

Some Thoughts about ‘World Literature’ and the Literature Truly Needed

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Abstract:

Whereas (socio-)cultures – with their forms of material production, of communal and/or statist organization, their diverse oral and/or written literatures – are complex, internally ‘diverse’ if not antagonistic entities that have existed and that have engaged in intercultural exchange processes for thousands of years, the nation-state with its standardizing and unitary tendencies is a rather young phenomenon that first emerged in the West and that has brought forth ‘nationalist ideology’ and the quest for unitary ‘national literatures.’ The term suggested unity where in reality – at the time of Goethe – diversity still existed; and in reality, literature in modern nation-states never became fully subjected to the nationalist project, which was coupled with colonialism and imperialism in the West, and which prompted a counter-ideology and praxis of emancipatory anti-colonialist (‘Third World’) nationalism, also with ‘unifying’ ideological tendencies that threaten to camouflage and subject real diversity in these socio-cultures striving towards emancipation.

Today, we experience an ‘Americanization’ or ‘internationalization of national literatures.’ As a consequence of (a) market forces, (b) concomitant capital concentration affecting the publishing sector, and (c) more efficient propagation of dominant discourses (and of the images they transport!), literary tastes of mass publics and of market-conscious producers of literature become more and more homogenous, despite the fact that prevailing advertisement strategies attempt to suggest the existence of diversity and difference.

Countertendencies that challenged dominant discourse and elitist canons have existed in earlier social formations and continue to exist today. The new concert of voices of the specific “literatures of resistance” is perhaps the real *world literature* of the future and speaks to all of us.

Keywords: National literature, world literature, socio-culture, nation-state, identity, diversity, specificity, cultural hegemony, domination, Americanization

四海之内皆兄弟也

Within the four seas all men are brothers.¹

Perhaps in seeking to discover things and to obtain new insights, it is good to move to and fro between

¹ A Chinese proverb that Needham’s *Within the Four Seas* has made me aware of; thus, this is also a homage to Joseph Needham.

opposites, and to look for incongruencies, if not contradictions, in the field we hope to explore. The straight path of moving forward may not be the best; so I ask the readers for patience when the route is zigzagging, and when there are detours. And why not begin these reflections on world literature with a question that does not point directly to world literature, but to its supposed opposite?

World Literature, we are told, again and again, since perhaps Goethe, relates to National Literature. But what is National Literature?

World literature has been seen in relation to national literature since the early 19th century, and is also seen thus today – but in various ways. During the 8th International Congress of P.E.N. International held in Rio de Janeiro, the prevailing stance was that “la littérature universelle n’est qu’une transformation de la littérature nationale, et c’est pour cette raison qu’il faut toujours favoriser les échanges culturels et littéraires.” (Fédération). Both appear as connected, and the one is said to have an impact on the other. And Michael Emmerich recently stated that Japanese “national literature, [...] like all national literatures, is ultimately a byproduct of the transnational” – I would prefer to say: transcultural and transregional – “creation, and continual recreation, of the concept of literature as a universally applicable category – of the concept, that is to say, of world literature.” (Emmerich 235) Emmerich changes the level of the argument, however, when he shifts the attention from the real, materialistically comprehended processes of creation, and continued creation of real literature, affected by exchange processes, thus interaction or interference, to the level of concepts. Still it is apparent that the Rio statement and Emmerich’s statement point towards a dialectics that exists between specific literatures and thus also between the specific and the “whole” that we still fail to grasp in all but the most abstract terms, like the “universally applicable category” literature. Is *world literature* just a synonym for the still little-known reality covered by the concept of “literature” as a universally present phenomenon?

At any rate, one can say that it has indeed become customary to talk about *world literature* as if it were something that transcends *national literature* – perhaps even its antithesis. But how far does this insight lead us? Do we clearly see what the one might be if we have conventional, if not muddle ideas about the other, about *national literature*? I suspect that many may even take this latter concept for granted, as if “everybody” knew what it refers to. Don’t we all *know* what is German national literature, or French national literature, or even Chinese national literature? But what do we know not only about ‘literature’ but about ‘German’, ‘French’, ‘Chinese,’ etc.? And then, about ‘national’? What are ‘identities’ and what ‘forms’ them? How complex do they tend to be, and what are their sources? Surely, many definitions of cultural ‘identity’ remain problematic. It is hardly something ‘pure and simple,’ free of contradictions and owed to ‘a common origin’ – one shared source.

But after all, we encounter more than one way to talk of national literature. The most naïve way to do so seems to imply that nations and “peoples” are naturally given entities, almost eternal, and that from the very beginnings of their traceable histories, “everything” that has assumed written form belongs to the vast and incredibly ancient body of their “national literature.” Together with the other arts, it would form their national cultural “treasure.” This is of course a spontaneous and psychologically understandable position²; it would subsume the works of Euripides and Sophocles under the heading of Greek national literature, and Chuangzi under the heading of Chinese national literature. It embodies a *sense of continuity* inscribed in the minds of those who belong – or who feel and think that they belong – to a certain presently identifiable socio-culture. It empties, however, the category of the “national” of all concrete, historical meaning. After all, we cannot ascribe constant, easily identifiable cultural “identities” that exist throughout history to regional populations that are associated today with a given society and culture (for short: a socio-culture).

2 It is even justified if we shed nationalist attempts to “possess” and to ascribe old and complex heritages to a modern “nationality”, “nation” and nation-state rather than seeing such a “heritage” as an expression of a much more broadly and fluidly defined socio-culture in all its diversity and in all its intercultural exchange relations to which it may owe so much.

Even today, such populations – say of Germany, or of China, are hardly simple cultural entities and they are, I would venture to say, not homogenous enough to deduce something like a “national character” – another concept that remains highly problematic, if not dubious.

Historically speaking, Western and in fact, Latin terms like “tribu” and “natio” point to the early emergence of pre-State forms of social organization. The relatively early emergence of ancient states - some apparently with a recognizable bureaucracy in China, the Indus Valley, and the Middle East (including Egypt) - is also well-known. And of course, these ancient cultures produced texts. But was this already a national literature?

A convincing Western view of the matter is that the modern nation state evolved in Europe in tandem with colonialism and the early beginnings of a world market. European absolutism, forms of commercial capitalism that got a boost due to the Transatlantic, Indian and China trade, then also agrarian capitalism³ – plus a slave-exploiting, very commercialized plantation economy in the colonies (and later also in former transatlantic colonies like the U.S. since 1776, and Brazil since 1808) – gave shape to the Western *nation state* and its particular, not yet fully developed (thus not yet industrial capitalist) regime of accumulation. Intellectual exchange among thinkers in Europe had been vibrant in the renaissance; it remained so in the 17th and early 18th century. Leibniz (1646-1716) for instance was in touch with the Dutch scholar Huygens (1629-1695) and the English philosopher Anthony Collins (1676-1729), and more importantly with Spinoza (1632-1677). Important cultural impulses depended on such exchange across borders, and this exchange bridged spaces and distances larger than any absolutist state (that might well comprise populations speaking different languages); it even surpassed the territory of what we call Europe. Joseph Needham thinks that “the ideas of Chinese organic materialism entered European thinking by the intermediation of the Jesuit Mission in the seventeenth century, bearing fruit in the West from Leibniz onward.” (Needham 156)

Cultural exchange became even more intense in the mid- and late 18th century between proponents of enlightenment in England, France, Holland, even Prussia. “To Diderot, the friend of Rousseau, and to the whole of Diderot’s school, England seemed the home of liberty of thought [...]” (Texte xiii) Among the French men of letters at the time who aided and mediated this exchange, Joseph Texte mentioned especially Desmaizeaux.⁴ He “wrote biographies of Bayle, Boileau, and Saint-Evremond, contributed to all the newspapers in Holland and London, acted as the non-official correspondent of the *Journal des savants* and of Leibnitz, made translations for booksellers, wrote lives of Chillingworth and Hales in English, issued the unpublished works of Clarke, Newton, and Collins and all without prejudice to an enormous private correspondence which lies buried in the archives of the British Museum. ‘He is the man who knows all the eminent persons: he writes to them, receives letters from them, and is indefatigable in their service.’ He was a literary factotum. Editor, translator, compiler and journalist, Desmaizeaux belonged to no one country; he was a citizen of learned and thinking Europe.” (Texte 18) In view of David Damrosch’s insistence that translation is a bridge that constructs world literature (Damrosch), the activities of Desmaizeaux not only as a translator but also as a contact and mediator of contacts deserve attention with regard to the mutual reception processes that contributed to the vibrancy of early Enlightenment philosophy in England, France, and perhaps even Germany, thus in a part of Europe. Even more important is the awareness of cultural difference that stimulated cultural exchange, and that this awareness was apparently free of pronounced “nationalist” sentiment. Central (“national”?) governments and their censorship apparatus could in fact only appear as an obstacle to quite a few thinkers and writers at the time. We all know about the considerable role of Dutch publishers with regard to the dispersion of enlightenment ideas, thus also with regard to *belles lettres* and educated readers.⁵ A marked “nationalism” was by no means typical of this period, even though

3 During the Consulate period (1799-1804), large land owners in France depended on mortgage lenders. Parliamentary debates reveal that these were not furnishing capital quickly enough to “propriétaires fonciers” for their “amélioration des propriétés foncières.” (Journal 59).

4 Pierre Desmaizeaux (also: des Maizeaux; 1666-1745).

5 It was the practice of censorship in absolutist states that forced progressive authors to publish their books abroad – often in the Netherlands, sometimes in Switzerland. Diderot’s famous *Encyclopédie* was printed at least partly in Switzerland. The commercial bourgeoisie in Amsterdam and Basel had no vested interest in suppressing ideas considered dangerous by central governments abroad; they wanted to make money.

socio-cultural identities can be identified. Indeed, closer scrutiny of 18th century texts reveals that the term “nation” was used loosely at the time. Authors seem to refer to regions and their socio-culturally identifiable populations, but perhaps also to states inhabited by population groups that exhibited diverse socio-cultural traits and spoke different languages. In 1762, John Lockman identifies such geographical regions (not states) as China and East India and attempts to attribute specific “manners,” but also forms of “government,” and “civil and religious ceremonies” to them.(Lockman, *passim*) Concentrating on what he took to be socio-cultural traits, Voltaire formed hetero-images (thus, stereotyped views) of “nations”. He spoke of “traits” that “characterize a nation.” These were “traits” seen as positive like “grandeur d’âme” (generosity), “magnanimité” (magnanimity), “courage”, “hospitalité” (hospitality), “libéralité” (liberality), “clémence” (mildness), and negative traits which consisted in the negation or the absence of the traits named above. He singled out admirable and detestable “nations” by constructing biased constellations of mainly positive or mainly negative traits; in one particularly case, the Arabs and the Jews.⁶ It reflected a typical antijudaism widely present in Europe. It is clear that neither “the Arabs” nor “the Jews” lumped together by him as “nations” were, at the time, *nations* in the modern sense of the word: they were historically formed socio-cultural entities, and the traits ascribed to them represented current prejudice. In other word, for Voltaire, the concept of “nation” was synonymous with a “socio-cultural entity” characterized by supposedly “typical,” collective, and thus “national” *traits* projected upon them (Voltaire 231).

Goethe was still aware of this lack of “centralist” rigidity a few decades later during his *Italienreise* and fascinated by what he may have seen as either a complex, fluid and vibrant Italian identity or as different “Italian” identities – those of Firenze (or Tuscany), of Rome, of the Mezzogiorno, etc.. Likewise, visitors arriving in Germany – and even Germans – may have been aware of manifold German “identities”. Socio-cultural diversity within the German-speaking region was undeniable. Could one also say the same of China, even today?

The existence of Italian *identities* (in the plural) instead of one identity is not only a socio-cultural, but also a linguistic phenomenon, and the rigid attempt of the bourgeois nation-state to *unify* and *standardize* Italian socio-cultural and linguistic realities by submitting them to the *diktat* of legal, cultural, economic and other hegemonically controlled institutions led, in the area of language and literature, to the foundation of academies that were expected to act as watchdogs of linguistic ‘purity’; in other words, the state-supervised *purity of (educated) language*. This was already recognized in 1837 by Henry Hallam in his book *Introduction to the Literature of Europe [...]*. He said, « Plusieurs académies furent instituées dans ce but spécial, et s’érigèrent en tribunaux de censure à l’égard de la littérature nationale. Il ne faut pas oublier que l’absence d’une autorité constante en fait d’idiome était en Italie, comme nous l’avons vu, une source de critique portant particulièrement sur les mots. » (Hallam 1839 [b], 476) Even today, it is clear that by the standards of purists desiring the *one* correct Italian language, the idiom of Pier Paolo Pasolini’s poems must be considered unforgivable, though it is therein that we can discover in good measure its real beauty and expressiveness. At the same time, his use of the idiom in his poetry testifies to the existence of countertendencies that diverge from the official hegemonic ideal. Obviously, the socio-cultural reality of populations is complex, diverse, and entails contradictions.

The modern nation-state surfaced first in countries like France and Britain, perhaps also Holland and the U.S.A.. Arnold Toynbee saw in it, in conjunction with modern industry – thus industrial capitalism – the decisive force that moulded the *recent* history of the West. (Anderson 11) Undoubtedly it did not exist independently of an emerging commercial and soon also manufacturing bourgeoisie. And thus, it was slow to form in Germany and Italy. And it appeared even later, on the stage of history, in the Balkan region, in Greece, in East Central Europe. Modern nationalism was very much the *ideological* expression of what some historians call *the thirst of populations* for “national unity.” To what extent the ‘thirst’ for unity really existed

⁶ This reflected a cultural superiority complex, something he shared with many, but I think that it cannot be taken as indicative of nationalism as it emerged (as ideology, commonplace attitude and motivator of praxis) since perhaps the mid-19th century in Europe and the U.S., and later – as a reaction to European nationalism and imperialism – outside the imperialist West.

throughout the society, in the entirety of its population, in this or that historical phase, is another matter. Even in the young United States, farmers in New England and Pennsylvania rebelled against too much “unity,” against an encroaching state apparatus, against what they took to be “taxation without representation” and the liquidation of old customary socio-culturally well-established rights. (Nevins, 109-113; Zinn, *passim*) The seditious uprisings against the state authorities of the young and struggling French Republic may have had, at least in part, similar causes. Late absolutism had begun to push for “national” homogenization⁷; the French republic continued in this way. It was the logic of the modern state, of its bureaucracy, and *the logic of a period* that saw, on the socio-economic level, the advance to an early industrial capitalist regime in Britain and, to a lesser degree, France. Nationalism and bureaucratic unification was, at the root, no deeply felt quest of the populace. It infected those who were ready to be integrated into the modern process: merchants who wanted old trade barriers to be scrapped, industrialists who wanted larger markets, state employees, and those among the so-called middle classes who had also a stake in the announced ‘progress’ – among them, lawyers, school teachers, and so on. And, yes – of course, one is tempted to say – many writers. In the last decade of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century it infected them only mildly. This may surprise in view of the established historical pictures painted by nationalist historiography. According to the image presented by it, the desire for national unity was strong in Italy and Germany. Do we really note it as *excessive* in the period of Hegel, Goethe, and Hölderlin within the region inhabited by German-speaking readers and writers? In what sense can we speak at the time of a “national literature”?⁸

Nationalism as a successful ideology was slow to build up. It was useful for the French revolutionaries when the revolution was encircled by the Holy Alliance of three reactionary regimes in league with supposedly liberal Britain. When Desmarais published the second edition of his overview of French literature in 1837, he spoke only of a “national spirit” but refrained from using the concept “national literature” that became current elsewhere in Europe and also in the U.S. (Desmarais, *passim*). In the U.S., ideas and emotions that centered on nationhood and accentuated the ‘national’ began to take form during the first half of the 19th century, as is apparent in the 1830s and ‘40s in the form of such reflections on an American “national literature” as those produced by Channing and Swanton-Belloc (Channing), by Du Ponceau (Du Ponceau) and by Rocchietti (Rocchietti). In German territories, ‘nationalist’ sentiments were fanned during the last phase of the Napoleonic period in an effort of the ‘old reactionary elites’ to mobilize popular support against the liberal French emperor and his armies. It was probably widespread resentment of the fact that young men were compelled to serve in the French army that aided the reactionary strategy to mobilize the populace against the Napoleonic occupation in 1813. It is an old insight that «toute littérature réfléchit jusqu’à un certain point son époque» ; «les évènements des derniers temps ne sont pas restés sans influence sur la littérature [allemande]. Les littérateurs à venir [...] devront, à dater de l’année 1813, époque de la délivrance du joug étranger, commencer une nouvelle époque dans l’histoire littéraire du peuple allemand. [...] De même que le malheur fait rentrer l’individu en lui-même, ainsi les peuples allemands, pendant qu’ils gémissaient sous un joug insupportable, apprirent à se connaître et à voir ce que leur situation avait d’insuffisant» [“all

7 Beginning homogenization under late absolutism in Europe had two principal causes: it was a consequence of a centralist political project, and it was also an effect of a forming national market that replaced regional markets which had continued to exist (and still would continue to exist to some extent) in a context that saw worldwide trade relations intensify. It is possible that economic tendencies which had strengthened commercial capitalism in the cities and transformed feudal into agrarian capitalist relations in much of the countryside had made the formation of the modern absolutist state possible, and that the political project of centralization in turn aided the existing market dynamics. This was most evident in France which followed Britain as a vanguard of ‘modernization’ in Europe. As a cultural institution of the centralist state, the Académie française represented the unitary impulses of Late Absolutism in the field of culture. Established by Richelieu in 1635, and functioning also as an instrument that sought to preserve a waning ideological hegemony, it ignored men of letters like Diderot. It was dissolved by the revolutionaries, who nonetheless kept pursuing the ideal of the unitary state, contributing greatly to further centralization. Under Louis Philippe, the concern for a unitary ‘correct’ national language received a boost by Bescherelle’s *Grammaire nationale* (Bescherelle). Its function can be compared to that of the Italian academies that watched over the ‘purity’ and in fact standardization of Italian as written (and spoken) by the ‘educated classes.’ Such standardization that sought to suppress regional variants was part of the nationalist project; it reflected both an ideology and the praxis of bureaucratic institutions, thus the state apparatus. The *Grammaire nationale* experienced several editions, thus in 1837, 1840, 1841 and 1847. The complete title is telling (Bescherelle [b]); it reveals the literary ‘models’ referred to.

