément himself. The page numeration refers to this PDF and the translation is mine:

[http://www.gillesclément.com/fichiers/\\_tierspaypublications\\_92045\\_manifeste\\_du\\_tiers\\_paysage.pdf](http://www.gillesclément.com/fichiers/_tierspaypublications_92045_manifeste_du_tiers_paysage.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

- to give the Third Landscape the matrix role of a global landscape in the making.
- to declare the territory of the Third Landscape a privileged place of biological intelligence, thanks to the ability to constantly reinvent itself.<sup>91</sup>

Let us now revisit the suggestions above and try to understand whether this really metonymic territory can be applied metaphorically to Letters. An important clarification: the Third Landscape corresponds to all cultural productions before their patrimonialization (that are the various means by which cultural features – either material or immaterial – are turned into a people's heritage) elaborated at any latitude or time.

First of all, the Third Landscape speaks about unattended land, and land is precisely where the literary and the artistic inventions are located. In other words, there is always an anchoring between a speech (or a gesture) and the place from which these two are emitted or practiced.

The land, however, differs from the notion of “field” (naturally I refer to Pierre Bourdieu, who first attributed this concept to cultural facts<sup>92</sup>): a field is defined by its delimitations, precisely by its distinctive system, while the notion of land is open and inclusive. If a field can be seen in a systemic way, a land is at the crossroads, if not at the edge or against several fields/systems, and it is dynamic. Just as it happens to the Third Landscape, indecision in literary and artistic innovations results from the abandonment of a formerly exploited land, without a previously assigned function, taking the risk of being neglected or reduced. In the same way these innovations reveal the artificial character of what appears to be “naturally” present: i.e. canons, delimitations of literary or artistic genres, distinction between orality and writing, partitioning between humanities and scientific knowledge, assignment of a novel to a shelf rather than to another in a bookstore, of the value of use of an object (for instance a literary motif) or a technique (i.e. a figures of speech).

In these spaces of contiguity and contingency, Letters can enjoy mobility and dynamism, both through the interplay of internal exchanges and through interaction with the surrounding environments. In the same way, their future is unpredictable and their evolution inconstant.

In relation to culture as a system, they position themselves as a refuge territory (passive situation) and as the place for possible invention (active situation). Thus, in their initial practice, they escape the idea of patrimonialization, although in some cases, without or with the express consent of the author or artist, they may become heritage. On this point we state a difference between the notion of the Third Landscape advanced by Gilles Clément, precisely because the literary space – as is the case for the Third Landscape – changes its forms and propositions by the play of the market, which, as Clément reminds us, is a political game: the choice of an expression in relation to another led Ngugi wa Tiongh'o' to one year in prison in 1977.

In contrast to the Third Landscape, these lands of literary creation parasitize and sometimes try to insinuate themselves into the “reserve”, namely in places not exploited for multiple reasons (it is sufficient to think of intertextual borrowings not as a trace of a so-called “postmodern” aesthetics, but as the capacity of an author to integrate and reinvent in his/her work the vestiges of an earlier polyculture<sup>93</sup>).

As for the Third Landscape, their borders are the boundaries of a Planetary garden, limited only by the biosphere of dreams.

Finally, by their content, by the stakes involved in diversity, by the need to preserve it – or to maintain its dynamism – the undecided spaces of creation acquire a political dimension and the maintenance of their existence does not depend solely on intellectual elites or on the cultural market (festivals,

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>92</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “Le champ littéraire”, in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, vol. 89, Septembre 1991, pp. 3-46.

<sup>93</sup> This is the case for the intertextual strategies in the novel *Le Devoir de violence*, cited before.

Frankfurt fair, publishers, curators), but on a collective conscience. Because of this, they configure the future, while continuously reinventing it.

In conclusion, I tried to show how the issue of cosmopolitanism is articulated around the difficult relationship between Self (community, nation-State) and Others (others that may come from another nation-State, feeling citizens of the world, or others hosted on a nation-State being hostages of the same, or rather relegated to the margins).

What we are facing today is a state of contiguity in a certain space (the only thing that everyone really shares), where the contingency is increasingly perceived. As shown by the analysis of Thomas Claviez, tropologically speaking this way we have a S/state that is partially metonymic (contingent) and partially metaphorical (that is to say, founded on the myth of a common history).

The proposal to apply the ecological concept taken by Gilles Clément to the literary realm is that this model has the merit of considering the community in metonymical terms (contiguity and contingency) without forgetting the planetary utopian dimension (metaphorical myth of world as unity) inherent, after all, to any cosmopolitanism and to Literature<sup>94</sup>. Moreover, this concept and the literary consequences that I tried to illustrate have the merit of avoiding cultural essentialisms, which are always misleading, and to give expressions and attitude the chance to work across purposes and across contingencies:

What is the Planetary Literature? – All.

What has it done so far? – Nothing.

What does it aspire to become? – Something.

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<sup>94</sup> Any text is conceived in terms of unity by the author and also by the readers who interpret it, and that is why a radical metonymy is impossible: as reminded by David Lodge before, the text is the vehicle and the world is the tenor.

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