8 As Weigui Fang 方维规 pointed out in his introduction to the book *What Is World Literature? Tension between the Local and the Universal* (forthcoming), the term “National-Litteratur” was first used by a German author in 1777 in a book that appeared in Britain, and what may well be the first ‘plea for national literature’ in Germany – even though the term itself was not used – can be found in the collection of essays *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*, edited by Herder, Goethe, Frisi and Möser and published in 1773. (Fang [b])

literature reflects its epoch to a certain extent”; “*The events of recent times have not remained without influence on [German] literature. Since 1813, the time of emancipation from the foreign [Napoleonic] yoke, future writers must usher in a new era in the literary history of the German peoples. [...] In the same way as bad fortune brings the individual back to himself, the German peoples, groaning under an unbearable yoke, learned to know and see that their situation was inadequate*”] (Dictionnaire 386). This argument reflects an attempt to explain why German writers and the German public, since 1813, became more concerned with “national” identity and possibly inclined to think of a “national literature.” Interestingly, the French author of this dictionary entry does not speak of German “national literature” but of German literature. That’s a big difference! In a similar vein, the unnamed author of a review of the “Allgemeine Litterarische Anzeiger” (General Literary Examiner) that appeared in Leipzig since July 1796, notes: “[d]er ALA verbreitet sich [...] über Alles, was von Teutscher Litteratur irgend merkwürdig und interessant ist [...]” [“*the GLE deals ... with everything that is, in some way, remarkable and interesting in German literature*”](Redacteur).⁹ Such sentiments – and the agitation that accompanied them – did not yet amount to modern ‘nationalism’; they were a mixture of *patriotism*¹⁰ (owed to a traditional, pre-modern motherland and perhaps to sovereigns – in Prussia, Saxony, etc.) and *resentment* that was furthered by grievances of the common people. But these sentiments foreshadow an early modern nationalism that was yet to appear; they were more than the old, customary awareness of “being German” (rather than “welsch” or foreign) that had existed for long as an awareness of a culture and of a community of speakers of a language that, with all its variants, was known as “Deutsch.” Of course, there had been a vague awareness of a history shared, and this history included such ‘landmarks’ as the Swiss insurrection against Habsburg control in the 14th century, a central theme of Schiller’s *Wilhelm Tell* (1804), or the Peasant Wars, invoked in Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773). But this awareness of a history of the populace in German-speaking lands – if it was really very old – is only articulated in literary form in 1773 and 1804, and such plays propagated republican, democratic rather than nationalist ideals. But then, we must note that agitation for national unity, mixed with democratic agitation, increased in the 1830s, due to big manifestations like the Hambach Festival (1832). It got a boost – not only in German states, but also in Poland (thanks to authors like Mickiewicz (Mickiewicz)), in Hungary (exemplified by the poetry of Petöfi¹¹(Erdödy-Csorba)), in Bohemia (where it had already inspired the poems of Macha¹²) and in Italy – during the revolution of 1848-49. Still, even in this context, it was no modern ‘nationalism’ of the kind that emerged in the 1860s and ‘70s. It clearly was above all a bourgeois and petty-bourgeois preoccupation with unification, colored by democratic, revolutionary overtones. It affected “the educated” much more than the peasants and probably also more than most workers. In several urban centers of German states, at least, there were quite a few artisans and manufactory workers who combined the quest for national unity with the idea of a ‘red republic’ during the revolution. In France, unity existed and thus nationalist goals did not matter that much among the workers who fought on the barricades – in 1830 during the revolution that toppled Charles X., then during the *canut revolts* in Lyon in 1831 and 1834, and of course in 1848 when the republic was established again. This is the time that saw the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*. Whether the spirit of the workers was ‘internationalist,’ is another question that can be answered one way or another. German workers seem to have felt ‘German,’ French workers ‘French.’ But in Berlin and in Paris, workers from different countries fought side by side. It was practical international solidarity of people conscious of their ‘nationality’ or perhaps just roots in a given country.

Since the second half of the 19th century, nationalist ideologues appropriated, by way of their discourse, the manifold literatures of countries like Italy, Germany, France, the U.S., and so on. They occupied

⁹ This is just one of several possible examples documenting the fact that in the late 18th century it was customary to speak of German literature, whereas the term German national literature or just national literature was extremely rare.

¹⁰ As Pierre Vilar pointed out, patriotism, love for the motherland, must not be confused with nationalism. Recent, quite modern psychological deformations related to *Machtpolitik* of the nation-state, such as the discourse-generated sentiments of “supériorité, infériorité, nostalgie de grandeur, crainte du mépris des autres,” characterize modern nationalism. (Vilar 89)

¹¹ See the selection of his diary notes, letters, pamphlets and poems, translated to German, and entitled: *Petöfi – rebell or revolutionary?* (Petöfi)

¹² About the connection between romanticism and the growing ‘national’ aspirations in Bohemia that culminated for the first time in the revolution of 1848-49, see H. Granjard (Granjard, passim). Karel Hynek Mácha (1810-1836) was only recognized as a major poet in the 1850s.

the literary terrain. Most writers would subscribe to it, consciously or pre-consciously, and insert themselves in a trend. It began mildly, with mixed (progressive and reactionary elements) by 1848. In a part of Europe, it was exacerbated by the Franco-German war of 1870-71, and quite generally, it got nasty and outright chauvinistic in Europe in the years immediately before World War I. In France, Gobineau had already published his racist thoughts about the “inequality of human races” in the 1850s, but racism was a self-evident consequence of colonialism everywhere. The Dreyfus affair brought it to light again (Winnock, *passim*). Not only writers like – more recently – François Mauriac (whose work was so clearly cherished in France and abroad that he even received the Nobel Prize during the Cold War) and before him, Maurice Barrès but the entire mainstream of renowned and lesser known authors and artists formed – and continues to form – what must be called a *national culture*, *national literature* and *national art* since at least 1880.¹³ But there also existed libertarian, anarchist and socialist authors and artists who embraced internationalist positions and who clearly did not represent a “national” culture despite their French roots. Even regionalists surfaced; a current included in the “national heritage” that was nonetheless heterodox and thought of as disturbing by purists. In Germany, it is similar; nationalism had received a boost in the 1870s; it reached a first climax around 1900 when it was put in the service of late 19th century colonialism and imperialism,¹⁴ and then it reached another climax during the world war, when even famous and respected writers and artists revealed their chauvinist side. Some 60 or 70 years ago, Heine had represented a counter-position; he had an ambivalent relationship to Germany, and was no nationalist at all.¹⁵ But he did not opt for integration into French culture or “la grande nation” when he lived in Paris. His language as an author remained German but he addressed all who would listen and he belongs to humanity; his work is not the cultural property of a nation. German nationalism shortly before and after 1900 was almost a preannouncement of the worse that was yet to come between 1933 and 1945. Linked to the October Revolution in Russia, both Germany and France experienced strong internationalist countertendencies between 1918 and the mid-1930s that challenged dominant nationalist discourse. This countercurrent grew strong, in both countries, but it did not achieve cultural hegemony. During all these years, literature – thought of by most authors, critics, and readers as a decidedly “national literature” – was not only a victim of political developments; it was also a force, a carrier of sentiments and thoughts that embodied ideological tendencies, in extreme cases, it was an ideological weapon, and writers who saw themselves contributing to a “national literature,” did not just succumb to nationalism; whether conscious of it or not, they contributed to it. Some may have questioned but many reinforced, by their writings, the “normalcy” of self-understood “national values” and “virtues” and the hetero-images projected on “Others,” and thus predispositions that were rampant among their readers, and perhaps they were thus instrumental in spreading the “virus.”

Broadly speaking, it is possibly to say that, in a sense, emerging “national literature” in Europe in this entire era from the *Levée en masse* in France and the so-called Wars of Liberation in German states to the defeat of Hitlerism is the ideological reflection and outcome of social and political developments that boosted – step by step – nationalist sentiments and nationalist ideology. And from the very beginning, writers and readers could insert themselves in this current that was becoming dominant, or they could position themselves outside it and even against it (like Heine).

We can probably assert the same with regard to U.S. “national literature” even though the country was

13 See (Winnock [b] *passim*), (Facos), the (*Revue de littérature comparée* 389-505), and see (Hobsbawm). See also (Logge); (Viel), and (Völlmer). And such works on ‘national literature’ that appeared in Germany during the 1890s as (Vilmar), (Kluge), and (Gottschall). With regard to Spain, see (Fox).

14 See (Goulemot, *passim*).

15 Michel Perraudin writes about this writer, “His own sense of [...] belonging was complicated.” Heine “was strongly conscious of his own Germanness, particularly in an awareness of the cultural memory – including folk memory – that he possessed and shared [...] ‘My breast is an archive of German feeling’, he once wrote [...]” (Perraudin 110) But this did not attach him to a ‘nation’ or ‘nation-state.’ Like literature, the consciousness of a cultural heritage and a feeling of belonging – no matter how complicated, contradictory, or antagonistic – exists ‘before’ and sometimes independently of a nation. With respect to literature, Gutiérrez Nájera was recognizing this when he wrote, “Hay una literatura polaca, y Polonia no es una nación. [...] En mi humilde sentir, [...] [l]as literaturas nacionales no son más que un subgénero de las literaturas propias.” (There exists a Polish literature, and Poland ‘has’ no nation [no nation-state]. In my humble opinion, national literatures are nothing but a sub-genre of literatures as such.) (Gutiérrez Nájera 84) – National identity is after all a fairly recent discursive and ideological product, and there exist sentiments, thoughts and forms of consciousness that precede it and have older and deeper sources. Regarding Heine, see also (Hinck, *passim*).

apparently less pronouncedly nationalist than most countries in Europe before 1890. Prior to the Spanish-American war and the conquest of the Philippines, its population as a whole had only experienced mild bouts of nationalism; it was perhaps more of a regional than a national preoccupation when Southerners pushed for the annexation of Texas (and then, New Mexico, Arizona, and California were also annexed). And so we notice that in the U.S. the idea or sentiment that a *national literature* was needed, was slow in the making. To define a literature as a *national literature* presupposes a modern ‘nation-state’ but, above and beyond this, **it is the expression of a nationalist ideology that overshadows and camouflages all those aspects of an inherited diversity of regional dialects, customs, etc., as well as cultural and political expressions of class antagonism that are seen as unacceptable by the watchdogs of ‘national unity.’** It is the pressure of institutions that pushes this old cultural diversity into the ‘underground’ of the ‘unacceptable’ and ‘despised’ while combatting the expression of class antagonism on the part of the subaltern classes with ideological, economic, and other repressive means.

With the establishment of a Pax Americana in much of the world in the wake of 1945, the nationalism that emerged in the 19th century and that experienced its cruel and irrational heydays in the 20th century – most of all, in two Fascist countries, Germany and Japan – was weakened in many countries. Nationalism receded in Western Europe and perhaps also in post-war Japan; Americanization and consumerist patterns of desiring, feeling and thinking were infinitely strengthened.¹⁶ Some speak of hedonist tendencies in the West, but it is difficult to see how steelworkers in Gary, Indiana or Essen (Germany) were supposed to be hedonist when they were doing their jobs, and it is even more difficult to see how they could become hedonist when the steel mills closed and they lived on the dole. In other words, the era of “globalization” with its inequalities and irrationalities had begun. Michel Beaud speaks of a global and hierarchized “national system” or system of nation-states (Beaud, *passim*); such a view or analysis emphasizes the hegemonic role of the U.S. at the top of the pyramid, at least in what Western ideologues call the “free world” – that is to say, the space of U.S. domination, of sub-imperialist partners, client states like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Columbia, protectorates like Kosovo, and potential allies like Vietnam and India.¹⁷ Nationalism, until very recently, was toned down, unfashionable in many quarters, except of course in the U.S., the leading nation, the hegemon, where school children continue to salute the flag. (Ekblad 106).

The exceptions are clear: The anti-colonialist struggle had produced, before WWII, and continued to produce in its wake, new and different forms of nationalism: nationalisms that embraced the quest for human emancipation and equality. But during the second *Congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs* in Rome (March 26 – April 1, 1959), Fanon also pointed out the dangers of mythification of one’s own history and thus “identity” and the dangers of inverse ethnicist prejudice and racism existent in the camp of his comrades who were justly engaged in the struggle for human emancipation and liberation not only from the yoke of colonialism, but also from alienation resulting from the uncritical reception of a Western mode of life, with all the attached ideological and practical implications, most notably those of competition, indi-

16 ‘Consumerism’ is a prevalent ideology (and to some extent, a practice). It is a consequence of Late Capitalism and the ideological outcome of the successfully propagated ‘American Dream.’ Despite the Cold War, ‘consumerism’ affected even the Soviet Union, as the economic reorientation under Khrushchev, advocated by Liberman and others, demonstrates. (Regarding the prehistory of this reorientation, see Michael Kaser (Kaser 141)). Since the 1950s, voices can be heard, however, that ask, *Do we want that?* Or: “Do we want to be like them?” (Galeano 176)

17 There is no need to resort to conspiracy “theories” if I note that the modern capitalist state, since its introduction of war-time planning in WWI, if not earlier, has continually expanded bureaucracies – as Max Weber has shown - and that it likewise increased the ratio of government spending to GNP (thus its weight or direct influence in the economy) while simultaneously increasing economic “framework planning” or broadly designed, flexible planning in the context of agendas more or less agreed upon today with major corporate sectors. Likewise, big corporate capital (increasingly “financialized,” but basically still both financial and industrial, plus commercial) pursues its global goals in conjunction with state bureaucracies, and seeks to fathom and if possible, solve intra-capitalistic, thus intra-class contradictions, using forums like the Council of Foreign Relations, the Foreign Affairs Council, the Aspen Institute, the Trilateral Commission, that are based in the hegemonic nation, and similar forums abroad. This is in fact the communicative infrastructure of the increasingly internationalized bourgeoisie that was established by the hegemon and loyal partners after WWII. It has controlled a particular internationalization or globalization that guaranteed a maximum of control by the still quite nationalistic U.S. economic “elites” – of course in all but conflict-free cooperation with their trustworthy partners, Trans-Atlantically focused “elites” in Western Europe and Trans-Pacifically oriented “elites” in Japan. The secret of this network of supposed stability is coordination, of course in combination with secret diplomacy and backroom dealings. This is business as usual, not conspiracy. As the respected liberal daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported, singling out just one member of these “elites,” David Rockefeller, for long a key figure in U.S. politics, who directed the Chase Manhattan Bank, was a “president of the influential Council of Foreign Relations” as well as a “member of the Bilderberg Gesellschaft, the Trilateral Commission, and the Group of Thirty.” (Piper 17)

vidualism, the longing to get rich, and the false consumerist “American Dream” that replaces satisfaction of real human needs by the fetishization of commodities as status objects. His intervention, that links “la culture nationale” to national liberation (with the latter as a temporary priority, because «aucun discours, aucune proclamation sur la culture ne nous détourneront de nos tâches fondamentales qui sont la libération du territoire national, une lutte de tous les instants contre les formes nouvelles du colonialisme»), indeed succeeded to ascribe a new, concretely universal significance both to *the different culture* the oppressed were in need of, and to *a new type* of nationalism, not as a glorification of the bourgeois nation-state and a spurious nation qua mythical, ethnically defined pseudo-“totality”, but as the unifying ideology of concrete, yet manifold *populations* of a given territory rising up, determinedly and in solidarity, against colonial suppression and exploitation. According to Fanon, « La lutte elle-même, dans son déroulement, dans son processus interne développe les différentes directions de la culture et en esquisse de nouvelles. » This has obvious consequences for committed new literature (called by him “national” literature), too. His speech later on became a part of his book *Les Damnés de la terre* (1961).

These struggle for liberation in many parts of the so-called Third World and the evolving “nationalisms” reflected the need of repressed populations to achieve unity in their struggle for freedom; this went hand in hand with international solidarity, and many of those engaged in such struggles clearly embraced what we have come to refer to, conventionally, as universal values. In other words, in the context of emancipatory struggles, they embraced ideologies that were the direct opposite of European nationalisms that had ended up, in their most extreme forms (exported even to Japan) as imperialist, racist, and genocidal.

If Fanon had hinted already at the possibility of a dangerous turn that nationalism might take even in the so-called Third World, the far-sighted correctness of his warning was revealed in the context of Khmer-Vietnamese conflict in the late 1970s and in the context of anti-Chinese massacres in Indonesia in 1965. We should thus have no difficulty to decipher the negative potential of all nationalisms.

So, what do we make of “national literature”? A holy cow? Or shouldn’t we become more modest, and say: there exist manifold literary creations, in every socio-culture? Of course, the writers and the readers in these socio-cultures can look back to a history. There are traditions, there are dominant lines of traditions, and there is that which was suppressed and at times, forgotten. “In a recent discussion of the concept of the literary canon John Guillory has taken up a point made by E.R. Curtius (1954) in his study of *European literature and the Latin Middle Ages* that at the root of the European literary canon lies the desire to homogenise society, or at least certain groups therein [the elites, the educated, the co-opted etc. (AW)] by means of education. Referring expressly to Curtius, Guillory stresses the importance of school as the regulatory social institution with the task to disseminate the knowledge desired by the dominant group(s) for the formulation and shaping of the literary canon. This of course is determined by and dependent on the nature of the dominant social and ideological themes of the day.” (Kratz 166; see also Guillory 62) Insofar the burning of books considered unorthodox by a Chinese emperor, burning of books under Hitler, the critique of “counter-revolutionary” literature under Mao Zedong, the intervention of the CIA that was seeking to get Rowohlt publishers not to publish a German version of a certain book by James Baldwin (reported by Fritz Raddatz, then in charge of Rowohl’s program of new books, in a conversation broadcast shortly before his death by WDR5 Cologne), and the economically motivated censorship of certain unwelcome kinds of literature in “free market societies” all serve the same goal: the bending of the canon, in an attempt to make it conform better to the ideological requirements of the “elites”, which today might mean, factions of the dominant class and their intellectual clerks. The canon was always a reflection of tastes and ideological preferences of elites.¹⁸ If you cannot question the canon, you just inscribe yourself into the pattern of promulgating both

18 Of course, the fact that these factions of the dominant class(es) and their allied intellectual clerks do not represent a unified, monolithic world view in today’s capitalist societies makes for a certain variance within the literary field, while the market allows for *pseudo-alternative as well as truly counter-hegemonic ‘niche publishers’* attuned to small market segments. Still, as Magdi Youssef has shown in his essay ‘Decolonizing World Literature,’ the pragmatics inscribed in the Nobel Prize in Literature decisions reveal the prize awarding committee as a watchdog of a canon that favors ideologically ‘idealistic’ rather than materialist authors. Youssef refers to Kjell Espmark (Espmark) – a former member of the committee – as a key witness. (Magdi Youssef, 125-140)

“the traditional heritage” and “the new” that is selected, maintained and defended by those who want to keep things as they are. Do it, if that is your cup of tea. But try to know who you are and where you position yourself and why.

Returning to the Question, “What is World Literature?”

Perhaps the concept of ‘national literature’ is indeed in need of critical analysis or “deconstruction” – to use a (still fashionable?) post-modern term. Apparently it is a treacherous concept, and to boot a concept that mirrors the persistent influence of extremely conservative and in fact nationalistic “philological scholars” – a bunch that dominated the discipline, say in West Germany, until at least the early 1970s and that left a trace of their impact for a much longer period.¹⁹

Again and again, for two or three decades already, the debate among professors of literature, comparatists, cultural sociologists and others, has been returning to this question, “What is world literature?” The term seems to seduce, and it may hold a hidden or not so hidden promise in store for us. A Mexican writer used it about 200 years ago, as a number of critics of eurocentrism, among them Magdi Youssef (Youssef, *passim*), have pointed out, and Goethe was fascinated by the concept a little later.²⁰

But what do we encounter today, in this “era of globalization” – world literature? – or a large number of dominant and marginalized literatures, of noted and marginalized writers, in a context of a world market that becomes a reality, in ever more aggressive fashion, reaching almost every one of the most secluded locations of this planet? In fact, this much at least is clear - that the number of different books hailing from diverse cultures worldwide has greatly increased, and at the same time the number of readers, and the total number of copies printed. The consumption of paper by the print industry has multiplied vastly. And book publishing is an important industry with big “globally” active publishing houses, even though small publishers still exist, go down and are started anew. Translation has become a badly paid wage labor, and it is needed more than ever. There are those like Damrosch who will tell us (Damrosch, *passim*) that without translation, world literature as he defines it, wouldn’t exist. And indeed, it is true that access to works written in languages not mastered by the increased number of readers in our world has been improved, though in the first place for those who are capable of reading translations to English. It is also true that good, average and bad translations exist, and that the quality of translations may affect their reception by critics and many readers. But does “translation” create “world literature”? Or does world literature – as the joint heritage of people on earth – exist because it has existed for thousands of years and is still being written, all over the world: available to all those who care, and who make an effort to read it in their original language(s)? David Damrosch claims that translation may even enhance a literary work. Really? Or does it supersede that work, and create a new work – especially when it “improves” it? What, at any rate is “the quality” of a translation? In the East Asian Institute of Bochum University, I heard sinologists speak with contempt of Waley in the 1970s whereas they cherished Debon. Waley’s translations of Chinese poems seemed inadequate to them, if not outright bad. But Brecht, thinking highly of them, made use of Waley’s versions. Perhaps we need new translations in every century, in order to account for *changing sensibilities*. Günter Debon’s translations of Chinese classical poets clearly belong to the period prior to Brecht and Pound.²¹ In order to be fair to writers and their original works, the best solution may be to produce bilin-

19 I’m in no position to say whether a similarly overwhelming influence of conservative scholars was felt in North American philology in the U.S., or in French philology in Quebec, in Belgium, in Switzerland, and in France. The dominance of so-called New Criticism for a time in the post-war U.S. suggests in fact a rather conservative bias. The reception accorded to Auerbach and Curtius in the U.S. seems to confirm this suspicion. For a critical “deconstruction” of the position of Auerbach and Curtius, see Magdi Youssef (Youssef [c]).

20 The Mexican view of World Literature, announced to the public prior to Goethe’s, was first discussed briefly by H.G. Ruprecht. See Hans Georg Ruprecht, “*Weltliteratur* vue du Mexique en 1826”, in: *Bulletin hispanique*, July-Dec. 1971. Ruprecht’s discovery was mentioned by Roberto Fernández Retamar (Retamar 44). All of this matters very much in the discussion of Goethe’s concept of world literature. René Etiemble asserted already in 1974 that it was Germano-centric. See: René Etiemble, « Faut-il réviser la notion de la *Weltliteratur* ? » (Etiemble 15)

21 Alex Callinicos, by the way, has given a short critical overview of the diverging opinions of Marshall Berman and Perry Anderson, with regard to the rupture or change in terms of what I called here “sensibility” that seems to have occurred in the years between the late 19th century and WWI, separating the literature of “Goethe or Baudelaire, Pushkin or Dostoyevsky” from “the Cubists, Futurists, and Constructivists”, but also from “Pound and Eliot” who still “used ‘the tradition’ of European high culture” that informed someone like Debon and his aesthetic sensibility. (Callinicos 39f.)

gual editions. They make the difference between original and translation palpable – even for those who cannot read the original text. In this respect, a praiseworthy effort was made by Hungarian comparatists, in a country that is also notably engaged in an effort to make us aware of literatures written in African languages. Sándor Kozocsa (1904-1991) documented the effort to do carefully produced, high quality bilingual editions and discussed its importance in his paper “Les éditions bilingues de Hongrie.” (Kozocsa 161ff).

Questions regarding world culture (world literature, world cinema, world music) that arise in a post-war German and Western European context in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s

If we want to test the concept of world literature, its “real content” rather than the idealistic projection, we may do so by venturing into an adjacent field of modern culture, including modern “mass culture”: the cinema.²² Does a *world cinema* exist? And if so, is its real existence synonymous with the existence of present, more recent, and earlier (say post-1940) output of the Hollywood film industry? Its far-reaching economic dominance, political protection by U.S. cultural and other institutions including embassies, USIS, etc., and its ideological and aesthetic impact on audiences in many parts of the world cannot be put in doubt.²³ Certainly it is apparent that this cinema, unified by its American origin, its American language, the American reality it frequently depicts in ways that reveal an American *vision du monde*, was never a completely homogenous cultural product.²⁴ And to maintain that it does indeed “trivialize” and that it tends to “infantilize” many of those who become addicted to it, may well leave some of its foes nodding with approval, but it is a simplifying statement. The approach John Ford chose, as a filmmaker, toward the “real things, people, landscapes, light and shadow” was not just an aesthetic but also a philosophical, social and political approach that revealed a rare honesty and struggle to come close to the world as a reality that he was establishing a “*rapport*”, a “relationship” to, through the camera and by the way it was used. No wonder that his early, very committed film “Grapes of Wrath” got him in trouble,²⁵ and made him shy away from open confrontation and social, socially critical observation, which was replaced by the creation of “American myths.” But myths, mind you, of the common people, though not the “*indigenes*.” It was the newcomers, the immigrants, those rugged people who took possession of the land, that he sided with. Woody Guthrie, the leftist folksinger, was no different, when he told his peers, steel workers, small farmers, construction workers, farm workers, migrants, that “this land is your land.” He forgot the “natives.”

What the comparison with Hollywood cinema is meant to reveal, is the non-monolithic – or not quite monolithic? – character of *dominant cultural products*: like, well, U.S. cinema and modern American literature.

22 This approach is justified in terms of Raymond Williams’ insight that “(t)he cultural theorist who studies the culturally dominant should trace the ‘internal dynamic relations,’ or the interrelationship of multiple processes, of this dominant mode *as it interacts with other features of culture*.” (Wicks xiv) (Emphasis added by me.) The ‘film business’ and its dominant traits are indeed offering insights into tendencies we may suspect to be at work in the increasingly internationalized, Western dominated global book market and patterns of production, distribution, and reception related to it, if not determined by it. And inversely, the trends of the global book market may indeed throw light on developments in the film sector.

23 This U.S. dominance in the cultural field reached its first stage in the wake of imperialist expansionism under Theodore Roosevelt. In the 1890s and up to 1914, four imperialist (colonialist!) powers excelled in many “cultural” disciplines: Britain, France, the German Empire, and the U.S. - Achievements in anthropology, ethnology, and linguistics were clearly related to colonialist goals, even though researchers may not have been aware of it. The state and private interests provided the means necessary; public and private investment in the “scientific infrastructure” (universities) and in “personnel” increased greatly. Publishers attuned to “national goals” responded to demand by readers and thus kindled and reacted to a spirit expressed so well by Kipling as “the white man’s burden.” After 1945, the growth of U.S. public and private investment in this “infrastructure” was unparalleled (if we omit the Soviet Union, due to lack of data). Foreign policy concerns were a key factor when foreign language departments regarded as unimportant in *déclassé* Western European countries received money and other forms of attention in the U.S..

24 It is true of course that something like American popular culture (as a product of the cultural industry) exists, and that the American film industry is a vital part of the American cultural industry, as a globally active force. But is Jacques Rancière right when he reduces this American pop culture, and with it, all the films produced by Hollywood to «un art et une littérature populaires et commerciaux, faits de chromos, de couvertures de magazine, d’illustrations, d’images publicitaires, de littérature superficielle et sentimentale, de bandes dessinées, de musique de rue, de claquettes et de films hollywoodiens, etc.»? (Rancière 305)

25 Nonetheless, Ford’s film “Grapes of Wrath” was critiqued by James Agee. As James Agee saw it, there was as much *unreality* in “The Grapes of Wrath” as in “Gone with the Wind” and he thought that this *unreality* was much more pernicious because it touched the center of life, human pain and dignity, much more closely. And therefore, it appeared to him as much more abusive – above all because it had been disguised as “reality” with so much success. This was of course a critique that could be leveled at all naturalist cinema and drama at the time, and especially at the works of the American playwright Tennessee Williams, in view of his reliance on naturalism, shock and sensation so often mistaken for realism but rightly criticized from a Brechtian point of view. It is clear that John Steinbeck’s book was not free of these traits that Agee eyed with justified suspicion.

Hollywood established its cinematic dominance in North American, Western European, and even Taiwanese film theaters between 1950 and the 1970s, and it certainly made itself felt in other parts of the world as well – though less markedly. As Laikwang Pang notes, American film companies, supported by U.S. trade policies, had the financial means to push into Asian markets. Pang thinks that it is also “the abundant use of technology that secures Hollywood’s dominant position in global cinema.” (Pang 82)²⁶ US film companies established what they *intended* as a global distribution network, and when movie houses were not the best outlet or a sufficient one in some regions, they attacked in other ways, especially through television programs.²⁷ The destructive effect of Hollywood on the briefly blooming New Taiwan Cinema was noted by Lee Dawming 李道明 (Lee 31).²⁸

If we turn to literature, it is also obvious that contemporary U.S. literature established a sort of hegemony after 1945. It would be unfair to depict its eager reception abroad as purely and simply a result of political manoeuvres. This is not even true of abstract expressionist painting, though it was certainly supported by the American government, its cultural institutions, allied big capitalists in the background, and private steering committees like the International Committee of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Abroad, influential members of the so-called elite with a strong interest in art were co-opted into a network designed to push abstract expressionism as an American cultural export commodity and a tool used in the ideological, partly foreign-policy motivated attack on ‘realist’ art and especially socially critical art.²⁹ It is clear that it was a well-conceived strategy and that the intention to establish the dominance of a certain, seemingly *apolitical* tendency in the arts was playing a role, as was the determination to marginalize socially critical South and North American artists (Diego Riviera, Ben Shahn, and other like-minded painters) and their European colleagues (Kollwitz, Grosz, Heartfield etc.). But abstract art was received openly also because certain European progressives (Picasso, for instance) embraced it, and because creative artists and their audience were fed up with the peculiar “naturalism” of colleagues infected by Nazi ideology. Others, at the time, were condemned to embrace Stalinist monumentalism, but that was on the other side of the Cold War “curtain” that functioned as an ideological watershed. For many decades, US ideological and aesthetic dominance asserted itself obliquely even in the East Bloc; it may have had a seductive appeal – but no one could dare to embrace it openly and wholeheartedly before 1990.

I have chosen a detour by talking briefly about the orchestrated effort of US cultural policy makers and their institutions to establish a North American hegemony in the field of the visual arts, a hegemony that bolstered already established influence on the masses via that other visual, yet often corrupted art, film as an art form. As far as both art and literature were concerned, the US-steered congresses that celebrated

26 Pang speaks in fact of “high-tech content and sensationalism”: probably most clearly in such genres as action films, fantasy stories, science fiction films and films that reflect the presence of American violence and militarization, though not necessarily in a negative light. Pang is getting to the gist of the matter when he says that there exists a “relationship between [exhibited and at the same time fetishized film-] technology and social control” or in other words, ideologically exerted influence over audiences, and that this reflects “today’s international cultural politics” as practiced by the U.S. government and American corporations. (Pang 82).⁷

27 In his paper “Arab Fairy-Tales in Disney-Times,” originally presented as a plenary address to the congress of the Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures modernes on children’s literature, held at Regensburg University in Germany in 1996, Magdi Youssef critiqued the disneyfication of Arab television programs directed at children that was observable in the 1970s and ‘80s. An Italian version is available online. (Youssef [d]) Today, the very successfully marketed *virtual reality* video games that reflect a militarization of US-society have a far more pernicious effect on Arab children (and children almost everywhere in the world).

28 Lee (or Li) Daoming 李道明 points out that “the Nationalist government (and the Democratic Progressive Party government that succeeded it in 2000) surrendered to pressures from U.S. governments and opened wide the Taiwan market to Hollywood blockbusters, which were unrivaled by domestic productions” (Lee 31) - the latter notion, of course, suppressing the criticism that these blockbusters as such deserved. Nothing would have been won if the Taiwan-based film industry had been able to compete successfully by producing the same trash that violently deforms the aesthetic sensibility and intellectual awareness of a so-called ‘mass public.’

29 In Germany, Mr. Ludwig, a chocolate factory owner in Aachen, founder of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne and a similar museum in Aachen, has mentioned that he was a member of the International Committee of MOMA that played a key role in this context during the 1950s. Such people were placing abstract art prominently in museums and combatting the influence of artists like Diego Rivera (1886-1957), David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974), Ben Shahn (1898-1969), George Grosz (1893-1959), John Heartfield (1891-1968) or Alex Katz (b. 1924), in line with their class interest and the wishes of the U.S. government. ‘Tastes’ are often neither neutral nor accidental.

freedom in Paris, Berlin, etc. in the 1950s (Saunders)³⁰ were certainly reduplicated by congresses in the East like the famous Kafka Congress in Liblice Castle near Prague in 1963 that saw Eduard Goldstücker, Ernst Fischer and Roger Garaudy plead for artistic freedom and intellectual authenticity of progressive artists and intellectuals (Bischof 265). For the powers that be, whether in Washington or Moscow, other things mattered: hegemony, dominance – at least over *a sphere of the world*. There could be no question that the breathing space left for artists and writers was narrow under Stalinism, and that considerable room for artistic and political expression existed *in part of the US-dominated sphere*: not in Iran under the Shah, South Korea under Syngman Rhee³¹, Taiwan under Chiang Kaishek³², or in the vast zones of Africa that still suffered under open and hidden apartheid, unashamed racism and brutal colonial rule. But in the U.S. – if you were no Afro-American, no Native American, no Mexican farm laborer, no known Commie, and later on no John Lennon or Jean Seberg³³, you could make yourself believe that you enjoyed complete freedom. Censorship was indirect, self-induced or extracted by the boss you worked for, who may have made demands not only in conformity with his ideological position but because he kept “the market” in mind. Rather than a censorship office with censors appointed by a dictatorship, you had – and still have – above all *the expectations of the “market”* that prove to be a weighty inhibition of factually free forms of expression in all of their potential diversity, when it is a matter of reaching large audiences. These so-called expectations of the market that reflect largely the stereotypes of those who are in control of the production and distribution sector, are to a large extent projected upon – and produced in – a mass audience, mainly by way of the media and by way of advertising.³⁴ It is apparent that with respect to the film industry, the publishing sector³⁵ and the visual arts (which depend on art dealers, galleries and museums), owners and top executives must depend for this purpose on their carefully chosen employees, people who act as mouth-pieces, watchdogs, and gatekeepers, especially in the PR sector, the print media, publishing houses, radio, film and television studios (Hildebrand 3), and recently also increasingly in so-called internet-based “social media.”³⁶ Hildebrand’s article, based on an interview with the widely respected actor Peter Sodann, notes that as a guest of a talk show moderated by German television anchorwoman Sabine Christiansen, Sodann

30 Among those who supported the CIA financed initiative for ‘freedom of culture,’ we find figures like Melvin Lasky and Irving Kristol, but also quite respectable names, thus liberals like Benedetto Croce and Ignazio Silone in Italy, T.S. Eliot, Stephen Spender, George Orwell, and Bertrand Russell in Britain, André Gide, François Bondy, Raymond Aron and André Malraux in France, Karl Jaspers and Friedrich Torberg in Germany, and Faiz S. Noorani in India. Among those attacked in the context of the concerted effort to combat anything and anyone on the Left were Pablo Neruda, Thomas Mann, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre. Edward Said reviewed Frances Stonor Saunders’ book in the *London Review of Books*. He notes the “mentality” then produced by way of influenced media, and thus in an enormously large public subjected to Cold War anxieties and projections. All of this was pretty much orchestrated by a US government agency, the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) that was determined “‘to break down ... doctrinaire thought patterns’ and anti-American attitudes throughout the world” while acting in ways that were “... ‘just about as totalitarian as one can get’,” Said writes, quoting a former member of PSB, Mr. Charles Burton Marshall. (Said 54-56) Even if they were naïve with regard to the backers of the Congress for Cultural Freedom venues, the opposition of social democratic and liberal intellectuals to Stalinism was of course understandable. We all have to learn a lot from Arthur Koestler. The beleaguered revolution in Russia had reacted in ways that were very similar to those of the French Revolutionary Republic when it was exposed to outside aggression and internal revolts. Paranoia and terror were the result.

31 It was especially the bloody prelude to the Korean War in South Korea that led to a situation which was characterized by silenced and murdered progressive writers. The poet and playwright Kim Chi-ha (b. 1941), a practicing Catholic and a dissident, was tortured, sentenced to death, imprisoned, freed, sentenced to life in prison and tortured again in the late 1960s and in the 1970s. The composer Yun I-sang, better known in the West as Isang Yun (1917-1995) was kidnapped in 1967 by the South Korean secret service and sentenced to death). We know too little about lesser known writers, artists, intellectuals in this East Asian de-facto protectorate of the U.S.A. where tens of thousands of U.S. troops remain stationed.

32 In KMT-controlled Taiwan, writers like Yang Kui and Bo Yang were imprisoned under US auspices; it was the same democracy-celebrating hegemonic power that stood by when tens of thousands of Taiwanese people as well as some Mainlanders were murdered on Feb. 28, 1947 and in the aftermath of the crack-down.

33 An FBI document dated 1970 states that Seberg should be “neutralized” – which, in secret service lingo, is a synonym for *killed*. It is known that she was targeted by a COINTELPRO unit. It was on Aug. 29, 1979 that she was seen alive for the last time. Ten days later a pedestrian discovered her dead body in a parked car in the 16th arrondissement of Paris, nude, covered by a blanket. The blood alcohol level (BAC) was 0.790 (“7,9 Promille”) while coma is likely when the level is between 0.400 and 0.500. Jean Seberg’s doctor, Marion Bouihet, has stated that she talked to Seberg shortly before the officially ascertained likely time of her death; she sounded very sober in her conversation with Bouihet. Seberg was considered to be subversive due to her connections with the Black Panther movement. (Schnelle 63)

34 This is also true in the so-called Third World (“Latin” America, Asia, Africa). “*We can be like them*, this is what the giant billboard put up alongside the road to development of the Underdeveloped and Backward is announcing.” (Galeano 176)

35 With regard to book fairs, see Al Ahram’s article, “No one listened: Science, independence and grassroots art: a German-based Egyptian scholar offers critical insight into the Arab presentation at the Frankfurt Book Fair” - an article largely based on interviews with Magdi Youssef (Al Ahram).

36 Facebook, for instance, is known to delete comments in Spanish that quote (though not verbatim) defected members of the army who testified in Canadian courts that they were part of units routinely ordered to carry out extra-judicial killings of “disappeared” campesino activists occupying private land owned by latifundistas, for instance an army general, etc. Facebook objects to the term “state terrorism” when used with regard to the Republic of Mexico, based on such evidence, or in the context of the murder of the AYOTZINAPA 43. This is of course American censorship. And doesn’t it also amount to censorship if whistleblowers like Manning, Snowden, and Assange - who revealed American war crimes – are persecuted?

(who was imprisoned briefly in the GDR on account of his direct way of voicing criticism, and who still could work as an actor with the famous Brechtian *Berlin Ensemble* and could perform in televised films in the GDR) quoted a poem by Brecht, “Reicher Mann und armer Mann/standen da und sahn sich an. / Und der Arme sagte bleich: /Wär ich nicht arm, wärst Du nicht reich.” (Poor guy and rich guy/stood and looked, eye to eye/ And the poor guy, pale, he said/Were I not poor, you’d be in the red.) This was at the beginning of the talk show on German tv when the guests were introduced to the public. During the entire show, So-dann was completely ignored and could not voice a single word. He was not invited to a talk show again by German television chains. When he was nominated by the Left Party as a candidate, this actor who was very popular with German television audiences – like so many GDR actors, for instance Manfred Krug – due to the Brechtian training received in East Germany, was no longer offered jobs as an actor. In a similar vein, the poet and political cabaret artist Georg Kreisler (1922-2011) has noted that he was boycotted for years by post-WWII Austrian radio and television. There are other, lesser known examples – for instance, that of Konstantin Wecker (b. 1947) and of Georg Danzer (1946-2007) who said that they were temporarily boycotted.

This is of course the real face of Western liberalism that produces and safeguards a mainstream by means of a policy of tacit and sometimes not quite as tacit exclusion, sidelining, marginalization, and – if necessary – blacklisting, while posing as extremely tolerant, yet “combative if necessary.” Authors aware of it, if they are not, due to background and/or education, part of this mainstream from the very start, do well to adapt to it if they desire recognition, or at least a chance to be heard. Marie Salgues’ description of the “liberal ideology” – even though focused on the Spanish theater in the 19th century – is still very much to the point: “La ideología liberal es una constante en el corpus, pero el hecho de que usen términos estrictamente idénticos a lo largo del período para enaltecerla traduce el inmovilismo de esas obras. El conjunto ostenta un aspecto moderado antes que progresista [...] [S]e trata de una ideología del término medio, para que no espante a nadie, para que reúna al mayor número posible de adeptos; una ideología en la que pueda reconocerse, sin grandes dificultades, el público medio-alto de los teatros de entonces. Esta ideología moderada casa perfectamente con el espíritu de la Restauración y de los que apoyaron su advenimiento.” (Salgue 275f.)³⁷

Such oversight and limitation of what is allowed to be said, either for ideological reasons or in view of an entrepreneurial assessment of what the market “wants” (because companies prefer whatever they think they can “sell”), has minimized quite often the extent to which “customers” and “consumers” of cultural “merchandise” were able to express their real longings and real needs. Class interest mattered, and the dominant class dictated. I mentioned the reason why John Ford turned away from openly expressed social criticism as a film director. The bosses in Hollywood did not like it when social antagonisms in the U.S. were exposed.³⁸ And neither did the film theater owners like it, I suppose, or the owners of newspapers who paid the guys writing the film reviews.(Sinclair [b]). This, in effect, is the real face of a free market democracy.(Sinclair) We all know that Hollywood blacklisted – and that McCarthy’s way of questioning artists, filmmakers, theater directors, dramatists, poets before the House Un-American Affairs Committee (HUAC) could destroy careers almost perpetually.³⁹ But all of that does not wipe out the fact that, in addition to a vast amount of trash and mediocre commercial products, Hollywood produced true masterworks for a number of years, before it declined almost completely. Well, it was not Hollywood that “produced”,

37 “Liberal ideology is a constant in the corpus [of works written for the theatre at the time], but the fact that they use strictly identical terms throughout the period to enhance it shows the immobility of these works. The whole has a moderate aspect rather than a progressive one [...] [I]t is a middle-of-the-road ideology, so that it does not frighten anyone, which brings together as many supporters as possible; an ideology in which the medium-high [= upper middle class] audience of the theaters of the time can recognize itself without great difficulty. This moderate ideology was perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the Restoration and of those who supported its advent.”- *My transl. with additions in brackets.* (Salgue 275f.)

38 Orson Welles experienced it, after he did *Citizen Kane* in 1941; Charlie Chaplin experienced it. But we see only the top of the iceberg. It is typical, as we all might know. But we internalize the need to adapt to it; many of us, at least. Such adaptation is a strategy of individualist survival: we all have families to feed.(Sinclair)(Sinclair [b])

39 We may well remember John Ford’s way of taking a stand at a meeting of the Director’s Guild of America, during the days of McCarthyism. The HUAC interrogations and the widespread practice of blacklisting prompted John Huston in 1952 to move to Ireland with his family. (McGilligan 53) See also (Ford). And (Trumbo)

it merely enabled and allowed fine directors like Charlie Chaplin, John Ford, John Huston, Orson Welles, Billy Wilder to realize good films, sometimes against the odds, and often not without having to swallow the dictates of bosses who demanded certain changes. The bulk of the output was of low and mediocre quality nonetheless; but it is often extremely costly (Holmlund 240f.) and apparently also profitable.⁴⁰ Worse yet, it has succeeded to corrupt the aesthetic sensibility and stultified or poisoned the minds of a mass audience. And its standards still keep deteriorating, as even directors within the system admit.

Literature, contrary to the cinema, is not depending on considerable capital, small or large crews, expensive machinery and material, studios – it was still in the artisan stage of the industry, until very recently, one might argue: a one-man or one-woman-job.⁴¹ And it certainly flourished in the U.S. after WWI. I even believe that the deep social and economic crisis known as the Great Depression was a boost for U.S. literature. Good men with an awake mind and clear perception of what happened around them, in a deeply divided class society, went on to create great literature. James Agee and even more perhaps Sherwood Anderson, who went down South to study the existence of workers in the textile factories, should be mentioned.⁴² And of course, Dos Passos.

I can understand the fascination that Pavese felt when discovering contemporary American literature (Pavese, *passim*), or that a writer like Böll felt. As a young boy, perhaps just 12 or 13, I sensed this fascination when I listened to the enthusiastic words my father found when he talked about what he had read, as a young Berliner, during the 1920s: novels by Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis⁴³, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, and of course B. Traven (the socialist anarchist who emigrated to Mexico). He named them in that order, and he regretted perhaps that in 1933 he had to give most of these novels, as well as all the theoretical writings with a leftist political orientation away to his friend Brettschneider, who was still a member of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer*, the Nazi regime's equivalent of a writers' union.⁴⁴

Later, when I taught in Taiwan, I discovered that the same Nazi-type method was practiced there: reading or simply owning the writings of Lu Xun 鲁迅, Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Ba Jin 巴金, etc. was forbidden, but the professors of literature at the “Political University” (国立政治大学) in Mucha near Taipei were allowed to keep them in a kind of “poison cabinet” and could read them – supposedly in order to refute and contradict these dangerous “bandits.” Hsu Chien-Jung confirms my experience in KMT-ruled Taiwan (under martial law) that “the Chinese Communists were called “Gongfei” 共匪 meaning ‘communist bandits’,” adding that “beginning in the 1980s, some newspapers did not use these terms” anymore. (Hsu 739) In the 1970s, the argument still was that “Communist bandits” like Lu Xun, Lao She, Cao Yu, Xiao Hong, Shen Congwen, Qian Zhongshu, Ye Shentao, Rou Shi, Ding Ling, Zhang Ailing, Yu Dafu, Mao Dun, Guo Moruo, and Ba Jin had “seduced” the Chinese and that this had led to the defeat suffered by the armies of the Chiang Kaishek regime. The “seductiveness” of their literary works required, according to the KMT, that they must be outlawed. But this was all but a homogenous literature, and by no means “party literature” in the sense of commanded literature, made on orders. It was diverse, lively, yet critical of Chinese social reality as witnesses in the 1920s, ‘30s and ‘40s. This is made amply clear by books like Weigui Fang's

40 Geoff King referred to the “dominance of corporate blockbusters” in the New Hollywood Cinema of the 1970s, thus films like Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976), noting the presence of both “narrative” and “spectacle” in these films. (King, *passim*) The quality of *Taxi Driver* and other such films exceeded that of most recently produced U.S. films by far. Recent examples of cultural stereotyping such as *South Park*, a Paramount film that required a \$60 million dollar budget according to Chris Holmlund, are cause for concern. Another film with a similar tendency is *Three Kings*, a Warner Bros. production that is said to have cost between \$45 and 50 million and that is described as a “caper film cum combat thriller cum conversion melodrama, shot with disturbing special effects.” (Holmlund 240f.)

41 Script-writing became a factory job in Hollywood already, and today the industrial production of texts affects also other genres. And this not only in the U.S., Europe and Japan but perhaps also in China. See also Wei Zhang (Zhang 145-156)

42 See for instance Sherwood Anderson, “Mill Girls” (Anderson [a] 615ff.), “Loom Dance” (Anderson [a] 609ff.), “Please Let Me Explain” (Anderson [a], 657ff.), “Brown Bomber” (Anderson [a] 679ff.); and see also (Anderson [b]).

43 Cesare Pavese described him as “the most knowing expert of slang and the American vernacular now writing in the United States” (Pavese7f.). Discussing several of his novels that followed *Main Street*, he notes that at the end of these books, the protagonist, a “rebel,” finds himself “rejuvenated and Americanized,” having teamed up with a marriage partner “with whom to look forward to a future of freedom and struggle.” For Pavese, “the intimate sympathy” Sinclair Lewis felt for the men and women portrayed in these novels - “all of them people of the Middle West, as he himself was” (Pavese 10) - was obviously refreshing. Are these the “positive heroes” freely sketched that Stalinist cultural bureaucrats tried to command writers to produce, but ultimately failed to get?

44 I fear that many of these books – perhaps all, if they could lay hand on them – were burned by the Nazis.

Selbstreflexion in der Zeit des Erwachens und des Widerstands: Moderne chinesische Literatur 1919-1949. (Fang, passim) It was a pity that those growing up in Taiwan in that period could not access an important part of their more recent literary heritage. It truly echoed the Nazi past of the country where I was born.

Apparently, every generation develops its tastes even if it places itself in a tradition, in my case a left-wing political tradition. I was not fascinated by the only book written by Upton Sinclair that I found on my father's bookshelf. But as a teenager, aged 14 or 15, I avidly read Traven, and at age 17 or 18 discovered John Dos Passos in the public library and read his U.S.A. trilogy as avidly.⁴⁵ The other writer I discovered at that age, and read widely and loved for other reasons, was William Faulkner. Passos was great in the way he inserted, montage-like, a sort of newsreel into his narrative, and in the way that he gave the reader the experience and perspectives of a number of protagonists who were of equal significance. There was no overwhelming, towering "ego" whose perspective focused the view of the reader in a specific way; it was what I later learned to call "multi-perspectivism": but this did not matter as a new literary technique per se, it revealed a "rapport" to social reality that was democratic and close to the rank-and-file. It revealed the class standpoints of the rank and file, and by choosing this approach, the writer implicitly identified with it. Yes, I loved *The Sun Also Rises*, but it could not match, in significance, anything Dos Passos had achieved, and that he would not come close to, anymore, in *Midcentury*. Faulkner exposed the racism, as a poison he had to fight perhaps in himself, too: something deep inside us, not "over there" – in a few identifiable perpetrators of absurd and cruel crimes against a fellow human being, for a fantasized reason, hidden and hardly understood by perpetrator and victim, but overtly equated with denigration and rejection because of a "different color of the skin." Faulkner created an atmosphere that you would inhale and that would start you to marvel and probe the unconscious; Dos Passos challenged you to think clearly, coolly, and analyze social relations in what was an overtly democratic, and yet a class society. Perhaps I even discovered and appreciated in Dos Passos' trilogy a reflection of what we may call genuine universalism, based on the recognition that "man is specifically human – thus a universal being – insofar as he is a social being"(della Volpe 97).⁴⁶ As della Volpe has pointed out, "the relationship of man to nature is at the same time his relationship to other men, just like, vice versa, his relationship to other men is at the same time his relationship to nature." "Social activity [and] a social spirit do not exist [...] in the form of an *unmediated* shared activity": there exists "the necessity of a *mediated* unity, critical-rational, of the universal and the particular [...]"(della Volpe 97) And indeed, both the universal and the particular became apparent in Dos Passos' novels, as a "mediated unity." Which is to say that U.S. society as a whole became apparent and 'the Others' – the 'individuals' – became apparent, *in modo critico-razionale*, as social beings in their shared (universal) humanity and at the same time, as situated members of the American – not European – class society in the first half of the 20th century.

Pavese certainly did not share my enthusiasm for books like *The Big Money*; it is enough to read his chapter on "John Dos Passos and the American Novel" in *American Literature: Essays and Opinions*. (Pavese 91ff.) He speaks of Dos Passos' curious style and obviously regrets that the author "carefully excludes any direct presentation of the state of soul of the characters."(Pavese 92) In other words, he sees exactly that as a negative moment of the novel which I see as its strength: that it overcomes *psychologism*, that it is

45 John Dos Passos' trilogy, consisting of *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *1919* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936), was decisive in kindling my love for U.S. literature, alongside many novels written by William Faulkner, when I was still in high school (my last year in school), and I used every free hour to stay in the public library and read. In hindsight, it confirms my conviction that Ivan Illich is right when he advocates de-schooling. We learn to love literature when we are free to discover, free to choose. The 'canon' that schools must respect offered none of it. Dos Passos surpassed everything I had chosen to read before I chanced upon his trilogy. It must be said of course that in Nazi Germany (1933-'45) and – in all likelihood – in public municipal libraries of the GDR (during the 1960s), I would not have found novels by Dos Passos. In the GDR, the reception of Russian and Eastern European literature was encouraged. Should we subsume this fact that I did find his books under the heading of 'openness' or of 'American cultural influence' in a part of Germany that had been liberated and then occupied by the U.S., Britain, and France?

46 In the original text, it says: "L'uomo è specificamente umano – cioè ente universale – in quanto è sociale."

no longer “psychological realism” we get here.⁴⁷ Pavese, I think, took to Hemingway. Yes, the *49 stories*⁴⁸: this beautiful book filled with concise observations, focused on touch, smell, sight, movement, *the close at hand*, a table, an arm, a chest, a tree, a lake, a fish. This attempt to shun romanticism, pathos, this male world full of hidden pathos and emotion that lay covered beneath the dry, calm, and never wordy way to capture glimpses of reality. Polaroids, that’s how visual artists may have attempted something similar later. John Huston, in *Misfits*, shared the observant look⁴⁹, but did not exclude the social dimension. He went beyond what Hemingway achieved in short stories, but his way of grasping real things and persons, real landscape, revealed a kindred spirit, up to a point.⁵⁰

Brecht said that the façade of the AEG factory buildings in Berlin does not reveal the *essence* of the structural characteristics of a large capitalist corporation⁵¹; it does not reveal the social relations implied by it (Giles, *passim*). Hemingway, if he could have listened to the question and if he had kind of understood its direction, might not have shown much interest in finding a way of solving the problem a writer faces when he wants to write a short story, a novel, a play and still hopes to reveal the essence of social forms, of social ways of relating. The tendency is so easily to *turn the problem how class relations and thus power relations can be made visible in a literary text* into the eternally recurring problem of how to make the reader aware that from the very beginning of history, man tended to exert power over man. It is turned into an anthropological constant, it is portrayed as something eternal, you have to see it, to be prepared for it, to live with it. It is there, full stop. Sometimes you are the victim, sometimes you victimize the Other. This is how life is, full stop. Then you turn to C.G. Jung, to myths, you seek salvation in myth, you become a modern-day pseudo-Buddhist – or else a Social-Darwinist, a cynic; perhaps quite rudely and without sarcasm or cynicism, a Nazi. When old Marx wrote that *throughout the ages* history was a history of class struggles, he had something different in mind. As a social scientist and political economist, he pointed out that it matters to discover and analyze the specific forms the struggle assumes, and its specific agents; as a humanist, he encouraged fellow-men to disrupt the continuity and put another logic, other social relationships in place.

Yes, but still, after fascism in Italy and its Hitlerist variety in Germany were defeated, it was plausible that the “non-ideological” Hemingway would serve as the perfect paradigm. And not Dos Passos, certainly

47 Such preferences have ideological implications. For me, among modern German novels, two works that shun psychological “realism” are the most admirable: Bertolt Brecht’s *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar* (written since 1938/39, published as a fragment in 1957) and Alfred Andersch’s *Winterspelt* (1974). With regard to film as an art form, Martin McLoone briefly discussed the implications of psychological realism when he summed up Guy Hennebelle’s critique of the Greek political filmmaker Costa-Gavras. “[H]e [i.e., Costa-Gavras] was synonymous with a kind of filmmaking that attempted to marry highly political subject matter with mainstream narrative forms, especially the investigative thriller. [...] Costa-Gavras argued that his approach to filmmaking was dictated by the desire to engage with popular audiences, and therefore the need to wrap the political in generic forms that popular audiences are already familiar with. ‘Cinema is about seducing an audience to have them go away and think’ [thus Costa-Gavras.] [...] Hennebelle’s objection to Costa-Gavras is that the genre forms he utilizes are not neutral and have meaning already inscribed in their generic conventions. If you want to make political films, he argues, you have to make films politically, challenging or disrupting rather than merely adopting dominant forms. [...] [M]erely to adopt conventional forms – established genres – meant that Costa-Gavras’ cinema was hampered by its reliance on individual psychology and surface realism, and the politics, as a result, were rendered simplified and naive.” (McLoone viii) Cf. also the attention paid by a number of politically committed French filmmakers to such seemingly ‘merely formal’ matters as challenging dominant filmic forms. Writing in the special issue of the French journal *Cinéma d’aujourd’hui* dedicated to the «cinema militant», Hennebelle said pointedly that “la révolution devait consister d’abord à peser sur le système des formes «mis au point par la bourgeoisie».” On the other hand, “[u]ne œuvre n’est pas révolutionnaire parce qu’elle est seulement novatrice sur le plan formel[...].” According to Hennebelle, filmmakers like «Jean-Luc Godard, Marguerite Duras, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Jean-Marie Straub» and Danièle Huillet embraced this position that «pondering» the implications of established forms mattered and that they should be challenged and transcended wherever necessary. (Hennebelle 190.)

48 Ernest Hemingway’s *The First 49 Stories* (London: Jonathan Cape: 13th printing, May 1968) is a beautifully designed book, in a good, handy ‘format’, printed in a good year. (You forget every grudge with regard to the wave of bestsellers that reaches bookstores in Europe these days when you touch and open this book.)

49 He once noted, in an interview: “I edit my pictures in the camera. I don’t protect myself; I don’t take other shots of the ones I need. One’s almost forced to edit a film the way I shoot it. I don’t believe that pictures are made in the cutting room. They’re sometimes helped, but they’re not made.” – John Huston in an interview originally published in the *Playboy* magazine, reprinted in: *John Huston: Interviews* (Huston 130). – That way of shooting a film of course demanded an acute way of “seeing.” The proportions, within the frame..., the distribution of light and shade..., the placing of the ‘objects’ that matter, within the frame..., they have to be immediately ‘right.’ It’s a bit like a painter sees a segment of ‘reality’ and puts it ‘into a frame.’

50 Asked in the *Playboy* interview why he wasn’t subpoenaed by the HUAC, Huston replied, “Because the members all knew I wasn’t a Communist.” (Huston 170) But Huston had a social conscience that made him aware of many things. It was not by chance that Traven’s work had motivated him to do a film in 1948 based on this *anarcho-communist* writer’s novel, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. It was not by chance that the protagonists of *Misfits* belonged to the sort of people that Orwell, another Leftist, would have described as ‘down and out.’ Perhaps to be outside a party matters for most progressive writers and artists because it helps them to preserve what Adorno called “autonomy.” In other words, it helps them to preserve their artistic and intellectual freedom. Having to pay for this courage to preserve such freedom, Huston left the United States, settling down in Ireland.

51 “Eine Photographie der Kruppwerke oder der AEG ergibt beinahe nichts über diese Institute.” (Brecht, 469)

not Upton Sinclair. Faulkner, yes, maybe – but less so than Hemingway, and in more indirect fashion, because the *ambiente* was too Southern, too American: the damp wet air of the U.S. South in mid-summer, cottonwood, shacks inhabited by dark-skinned women and men, the mood of lynchings... In Europe, it could not be imitated and then, transcended, so easily.

At any rate, the specific atmosphere and concerns of West German and Italian post-war society asserted themselves in the writers who had discovered Hemingway as a creator of short stories. Wasn't it the short story that was the decidedly new genre in West Germany after 1950? No longer the novella, no – the short story.

It is difficult to accomplish here more than a sketch, based on a few – in fact, too few – observations. But the general trend is clear, and most critics will confirm it or have confirmed it: Literature was Americanized up to a point in Western Europe, and especially perhaps in West Germany and Italy, after the war. According to D.G. Williamson, for instance, it is already possible to speak of a “partial Americanization of West German culture” in “the 1950s”.⁵² In France, the prominence of Sartre as a novelist and dramatists points to a greater continuity of French literary preoccupations and aesthetic forms. With the advent of U.S. bestsellers in the literary arena that are comparable to the blockbusters of the film industry that earn huge intakes, the more popular and better-selling segments of French literature must have been Americanized with a vengeance, too – even so belatedly. But this is true of French cinema, as well. And therefore, Godard was implicitly speaking of a culture, thus also of a film culture, when he stated that Japanese cars, brought to France, reflect at best the needs of Japanese users; they represent inadequate use value in France.⁵³ The *nouvelle vague* asserted, especially in the 1960s and '70s, French specificity against the mainstream cinema, in both theory and praxis. It was above all Godard who underlined the necessity of a specific cinema made in France. For this director, it was clear that it must be realized in the first place for those who share a specific history and a specific culture which affects the shape that the antagonisms of contemporary capitalism take, but also the specific forms of resistance.

Awareness of specificity was nothing absolute; it was not informed by ideological particularism. Clearly *nouvelle vague* directors were aware of the better directors who had worked in the past, or who still worked in the 1960s, in Hollywood: it is enough to think of Godard's homage to Samuel Fuller in 'Pierrot le fou.' But nonetheless, the *nouvelle vague* directors by and large resisted Hollywood. *Nouvelle vague* films weren't world cinema, in the sense that Hollywood was producing and marketing its version of 'cinema' as a globally dominant, economically overwhelming film industry the products of which were much more present and more influential in the 'mass market' than the *nouvelle vague* could ever hope to be – even in France. Still, the French *nouvelle vague* integrated good filmmakers from the French-language-community in Belgium, and it influenced filmmakers who were soon going to create the New German cinema, but also a number of Yugoslav filmmakers, Czech and Slovak filmmakers, perhaps even Polish filmmakers. In less obvious ways, its influence was felt internationally, and in contrast to average Hollywood films, almost every *nouvelle vague* film could fascinate true *cinéastes* among the public everywhere. Directors

52 “American literature was particularly sought after. Hemingway, for instance, was by far the best-selling author in [West] Germany.” (Williamson 79) Regarding Americanization tendencies in Western Europe and particularly in West Germany, see Duignan et al. (Duignan, *passim*). And see Waldemar Zacharasiewicz who writes that “the increasing modernization of society” in West Germany “was often interpreted in Germany itself as ‘Americanization’” - something that became visible for instance in a new “lifestyle among German youth widely regarded as Americanized” and thus “quite a few commentators no longer saw the formerly obvious differences between the United States and Germany.” (Zacharasiewicz 140) With regard to Böll, see: Klaus Stieber (Stieber, *passim*). Though Böll received the Nobel Prize, Alfred Andersch apparently thought more highly of Borchert, who was also influenced by American authors. See: Alfred Andersch's “Das Gras und der alte Mann” where we find his comments on Borchert's reception of U.S. authors that specifically name “Wolfe, Faulkner, Hemingway.” (Andersch 928)

53 By now, Godard's dictum seems anachronistic because the specificity of US cars, French cars, Japanese cars, German cars, Chinese cars and Korean cars has almost completely vanished. Design has been universalized, parts and components in these cars come from umpteenth countries, and the product is destined for a universal market. The overwhelming trend is obvious. Increasingly, differentiation does not reflect the specificity of regional conditions and thus, under capitalism, of regional target markets the world over; it reflects the differentiated ability of buyers to pay, that's basically all. Everything else in terms of differentiation is merely decorative and superficial, a PR gimmick that addresses PR-produced tastes across a meaningless spectrum: tastes that are as different as the spectrum of colors of mobile phones that a buyer may choose from. With respect to literature, film, and perhaps also the visual arts, we can recognize the same trend away from real distinctions – rooted in concrete historical circumstances, concrete socio-cultures and the vaguely sensed or clearly perceived “real needs” of individual and collective “subjects and objects” of history – towards an empty formalized “imagination” devoid of all but commodified (thus fetishized, media-produced and therefore PR-produced) *formed content*.

who revealed an aesthetic (and often also political) sensibility in almost every filmmaking country would take note, regardless of whether they liked the approach or disagreed. In that sense, the *nouvelle vague*, like Italian neorealism, the New German Film, the New Taiwanese Cinema, the Brazilian Cinema novo, political cinema of the 1960s in Cuba, Argentina, and Chile, and certain strands of Japanese cinema constituted a voice in the concert of what perhaps deserves to be called ‘world cinema’ rather than globally dominant cinema. It was (and perhaps is) a concert of voices in conversation, there can be no doubt about it. Much of it was very political, both active for change in a national context, and internationalist. The quiet voices (Rohmer, for instance, in France or Ozu 小津 安二郎 in Japan or Hou Hsiao-hsien 侯孝贤 in Taiwan) were perceived no less, of course. They, too, revealed traits of a specific film culture, based in their own social and cultural context: they loved the local color of a place and a language, its history and its customs, without turning reactionary or nationalist. They, too, spoke at the same time, to local folks – across all so-called divides associated with terms like ‘high brow’ and ‘low brow’ – and to everyone who cared abroad.

In West Germany, the *Neue deutsche Kino* attempted the same. But where are they now? Is not Wenders completely Americanized? And did not *the late Fassbinder films* amalgamate Hollywood and its star system?⁵⁴

This last thought points to one thing: if we simplify things a little, we can say that after 1945, U.S. culture – from the novel, poetry, drama, to cinema, painting and on to pop music, cars, and textile fashion – exported its images and paradigms. And even if they were not copied faithfully, U.S. cultural hegemony or dominance was established, with certain social and political implications. The old great writers especially of the Left, who had been driven into exile by German fascism, could not regain their position and importance in West Germany after the war. From Karl Kraus (who died in Vienna in 1936) to Karl Valentin (who did not flee Nazism, but suffered and encountered harassment), from Döblin to Egon Erwin Kisch, from Lion Feuchtwanger to Heinrich Mann – was there anyone who still mattered as much as he had before 1933?⁵⁵ Hadn’t Piscator been a pioneer, in the theater – not unlike Dos Passos had been as a novelist? Forced to leave the U.S., after facing McCarthy’s inquisition in the U.S., he went back to West Germany where he encountered many obstacles in the 1950s, but when he went to (West) Berlin in the ‘60s, he staged both Rolf Hochhuth’s *Der Stellvertreter* (The Deputy) and *Die Ermittlung* by Peter Weiss, plays that challenged the conservative mindset of many German critics and of the audience. Brecht who had been interrogated by Joseph McCarthy in the U.S., went first to Switzerland and in 1948 to East Berlin. But encouraged by Max Frisch, he returned briefly to Switzerland in February 1949, applying for a permission to work in that country, which was refused. He then went back to East Berlin. The Western Allies had prohibited any return to or even visit to occupied West Germany. Egon Erwin Kisch returned to Czechoslovakia in 1946. Like most exiled writers, he did not regain the attention he had enjoyed in the pre-war years among what was then a large progressive public. Basically, a middle-of-the-road literature took hold of the public. People like Gerd Gaiser, Karl Krolow, Eich – can they be compared to a Mayakovsky, a Jevtushenko, a Ferlinghetti? With few exceptions, the *socially critical* had been driven out of the literary genres, but also expelled from the theater and the visual arts, in West Germany, until the mid-60s.⁵⁶

But then, there is something that is particular to the dynamics that produced a dominant, supposedly aestheticist and “anti-ideological” literature, art and cinema: Pressure produces counterpressure

54 This was Jean-Marie Straub’s criticism, voiced in a conversation.

55 In fact, several of those exiled German writers who were still alive in 1945, and who returned, were put off by the reactionary tendencies in West Germany and some chose to go to East Germany. Döblin moved to West Germany, but it is a well-known fact that he resented the largely conservative cultural climate in that country. Lion Feuchtwanger preferred to remain in the U.S., although he had been targeted – like Brecht – by the House Un-American Affairs Committee. Brecht’s plays were boycotted for some time in West Germany, and on the whole, the exiled writers named here – with the exception of Döblin and Brecht – were not part of the ‘canon’ in West German high schools before 1968.

56 Of course, this cannot only be attributed to Americanization trends and CIA-organized congresses that sought to push back the leftist cultural influence in the 1950s. The fact that the vast majority of state servants, judges, professors and school teachers in Germany had faithfully served the Nazi regime made it almost inescapable that most positions in the West German state apparatus, in schools and universities and in the media, were occupied by former Nazis in post-war West Germany during the 1950s and perhaps even much of the 60s. The US Military Occupation Authorities had already started by 1947 to weed out leftists and suspected leftists, thus cleansing the West Zones’ media and its public service sector. The same occurred in Japan shortly after WWII. It prepared the way for the Conservative “restoration”.

(it did so, very visibly, in the Stalinist East, as well), and if dissent had been a tiny, hardly visible current in the U.S. and in *partly Americanized* Western Europe after 1950, it broke forth with much élan in the mid and late 1960s. The beatniks of the fifties in the U.S. were still a fringe group, a few rebellious individualists.⁵⁷ It is in the 1960s – in the context of the civil rights movement and of opposition against the war in Vietnam – that, in the milieu of the dominant Western culture, an American counter-movement developed⁵⁸, inspiring somewhat similar movements in Britain (the *Angry Young Men*⁵⁹ – and women !, thus poets like Libby Houston and Frances Horovitz). In France and French-speaking areas of Switzerland we encounter the Situationists since 1957. Like many enthusiastic admirers of the American counter culture, these artists, filmmakers, writers, and ‘theoretical’ thinkers replaced the need to fundamentally change the political and economic set-up of society by a project limited at least for the moment to a cultural revolution, a reshaping and redefinition of the arts. “For us situationists,” they declared, “the individual arts do not know how to integrate themselves into everyday life as we see it today, because of their historical function. Their revolutionary destruction, which has been at work for several decades, is the logical consequence.”⁶⁰ At about the same time, we witness the birth of the already mentioned Nouvelle Vague in France, which also had its effects in Belgium. Godard, Chris Marker, Agnes Varda, Chantal Akerman, begin to matter. James S. Williams notes that Godard was extremely sensitive to the daily acts of “institutional”, “cultural and political” terrorism that are a constant fact of Capitalist reality but that people have become so accustomed to that they take them to be the natural order of things.(Williams 22) Films like *Description d’un combat* (1960) by Chris Marker and *Le Petit Soldat* (1960) by Jean-Luc Godard had already echoed the state terrorism of the French government and the torture it resorted to during the dirty war against the anti-colonial uprising in Algeria that had been described by Henri Alleg and others(Alleg [c]). *Pierrot le fou* (1965) by Jean-Luc Godard, *Made in USA* (1966) by Godard, *Loin du Viêt-Nam*, by Alain Resnais, William Klein, Joris Ivens, Agnès Varda, Claude Lelouch, and Jean-Luc Godard (1967), *La Chinoise* (1967) by Godard, *Le 17e Parallèle* (1968) by Joris Ivens, *Le Peuple et ses fusils* (1968) by Joris Ivens and Jean-Pierre Sergent, *La Sixième face du Pentagone* (1968) by Chris Marker and François Reichenbach were filmic replies to the American aggression in Vietnam. As J.S. Williams notes, Godard was during the mid-1960s “put in close touch with the UJCML by a young journalist working for Le Monde, Jean-Pierre Gorin”; Williams adds that the UJCML “sought to transform into Marxist rhetoric and gestures the radical philosophy of Louis Althusser [...] The group published a theoretical review, the *Cahiers marxistes-léninistes*, founded by militants [...] based at the École Normale Supérieure, where Althusser taught philosophy.” Among these militants were “Robert Linhart, Jacques Rancière, Pierre Macherey, Alain Badiou, and Etienne Balibar [...]” (Williams 22). In 1965, Louis Althusser’s *Pour Marx* was published (Althusser) and in 1969 and 1973, *Lire le Capital* (Althusser [b]), written together with Étienne Balibar, Jacques Rancière, Roger Establet, and Pierre Macherey. What becomes visible in this way, is the synchronicity of developments in philosophy, in film as an art form, and in the political activism of many university students and young workers at the time. Everything revealed the desire to achieve a radical social transformation. This was true in the Paris context,

57 See for instance Ferlinghetti’s and Ginsberg’s *Selected Correspondence* (Ferlinghetti [c]); John Suiter’s *Poets on the Peaks* (Suiter); Paul Buhle’s *The Beats* (Buhle); and T.J. Anderson’s notes on jazz poets (Anderson [c]).

58 See Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s mid 1960s book *Where is Vietnam?* (Ferlinghetti [b]), the *War Poems* (1968) edited by Diane Di Prima (Di Prima), di Prima’s *Revolutionary Letters* (1969) (di Prima[b]), Kenneth Rexroth’s 1970 essays on the *Alternative Society* (Rexroth), Ferlinghetti’s critique of “Totalitarian Democracy” (Ferlinghetti). See also Mario Savio’s, Eugene Walker’s, and R. Dunayevskaya’s 1965 book on the Free Speech Movement and Black resistance to racism (Savio), also Savio’s 1968 book on the civil rights campaign in the US South (Savio [b]), and his letters from Mississippi (Savio [c]), and also the books by Cohen and Zelnik (Cohen), Aptheker on the student movement (Aptheker), Roszak on the so-called counter-culture (Roszak), Rosenfeld on COINTELPRO and other totalitarian measures taken by the state (Rosenfeld), and McConnell (McConnell) as well as Greil Marcus with two perspectives on the rebellious 1960s.(Marcus)

59 See the poetry books by Pete Brown published in 1966 (Brown) and 1969 (Brown [c]), by Adrian Mitchell in 1969 (Mitchell), and by Michael Horovitz in 1969 (Horovitz) and 1971 (Horovitz [b]). See also Pete Brown’s memoirs of 2010 (Brown [d]) and 2013 (Pete Brown [b]).

60 “Pour nous situationnistes, les arts individuels ne sauraient s’intégrer à la vie quotidienne telle que nous la voyons aujourd’hui, du fait de leur fonction historique. Leur destruction révolutionnaire, à l’œuvre depuis plusieurs décennies en est la conséquence logique.” (Berreby 128). The way they connected the arts (which included literature) and politics had been typical already for the surrealists before the war. See Guy Debord’s *La Société du Spectacle* (Debord) and the books by G. Marelli (Marelli) and Christophe Bourseiller on the *Situationnistes* (Bourseiller). Of course, the situationist project differed from that of Heartfield, George Grosz, Picasso, Piscator, Brecht, Strehler, Franco Fortini, and Luigi Nono. The attachment to the Left that these revealed was not possible for Debord and his colleagues. It is as if that Left seemed discredited to them. Guy Debord was also noted as a filmmaker when he did the provocative film *Hurllements en faveur de Sade* in 1952.

but also in much of France, and similar tendencies could soon be observed in Italy, West Germany, Yugoslavia, Mexico, Japan, etc.

In Germany, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (both exiled from France) start to work (Byg, passim), they are also in touch with the *antiteater* in Munich (Fassbinder, passim). In Austria, Vlado Kristl (exiled from Yugoslavia) creates challenging movies (Kornberger, passim).⁶¹ Writers like Arnfried Astel, in Sweden Peter Weiss (exiled from Germany), in Italy Pasolini become noted for their critically subversive work, and a few others, as well. All these oppositional artists and intellectuals constituted a counter-tendency, and their works resonated among the rebellious student milieus of the 1960s and early '70s, and among the 'educated', somewhat left-leaning liberals of the petite-bourgeoisie, the so-called middle class (Schildt, passim). It is hard to tell to what extent and how deeply, if at all, working-class militants and apprentices with blue collar jobs related to enlightened, elucidating art, cinema, and literature. If Kluge and Negt are right, and if random observations across the board can be trusted, the exposure and effect was marginal, a few exceptional cases of direct contact aside, which actually existed and exist between progressive artists, writers, filmmakers and peasants or workers.

But can we exclude the observation that the counter-cultural *Cinema indipendente italiano* and that filmmakers like Werner Nekes in Germany were influenced by the New American Cinema?⁶² To what extent, we may ask, were British poets like Pete Brown and Michael Horovitz influenced by English working class culture, and wasn't the contact with and influence of Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti more relevant? If so, *both the dominant current and the "anti-current" of post-war US culture had an effect in Western Europe, producing "analogies" or related tendencies that were in opposition to each other in Western Europe.* Similarly, on the political plane, the ruling circles of the KMT dictatorship in Taiwan and their local stalwarts were close to – and backed by – US conservative journalists, brass heads and politicians, whereas the pro-democracy current was finding support (at least to some degree) among the more liberal milieus inside the Democratic Party. The U.S. pattern, in some way, was "reduplicated."⁶³

If we focus on the phenomenon of a transfer of ideological and aesthetic orientations, we must not forget the Cold War context that re-enforced these "orientational" dynamics. But a political and socio-economic context that aids cultural transfers is always in place; we can assume that it was when Confucian Chinese culture supplanted early Shamanist and Buddhist cultural heritages in ancient Korea, or when architectural stylistic preferences were transferred first from Italy, then from France to Germany in the 18th and 19th century. But does the term "Americanization" hide more than it reveals, and to what extent is its meaning not really congruent with U.S. political, politico-economic, and military hegemony? In other words, does the term suggest a *causal, unidirectional relationship* between dominant and sub-dominant – or in some cases, almost completely dependent – *state, nation, economy, society*? Thus, with leading political and economic cadres, educated strata, and (indirectly) the general population *of the dominated society*? Is it descriptive and analytic at the same time, as a term indicating cultural influence of the one side and dependence of the other side (that is influenced)? Or is it, in a way, a misleading term because we should

61 Silvia Kornberger calls Vlado Kristl "an anarchist of the imagination" (ein Anarchist der Fantasie) engaged in a life-long struggle against a conventional concept of art (Kornberger 5). See also the book on German experimental film of the 60s published by the Goethe Institute (Goethe-Institut) and Schulte's book on Kristl (Schulte).

62 Nekes' connections to experimental U.S., Canadian, and British filmmakers are well-known. In 1975, he was invited to take part in the International Symposium on Theory of Film, at the Center for Twentieth Century Studies of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. His paper was entitled, "What happened really between the pictures?" (Was geschah wirklich zwischen den Bildern?) – Another West German filmmaker in close touch with US experimental cinema is Klaus Wyborny, whose work was cherished by Jonas Mekas. American journals like *Film Culture* were very influential in these cultural milieus. But interestingly enough, films like James Broughton's *The Bed* were screened in the Bochum University Film Club before 1971 whereas *Film Culture* featured Broughton's *The Bed* only in 1975. Likewise, American experimental filmmakers like Robert Beavers, Gregory Markopoulos, and Piero Heliczer were received more attentively in Italy, France, Germany, and Belgium than in the U.S., and they chose in fact to live in Europe for many years. See also: Walter Schobert's book on Nekes (Schobert). Schobert was at the time the director of the German film museum in Frankfurt and one of those open-minded people in Hessen who encouraged independent filmmakers. Others, like Dietmar Schings and Wolfram Schütte in Hessen, backed Straub-Huillet.

63 This dual position of the U.S. political elites with regard to Taiwan is obvious until today. It is reflected by a similar dichotomy of the political elites in Taiwan. Both camps in the U.S. and both currents of the local elite on Taiwan were regarded with skepticism by the Left in Taiwan that was at the forefront of the struggle for democracy and socio-economic rights in the mid and late 1970s. Today, the position of Leftist writers and activists like Chen Yingzhen (陈映真; 8 November 1937 – 22 November 2016) and Wang Jinping (王津平) has been factually marginalized by both the KMT and Taidu proponents.

speak of a dialectical process, a relationship that implies effects and countereffects, *Wechselwirkung*, as the Germans say, even though it is *Wechselwirkung* between (if no longer master and slave) a largely dominant and a largely dependent side?

Americanization in Taiwan?

I have had the opportunity, in the 1970s, to note for some years the so-called *Americanization* of Taiwan, a phenomenon supposedly parallel to what happened in Japan after 1945, and in Western Europe (mostly in West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, and apparently less so in France and the Wallonie). As a non-Chinese resident, I was starkly aware of those moments of Taiwanese culture⁶⁴ that left me with the impression that it is eminently Chinese. It is always problematic to draw conclusions from lived experience because generalizations are not warranted and easily lead us to accept widely held stereotypes. Stereotyped views, hetero- and auto-images are of course a reality. I remember how my colleague at Tamkang's German Department, Liang Chingfeng 梁景峰, pointed to the empty cup of tea on my desk. Its inside was covered by a thick black crust. He smiled in his particular, amused and skeptical way, and said, "*Du bist auch kein typischer Deutscher, was?*" (You are not really a typical German, right?) The dialectics inscribed in transcultural experience do bring about images of the Other, who is no other, but a brother or sister – and yet, like any brother, quite specific. Discourse we have been confronted with also produced auto- and hetero-images, quite independently of our lived experience. Of course, both Liang Chingfeng and I had heard that Germans are supposed to be overly "orderly," "clean," "punctual" – I might add, prejudiced as I am: *rigid, authoritarian, endowed with compulsive character*. But I know too many, who are not. So, what is won by cherishing such "insights"? And yet, some "stereotypes" seem to hold water. This was what I sensed, in the 70s, as a new resident in Taiwan. It concerned above all ways of polite behavior. But that contrasted – from a Western point of view – with unusual frankness among ordinary (rather than educated) folks when it came to expressing curiosity with regard to, and real interest in, the life circumstances of a foreign-born acquaintance (or just a person passing through), an openness which I actually cherished. I also encountered repeatedly a distinct non-committal rather than merely tolerant relationship to religion that seemed to allow amalgamation of different (mainly Buddhist and Confucian) traditions and their influences.⁶⁵ And in a few cases, a co-existence of – from a Western point of view – superstitious practice and lived

64 The author of the introduction of *Modern Sociology*, Vol.2: *Cultural Sociology* defines a "culture as a human group" (Monhanthy). A static, positivist, and reifying approach? Well, I always sought it was what *coined and colored* and *formed* a social group; something passed on from elders to the young, internalized early. Perhaps in part at least the *practico-inert* (a term coined by Sartre). To a large degree, not *living praxis*, but *inherited way of carrying out what is always carried out*, again and again. Or what comes to mind – almost automatically – again and again: a way of farming, typical of a population or "group". Its way of producing material man-made goods in households, workshops, factories. Its architecture. The layout, the design of villages, towns, large cities. Its modes of transport. Its kinship and family structures. Its ways of child-raising, of producing and reproducing knowledge. Its customs, traditions, wisdoms. Its oral and/or written literature (in the widest sense of the word) and its arts. Its superstitions, beliefs, typical fears, taboos. Its ways of dating, marrying, making love. Ah, it's getting muddled. Do I subsume the latter under customs, traditions or "the lived life" - energies, desires, the spontaneous? The pre-conscious? Is that the same in all human beings, and the inhibitions, too? But the specifics of the inhibitions, and the reasons internalized, differ? I don't know. The book says: "In general, it [culture] refers to human activity." Yes, this is convincing. But are taboos we have on our mind *an activity* – or a permanent presence? The book says: "Language, customs, traditions, religion and values are some of the shared products that define each cultural group." Even if we leave the post-war immigrants aside, how many thus defined "cultural groups" exist in Germany, if we think only of values? Five? Twenty? Two-hundred? Even more, if you analyze it precisely, all the different combinations and accentuations of values that you encounter in a population? Ah, you will say, *but you must consider the core values*, those of deeply human significance. But aren't they the same, the world over? Friendship, hospitality, love, respect, care – aren't these *shared impulses*, longings? No matter what specific form they take? And yet, as we know, as lived sentiments and lived practice, they are *mediated* by the specific mode of production and class relations of a given society at a given time in history. Still, socio-cultures are *specific*. There is more that affects them than the present *politico-economically determinating mode of production*. There are old socio-cultural heritages that survive, in one form or other and that make themselves felt. Late capitalism in Japan, for instance, reveals certain characteristics that are different from those in Late Capitalist U.S. society, despite all that I term – loosely – encroaching 'globalization' respectively 'Americanization' that has also affected Japan after WWII.

65 This is probably true of many Taiwanese and also of Mainlanders who embraced a *mélange* of traditional beliefs or rather religious customs: Buddhism, Taoism, and as ethical orientation, quite a few traditional Confucian or simply patriarchal maxims and remembered stories. It may have been different among more recently recruited adherents of Christian churches; the particular rigidity typical especially of Protestant sects struck me as strange, and rare among most other citizens of the island. Prof. Kuo Mingfong 郭名凤 (who taught at Fujen U., at Tamkang and Ulm U.) recalled how in South Taiwan her mother had briefly attended Protestant services in the late 1940s. People were starving, and American missionaries were distributing peanut butter to their fold. Her mother later referred to those who switched to Christian sects as "Butter Christians." See also Pas (Pas 36-47) With regard to both Catholicism and Protestant dominations active in China, and with regard to Christian thought or philosophy in conversation with Asian philosophies and traditions, see also Joseph Needham's essay "Christianity and the Asian Cultures." (Needham 200ff.)

worldliness. But perhaps, among the urban middle class, religious and customary practice (like ancestor worship) may have been only a routine, a custom at best motivated by loving remembrance of the deceased. And among the rural and small town population, it was probably neither superstitious nor non-committal, and instead of this, above all the continuing presence of old “folk religious” beliefs, associated customs, rites, and so on. I noted reverence of real friendship, and in one case (when I sought a printer and publisher for a journal I edited) encountered clever business practices, to put it mildly⁶⁶, but was saved from being “scalped” by the intervention of two members of the Cloud Gate dance company who found another printing company for me, acting as intermediaries, which resulted in a fair price. Is it too much of a stereotyped view if I say that I noted enjoyment of food, alcoholic drinks, sex – but also gender-specific coyness with regard to sex, and so on?

There was also a deeply felt conviction that the Chinese have good reason to be proud of 5,000 years of Chinese culture (a bit like German *Bildungsbürger* – the half-educated or educated so-called middle class that used to be proud of Goethe and Schiller thirty or forty years ago); but like their German counterparts who do not know very much of Goethe and Schiller, quite a few of the Chinese college students I talked to in Taiwan seemed to have only a misty and very general idea of this old cultural tradition. But apparently the tradition lived on in patriarchal patterns of intra-family relationships and patterns of obedience and loyalty that are at least preserved on the surface between boss and employee. It is clear that these patterns were challenged and critiqued, both by feminists and the Left that embraced the cause of workers and small farmers. As in other countries, the offensive of the Hollywood film industry attacked and undermined “Chinese ways”; it drew big crowds into the movie houses, and set standards while forming expectations. Still, Chinese *kungfu* films and other popular genres also drew crowds, and the question worth asking is to what extent the producers and directors of *kungfu* films adopted effective strategies of U.S. action movies without losing their Chineseness. The superficial, I think, reference to Chinese tradition (fighting Zen monks using spectacular self-defense methods) is apparent in this genre; the excess importance attributed to the spectacular is probably a new and Western (i.e. U.S.) ingredient. It is of course prompted by the logic of the market: people in ‘Americanized’ (or simply Late Capitalist?) societies have been “under the influence” of strategies that produce alienation, they have internalized the image of a consumer society, even if poverty hinders them to participate in it. Wishes are being fostered in *outer-directed*, more and more “flexible” contemporaries. Products are advertised. But the “new” of every product wears off fast. The spectacular is in demand. And because it, too, wears off, it must be topped again and again. It deforms the sensibility. The psychological effects used not only by action films but by many typical Hollywood films in order to create suspense or produce melodramatic “emotions” were once likened, by Jean-Marie Straub, to blows hitting a rabbit in the neck. Publics can become addicted to it, I think, the way those who frequent discotheques can become addicted to the repeated punches hitting the stomach when stereo systems produce excessively strong sound waves. At any rate, the dialectics is clear: Those who *produce*, develop a strategy of *selling*. The *targets* of marketing – the “consumers” – become “addicted.” Wanting more of it, in higher doses, they “force” sellers to respond. Those who own and manage the sphere of production are captives, too. Captives of the “logic of the market,” captives of the imperative that they must maximize profit, and that they must subordinate the decision to produce this or that to guesses regarding future “paying demand” – not real needs of populations (that actually exist, regardless of whether they can pay or not). The Taiwanese film industry and that of Hong Kong, challenged as they were by Hollywood’s competition, did

66 Clever business practices? Not always honest? Was it by chance that Hermes, that god venerated by the old Greeks of Classical antiquity, was the god of merchants, traders and thieves? We find them everywhere of course, these clever practices, in fact in every ‘modern’, contemporary socio-culture, but the stereotype exists that merchants from the ‘Levante’ (‘the’ Lebanese, and Jewish traders) possess above average business acumen. Such hetero-images are not valid if they are attributed to an entire population. But the Levante was historically a crossroad of trade routes between the ‘Orient’ and Europe. Of course, it gave rise to a commercial class. The same can be said of quite a few *hua ren* 华人在 Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia (and up to the 1970s, also in parts of Vietnam). The shop houses of Chinese merchants documented by Pratiwo in Semarang (Pratiwo) are probably very similar to those I encountered in Tamsui. Do Indonesian Chinese merchants in places like Semarang or Surabaya constitute the majority of the city’s merchants? It is not unlikely. In the 1920s and ‘30s, even the 1940s, Chinese port cities like Shanghai were known for their comprador bourgeoisie. Hardly worse than the clever Rockefellers, or bribing Siemens managers, or Mr. Odebrecht in Brazil, I admit it.

not fail to produce their own brand of the ‘spectacular.’

In the arts, it is interesting to note that Taiwanese landscape painting was strongly influenced by Westernized Japanese painting since at least the 1920s or 1930s. Quite a few artists from Taiwan studied at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, “one of Japan’s most prestigious art institutions”, according to Xiao Caihua (Xiao). The painter Shih-chiao Lee (李石樵) was one of them. A native of Taipei *hsien*, he was admitted by the academy in 1931 and graduated in 1935 (Xiao). Those who did were in turn influenced by the fact that many Japanese painters had studied the art in Europe, above all in France (Lai, *passim*). Quite obviously, Taiwanese painters like Lan Yinding, who spontaneously chose to do water color paintings in the 1930s even though doing oil painting was considered more Western and more advanced, developed a genuinely Chinese art form by actively receiving stimulating impulses from Japanese colleagues who in turn had studied in Europe. But the fact that they preferred water colors to oil paintings may have reflected their links to traditional Chinese paintings and the techniques of ink painting that had been used to create them.⁶⁷ In addition, the *sujets* or themes chosen were local, and reflected their rootedness in a region impregnated by Chinese socio-culture. This was still the case with many painters from Taipei who came to Tamsui in the 1970s in order to do water colors of Guanyin Shan or of Tamsui streets and landmarks. At the time, Tamsui with its old architecture and narrow lanes, its traditional shop houses, temples, the fairly old school buildings, and the fort of the “red-haired barbarians” was a gem. Apart from this, and our way of noting the destructiveness of the modernization process that destroyed old Tamsui, I think it is remarkable that water color painting, including its philosophical basis, was again receiving so much attention during the heydays of *xiangtu wenxue* 乡土文学 and increasing anti-KMT protests, in the midst of the onslaught of massive imports of “Americanizing” cultural influences (most notably in the form of films, pop music, and returning academics who had studied in the U.S.). It was after all a time when intellectuals like Liang Chingfeng 梁景峰 mocked “modernist” writers who had been invited to Iowa writers’ workshops.

In the performing arts, there existed various tradition-based opera genres, with local folk opera styles most strongly anchored in the popular masses, especially in small towns, villages, and the popular (that is to say, working-class and “small people”) districts of the larger cities. The “Chinese” (or Beijing) Opera – as a non-popular, highly regarded form, was typically performed in a theatre in Taipei owned by the armed forces, and it had the blessings and encouragement of the KMT leadership that was preaching a neo-Confucian renaissance since 1966 when it had unleashed “a [...] campaign” designed as “the ‘Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement,’ condemning the Chinese communist party as the betrayer of the Chinese tradition and proclaiming the KMT as the orthodox successor of the tradition.” (Chern 107).⁶⁸ In order to popularize the Beijing Opera among the middle class, performances were frequently broadcast on television. Whether this had any ‘moral’ or political effect, is doubtful. The reality was obviously different from the ideological phrases broadcast at the times. It is enough to think of Chiang Kaishek’s many young mistresses to recognize the cleavage between morality propaganda and praxis. Chiang’s example, too well known, was the model for those who could afford it and who embraced the possibilities offered by business, money, and connections. Was that ‘Western’ or Chinese? Had comprador capitalism in the Shanghai of the 1920s and ‘30s been ‘Western’ or Chinese? Or was it a product of a collision and fusion, of Chinese mercantile traditions affected by Western business practices in view of the presence of Western firms; was comprador capitalism and the culture it brought about at least in certain strata - but affecting others as well - thus a product of socio-cultural interference (*Interferenz*; dialectical interaction of forces), reinforced by the ‘logic of the market’? In Taiwan, during the ‘70s, I think that quite certainly the effects of integration into the world

67 Water colors demand different techniques than oil paintings – a way of being present in each moment, realizing simultaneously a measure of control and freedom, thus concentration in combination with great spontaneity. This had also been true of ink paintings, and Taiwan-born art students who went to study at Japanese art academies usually came from affluent families and had received painting lessons in tradition Chinese painting by local masters at home. Traditional Chinese philosophical concepts underpinned or informed that artistic approach, and continued to do so when the modern water color techniques were used.

68 Actually, even a Council for Chinese Cultural Renaissance was established. The ideological efforts of the KMT-regime to revive Neo-Confucianism are discussed by Christian Jochim (Jochim 48-83, especially pp.56-58); see also Philip Clart (Clart 84-97).

market as part of the new internationalized ‘virtual factory’, as a supplier of parts and components, of plastics, textiles, Philco television sets, and of chips, were more clearly felt than ineffective and hypocritical moral propaganda. Labor issues surfaced in the literature of Yang Qingchu, Chen Yingzhen, and others.⁶⁹

Drama in the Western sense was marginalized by the KMT, as all the great modern Chinese playwrights that reached fame in the 1920s, ‘30s, and ‘40s had been Leftists. The only noteworthy dramatist whose work I could see was Yao Yi-wei (姚一葑)⁷⁰, and his play ‘*A Suitcase*’ (一口箱子 Yikou xiangzi) that I saw was staged by a group of Tamkang students under the direction of U.S. educated comparatist Huang Meishu (黄美序) (Huang 44f.).⁷¹ It was a good play, and the performance remarkable, though it used lay actors that were not content to be authentic, but strived to be professional, which they weren’t. Like quite a few novels and short stories at the time, this play also focused on the plight of workers in Taiwan, but camouflaged it by traits of the absurd theatre borrowed from Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot.” But perhaps these traits I deciphered may have owed a lot to the way ‘*A Suitcase*’ was staged by Huang Meishu. If so, he was right: exploitation, poverty, but also loneliness and isolation in a society that puts “each one against the other” in the midst of plenty (the possibility of sisterhood, brotherhood, and sufficient food, shelter, clothing, and immaterial culture for all) is indeed absurd. And so was the instituted ‘suspicion’ that made even me and my colleagues aware that army officers in their office next door might listen in to conversations we had in our office.⁷²

Culturally, Taiwan became internationally renowned in two areas of achievement – dance theater and New Taiwan Cinema 新台湾电影. Both received impulses from abroad but became genuine Chinese art forms. The former is unthinkable without Lin Hwaimin (林怀民)⁷³, a dancer and choreographer who studied with Martha Graham, and who went on to form the Cloud Gate Dance Company 云门舞集. It is important to recognize that this is a genuinely Chinese achievement that draws both on tradition (the Chinese Opera) and on aesthetic discoveries made while studying *Ausdruckstanz*, which had pre-war German roots. But the Western influence (grasped by appropriating the Graham technique) has been sinicized, in its actual application; themes and ways of expressing things are Chinese, and the result is a modern Chinese art form that came into existence due to the creative reception and incorporation of Western impulses. The marketing of the company by the Government Information Office followed of course the paradigms set by modern Western “culture export” strategies; the aim was to instrumentalize the group’s socio-culturally significant expressiveness and its aesthetic rendition, and this for immediate political and economic purposes: the image of an export-oriented ‘country’ under the yoke of a military dictatorship was to be enhanced when the group toured abroad in the 1970s and ‘80s.

New Taiwan Cinema similarly received impulses caused by the perceptive confrontation with alternative filmmaking in the West, as exemplified, for instance, by Edward Yang’s (杨德昌, 1947-2007) astounded

69 When American corporations like Ford Philco and Pfizer opened plants in East Asia and others began to outsource the production of parts and components, it was not accidental that they would choose locations with repressive labor laws and a cheap skilled and semi-skilled work force, thus above all in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea (which were all entirely undemocratic and outlawing strikes). It was a strategy propagated later in books about the virtual factory, and it was accompanied by what Robert Went calls the “unprecedented internationalization of capital since the mid-1970s.” (Went 104)

70 A Korean translation of Yao Yi-wei’s play 红鼻子 (Hong bi zi / Red Nose) was published in 2013 by ZMANZ Co.

71 Also in: Art in Society, no. 15, Winter 2014 / Spring & Summer 2015. URL <http://www.art-in-society.de/AS15/YAO/Yao-Huang.html>. Accessed 5 April 2017. Huang Mei-shu (黄美序/Hwang Mei-shu, b. 1930; according to another source: Huang Meixu, b. 1931) also published many articles in the Tamkang Review 滄江评论, thus on Yao Yiwei (Huang [e]), (Huang [f]), and on the Beijing Opera (Huang [g]).

72 On one occasion, Liang Chingfeng 梁景峰, who was my colleague at the German Dept. of Tamkang, warned me by humming “*Auf der Mauer, auf der Lauer, sitzt ein kleiner Wanzen.*” The text and melody are part of the German folk tradition. But in modern German, *Wanze* does not only mean *bedbug*; it is also a colloquial expression for a bugging device. Of course, bugs (and Stasi-type informers) were no specialty of Taiwan; they were used in West Germany, too, and are still used in today’s Germany. We are not different from many other countries, in this respect.

73 Lin Hwaimin (or Hwaimin Lin 林怀民, b. 1947) is not only a gifted dancer and innovative choreographer, but also a writer. My colleague Liang Chingfeng must have seen him as a ‘modernist’ – thus opposed to *xiangtu wenxue*; at least he criticized, in the 1970s, the fact that Lin was one of those writers who had attended the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, as if this could only further cultural alienation and implant not only writing techniques but also themes that were far away from the social reality of the ‘little folk’ in Taiwan. Later, I was surprised to learn that Lin cared for Chen Da 陈达, the old folk singer. The performances of the Cloud Gate Dance Theater that were directed by him were marked by what I thought were psychological, highly individualist themes suggesting loneliness, despair, failing relationships, complicated by strange ties with and allusions to Chinese mythology. When he was in the States in 1978 or ‘79, letting the group decide what to perform and how, ‘collective heroes’ and folk *sujets* surfaced – though not always successfully, I think.

and deeply impressed viewing of a film by Werner Herzog while he was in the U.S.A.⁷⁴ But this was not the only stimulating influence on young Chinese filmmakers in Taiwan. *Cineastes* in Taiwan flocked regularly to the German Cultural Center's film screenings after I had shown them films by Helmut Costard, Werner Nekes, and other independent and experimental West German filmmakers at the center and also at the Taida Film Club that used the venue of the Tien Center at Roosevelt Street. Motivated by this echo, I convinced the Cultural Center that they had nothing to fear from the censors and should stop screening just *Guten Tag* language films. And thus, thanks to Inter Nationes, we could screen films by Fassbinder, Wenders, Herzog etc. and I could give introductory talks at the center since 1977 or 1978. Such aesthetic approaches as the New German Film offered may have proved stimulating. But just as Lin Hwaimin's choreographies (both with regard to their expressive forms and the stories told) are unmistakably Chinese, yet modern and new, New Taiwan Cinema developed a film form and language decidedly Chinese, adding specific tones to the voice of Chinese film and to the concert of voices of film cultures all over the world.

If we speak of influences that made themselves felt when New Taiwan Cinema was about to be born, one must also point out that works by decidedly left-wing filmmakers like Alain Resnais, Chris Marker, Jean-Luc Godard, Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub were kept out of the country by the censors, as were films by such progressive Japanese directors as Mizoguchi and Kurosawa.⁷⁵ But asked by Ivan Wang 王晓祥⁷⁶ whether I could obtain a copy of Alain Resnais' *Nuit et brouillard* for the incipient Taipei Film Museum, I was able to get it, aided by a French colleague, and it was smuggled in as diplomatic mail via the French consulate in Hong Kong.

It says a lot about German experimental films by Helmut Costard, Werner Nekes and Dore O., and *Neue Deutsche Film* movies by Fassbinder, Herzog, Wenders and others that they could be imported officially by the German Cultural Center and were then screened here⁷⁷, whereas films by the Straubs were taboo.

New Taiwan Cinema (discussed by Chang Shi-Lun (Chang, *passim*), Huang Ren (Huang [b]); Huang Yushan in conversation with Yukiko Komiya (Huang [d]); Li Dawming (Li) and Lu Feiyi (Lu [b])) actively and creatively appropriated not only aesthetic approaches found in examples of the *nouvelle vague* or the *New German Film* but also new material forms of making film (that often excluded the use of rented studios) which had been pioneered by the French and West German *autorenfilm* (Verband) – the term *author's film* implying a certain relative independence from the usual industrial and commercial infrastructure that we call the (commercial and fully commercialized) “film industry”,⁷⁸ and thus from a significant segment of the capitalist “culture industry” (which comprises the big book publishers, the private and state-owned mass media, the museums and important galleries and auctioning firms like Sotheby's, quite generally the book market, film market, art market, etc.). But it is impossible not to grasp the Chineseness of Edward Yang's attempt to come to terms with key life experiences of the parent generation and of his own generation, such as the exodus of mainlanders commanded by the leaders of the retreating KMT army in 1947-49, and the massacres committed by the KMT police and army on orders issued by supreme authorities, that were not stopped by the U.S. occupation authorities and that led to the barbaric slaughter of tens of thousands of brave citizens on the island of Taiwan, beginning on February 28, 1947. Nor can we deny the empathetic search for a past that, though not idyllic, was not yet marked by chaotic speed and perverse ac-

74 Edward Yang 杨德昌 mentioned that he was greatly influenced by the fact that he saw a film by Werner Herzog in the U.S.; it motivated him to become a filmmaker.

75 The exception was Kurosawa's *Red Beard* – a film I saw, I think, in 1978 in a preview house house rented by cineastes on that evening for a private screening.

76 Wang Hsiao-hsiang 王晓祥, the news director of CTV and publisher of the *Yinxiang* 影响杂志 film journal (影响杂志- Influence. 王晓祥发行人. Publisher: 影响杂志社), was widely known as Ivan Wang at the time. I think that either he or Huang Yushan 黄玉珊 told me that films by Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet could not be imported, and it was difficult to smuggle a copy of *Nuit et brouillard* past the customs authorities (by French diplomatic mail from Hong Kong to the French Dept. at Tamkang) when Ivan wanted to draw a copy for the Film Museum in Taipei, the tender beginning of which he had just helped to make a reality.

77 This was apparently seen as politically feasible by the GIO censors, as the Center, initially skeptical, soon comprehended.

78 See (Filmkritiker-Kooperative), (Huang [c]), (Rossés), (Corrigan), (Flynn), (Monteverde), (Spagnoletti), (Eue), and (Venzi) on New German Film. Huang Yushan's book on New German Film was probably the first that focused on this subject matter in Taiwan.

celeration of the rhythm of life under the dictates of the world market, that we may decipher in films created by Hou Hsiao-hsien (侯孝贤; b. 1947). These films breathe the presence of concrete localities, often rural and semi-modern, that are still governed by different (though certainly not entirely innocent) principles. And they lovingly recall the people attuned and attached to these places that we “moderns” may call backward, rural or semi-rural, almost isolated from “the real world.” The depiction, though not leaving out the pain and the contradictions inscribed in an almost pre-modern, “backward” world, causes us to feel the sting of loss, not because what was lost was indeed idyllic but because what replaced it turned so chaotic, often cold, and ripped open like a wound that refuses to heal. Yes, appropriation was necessary, “Western” impulses mattered. But those filmmakers who received them, sought – or at least opened up to – the impulses and translated them creatively into something *new* that is, at the same time, deeply anchored in their own private and collective history, and in the concerns, needs and quests of their concrete audience (to the extent that it seeks exposure to their films).

It is true that New Taiwan Cinema received perhaps more attention outside Taiwan than on the island, and that at home it remained largely something cherished by *cinéastes*.⁷⁹ This is so because it refused to be spectacular and follow the paradigms of Hollywood or of commercial Hong Kong cinema that had rubbed off on even fairly solid Taiwan-based film directors like Li Hsing (李行) in the past.

Moviegoers with a blue collar background seemed to be drawn above all to the big movie theaters in Taipei’s *dianying jie* (movie lane) in the 1970s, and Hong Kong-made *kungfu* movies as well as Hollywood’s invented catastrophes, portrayed with a lot of spectacular action, were frequented above all. College students and true *cinéastes* seem to have preferred Scorsese and were looking for possibilities to see films made in Europe.⁸⁰ Similarly, the music industry was selling U.S. merchandise, U.S. pop, rock, and folk – but mostly to urban middle class kids, especially college youths (Davison 81f.),⁸¹ whereas the people in Taiwan’s countryside (if they did not continue to value and practice folk music) and the urban blue collar audience – even in the bigger cities – probably preferred local Taiwanese pop, which was obviously influenced by Japanese pop music. In their book *Culture and Customs in Taiwan*, Gary Marvin Davison and Barbara E. Reed briefly refer to Taiwanese pop (Davison 79f.) and Mandarin pop. Just as J.E. Taylor in 2004, Davison and Reed note a significant Japanese influence with regard to Taiwanese pop music. (Davison 80f.) It echoes the cultural effects of 50 years of Japanese colonial rule on the island of Taiwan. We must not forget that teachers taught even elementary school kids in Japanese, and that kids were forbidden to speak Mandarin, Taiwanese, or Hakka in school and in public outside the school building. With regard to the influence of Japanese pop music, Jeremy E. Taylor mentions Yang Sanlang who had “travelled to Japan in 1935 to study music. [...] Yang became influential in the 1950s, the so-called ‘heyday of Taiwanese-language pop’ [...], as he single-handedly began transcribing dozens of Japanese *enka* songs into Taiwanese, as well as composing his own *enka*-inflected pop music. Some of his most popular tunes, including ‘Kang-to ia u’ (Rainy night in the harbour town) and ‘Ku-cheng mi-mi’ (Endless nostalgia) continue to be recorded and performed by

79 This phenomenon is highly interesting. In the U.S., a filmmaker like Woody Allen gets less attention than in Europe. In Taiwan, Taiwan New Cinema got less attention than in the U.S. or Western Europe. This is at least a widely-held opinion, and it boils down to the proverbial saying “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his relatives and his own family.” But this explains very little. It is more convincing if we assume that *cinéastes* took to New Taiwan Cinema because of its formal aspects, in both Taiwan and abroad. And quite a few may also have been enchanted by its local color, in other words, the true rootedness of films by directors like Hou Hsiao-hsien in a Chinese socio-culture. Such *cinéastes* were and still are a minority among moviegoers almost everywhere in our post-WWII world, also in Taiwan. The mass public in Taiwan took to both Taiwan-made and Hong Kong-made movies, and to products from Hollywood – all of them of a different sort, catering to the ‘popular tastes’ that the cultural industry had produced. And as Daw-ming Lee has shown, since the opening of the film market due to U.S. pressure for ‘free trade,’ both good and bad Taiwan films have lost market share and Hollywood is dominant. (Lee)

80 Western influence among the ‘educated’ was of course not only a ‘youth phenomenon’ and thus it has not been limited to the impact of U.S. pop music. Music lovers listen to Bach, Beethoven, Berlioz, Verdi, etc., and composers are aware of Western composition techniques as the work of Ma Shuilong (马水龙, 1939-2015) demonstrates. But as Ma Shuilong told me, he was very interested in creating modern Asian or more accurately, modern Chinese music, and his interest in Borodin (А. Бородин, 1833-1887), for instance, was motivated in fact by the Russian composer’s incorporation of elements of Asian music. Ma learned from Western composition techniques the way Chinese authors in the 1930s and ‘40s learned from Western ways of composing modern genres, like the novel and theater (as *Sprechtheater*; not Chinese opera). Such writers and composers received techniques actively, but integrated them into genuinely Chinese works.

81 That educated middle-class kids preferred American pop music as well as blues and jazz, was a trend that changed among the progressive segments of Taiwan’s college students when they embraced, since about 1976 or ‘77, the song movement that Li Shuangze (李双泽) ignited when he demanded that Chinese people should “sing their own songs.” Similarly, progressive youths turned to protest songs in West Germany during the 1960s and 70s. (Robb)

artists today. Yang's musical endeavours laid a foundation for others such as Ye Junling, a lyricist and later chief of Yazhou changpian (Asian records) who introduced literally hundreds of Japanese songs into Taiwan during the 1960s [...] The songs that Yang Sanling and Ye Junling introduced, labelled [...] *hunxue gequ* (mixed-blood songs) by a number of critics [...], came to dictate the sound of this genre of popular music. [...] The heartbroken melodies of Japanese enka which first came into Taiwanese pop in this period are now one of its defining features [...]" (Taylor 177)

It was in secluded villages that genuine folk music survived, kept alive by street singers and local opera groups (Chen). And it was only after the campus folk music movement took off and was merely embracing singers like Judy Collins, Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan, or locally written 'folk songs' sung in English, that progressive writers, academics, and students discovered not only the necessity to sing their country's "own songs" in their mother tongue, rather than American pop songs or songs by Joan Baez, but also folk singers like Chen Da (陈达) (Ho).⁸² The impulse at the time came from Shuangze Li (李双泽, 1949-1977), a painter, writer, and singer-song-writer based in Tamsui, who was also an advocate of *xiangtu wenxue*, as the journal *China Tide* 夏潮 (China Tide editorial) and a book by Liang Chingfeng and Lee Yuan-chen told us (Liang). It was a clear act of resistance against what was perceived by Li Shuangze, Liang Chingfeng (梁景峰), Wang Jinping (王津平), Hu Defu (胡德夫), Yang Zujun (杨祖珺), Lee Yuan-chen (李元贞), but also by Wang Tuoh (王拓) and others as encroaching cultural imperialism or blatant "Americanization" and they blamed the supposedly nationalist KMT regime for being the servant who had opened the door to it.

Those attached to literature in Taiwan after 1945 could look back to progressive Taiwan-based writers like Lai He (or Loa Ho in Taiwanese; 赖和) and Yang Kui (杨逵) who had been aware of the plight of peasants, fisherfolk, sugar and tea plantation workers, sugar mill workers, mine workers and so on. But the anti-colonialist (thus "anti-Japanese") peasant movement was destroyed by the KMT after it took over and progressive writers were shot or jailed. The mock-beginnings of new literature after the massacres of 1947 and the waves of White Terror that followed were *ordered* beginnings: Officers, retired officers and even retired PFCs were ordered to write, when they were ready to go along; those who retired also formed the body of teachers in elementary schools and middle schools, because the old generation of teachers wrote and taught in Japanese, as had been demanded between 1895 and 1945 by the colonial authorities. The literature produced by the military was obviously pure propaganda without literary merits, and the counter-movement that was tolerated was soon enough hermetic poetry and the literary equivalent of *l'art pour l'art*. It is true that I simplify to cut things short, but basically committed literature did not resurface until the late 1960s, and it did flourish only briefly, in the 1970s, represented by fine writers like Wu Cho-liu⁸³, Chen Yingzhen⁸⁴, Wang Tuoh⁸⁵, Yang Ch'ing-ch'u⁸⁶, Hwang Chun-ming (Huang Chunming)⁸⁷ etc.. In a way all these varieties of written literature in Taiwan appear to me both distinctly Chinese and indebted to the "revolution" in Chinese literature that came with the May 4th movement on the mainland. But then, *was the American impact felt* that I assert as a factor in West German and Italian post-war literature? This is hard to decide, for me. I share the viewpoint of Lu Xun who tackled the question *whether new Chinese theater, poetry, and prose writing had been totally Westernized* when traditional forms were sublated⁸⁸ and modern themes emerged side by side with new genres and aesthetic approaches, by merely stating quite dryly that *we don't become an ox because we eat beef* (Lu 156). The absorption of the foreign influence does not wipe out existing identities, traditional

82 See also Hsu Tsang-houei 许常惠 (Hsu [b]), Jian Shangren 简上仁 (Jian), and Zhao Jingyu 赵静瑜 (Zhao).

83 吴浊流, also transcribed Wu Zhuoliu (1900-1976).

84 陈映真 (1937-2016).

85 王拓, also transcribed Wang Tuo (1944-2016).

86 杨清矗, also Yang Qingchu (b.1940).

87 黄春明, also Huang Chunming (b.1935).

88 Robert M. Doran has made use of a beautiful quotation; it says: "what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper (!) features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context." I have added here an exclamation mark, emphasizing the word *proper*, as such sublating implies of course a critical reception that sorts out the anti-humanistic and that which does not respond – or which no longer corresponds – to real needs, at least not at the given time and in the place that situate the reception process. (Doran 442)

heritages, historic memories, specific needs – it merely helps to creatively transform them and to adapt them to actual, “modern” conditions. Was the same argument applicable across the board with regard to Taiwan’s post-war literary development? If we take the hermetic poets, we can guess that they chose, willy-nilly, an escapist practice, as Chinese poets had done under oppressive conditions before, and as many writers have done in many places and socio-cultures under abstractly “similar” conditions. But the concrete conditions of *Cold War repression* by the KMT regime were also a result not only of specific class interests of the social fake-elite among the mainlanders living on the island; they reflected also U.S. interests and were condoned and in fact, materially supported, by one U.S. administration after the other, from Truman to Eisenhower, Kennedy, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Nixon, and so on. As in West Germany where Brecht was not welcome and denounced for many years, and where a pacified literature, mildly and almost covertly critical at best, would prosper, the aestheticism of Taiwan’s poets in the 1960s was also a reflection of a global political constellation, and it was America that was in command in Taiwan or West Germany, just as the Soviet Union was in command in Poland and the G.D.R. It had implications and colored the societal frame of reference from which literature could spring. Its different hues and shades and individualities aside, it had the effect of an American orientation or orientation that was Chinese (Taiwanese) but yet subservient, implicitly, to the “Don’ts” laid down by the U.S.. If a Charlie Chaplin – a director who let a man with a red flag (not a red flag, ironically, but a piece of red cloth) run down the street ahead of a demonstration in one of his films – had to leave the U.S. for Britain, then it was small wonder that artists (and perhaps writers, as well) who could not breathe freely in Taiwan under the American’s watchdog on the isle, the KMT, would emigrate to countries in South America or to Paris in the 1950s and ‘60s. Qidengsheng (七等生), one of the experimental writers surfacing under the KMT’s rule, chose to experiment with language, taking cues from surrealists and from Freud. Some critics accused him of violating the Chinese language by imitating grammatical constructions acceptable, they thought, only in English. If we search for hints that America’s influence was felt in Taiwan’s literature, it is good to remember the sarcastic criticism of those close to the social-realist *xiangtu wenxue* movement. My colleague, at the time, Liang Chingfeng, who wrote also under a pseudonym for opposition (and thus pro-democracy but also pro-*xiangtu wenxue* 乡土文学) journals like *Qiachao* (夏潮 China Tide) and *Meilidao* (美丽岛 Beautiful Island, i.e. Formosa in Portuguese, thus Taiwan), commented sarcastically on all those aesthetically minded writers who shunned committed literature when it mattered most for the pro-democracy movement. They all go to, or went already to Iowa, he said. Attending the Writers’ workshop, in order to learn to write like the Americans, and in order to appreciate and cherish their concerns. Theirs, not those of Taiwan’s common people. Their *do’s* and *don’ts*. Their ideas of what is good writing. Their canon, their literary models. Or that’s how I understood it at the time. Yes, Lin Huai-min, not only dancer and choreographer, but a writer of short stories, had also been to Iowa, hadn’t he? But when I visited Lin Huai-min at home, in that nice small house in the Yangmingshan 阳明山 area that overlooked Taipei, his room where he received me was modeled after a Japanese room, strict, severe, empty, almost Spartan. The entire floor of the room covered by tatami, and Lin severe and almost Spartan, like a Zen monk. Was it due to deeply Buddhist preoccupations? Or wasn’t it rather a “spirituality *expressed*” – the significance of which was more truly grounded in the reduced, minimalist aesthetics than in an ancient “spiritual” tradition? I sensed the *modern* significance or meaning of it all, modern like the performances of his Cloud Gate troupe, and I sensed that it was *Chinese*, despite the Japanese “outfit” and the tatamis. Taiwan, it is true, was occupied for 50 years by the Japanese and something rubbed off, was absorbed and turned into a Chinese aesthetic element. My experience during this visit contradicted the assumption that he was “Americanized” in Iowa, but his writings may well reveal the impact of the Iowa writers’ workshop. When Lin invited Chen Da (陈达) to perform during a Cloud Gate performance, it is clear that the sorrows of the Chinese population due to recent history were preeminent, and that it was because of this meaning of Chen Da’s performance that Lin had incorporated it in his dance theater.

And yet, Lin Huaimin, like several other writers in Taiwan at the time, belonged to the current that shunned openly committed, socially critical literature. He was, I repeat, an “aesthete”. The KMT-controlled

dominant media vilified the *xiangtu wenxue* authors, not him.

Is it possible to draw conclusions?

I cannot with good conscience attempt to write here about more than just a few concrete and specific literatures that flourish in our world. I have attempted to touch at least broadly, and perhaps too vaguely, on the issue of cultural dominance (which is also the material dominance of a society that can afford to free its successful and acknowledged writers from menial work, and that possesses a big and internationally operating publishing industry). I know we often talk too easily of the Americanization of Western Europe, of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan – that became, in actual fact, US-liberated and at the same time, factually, US-occupied territories after World War II. (There still exist, in all likelihood, secret clauses attached to treaties, or secret treaties, which limit the sovereignty of Germany, Japan, Taiwan, giving the US government rights that do not correspond with full sovereignty of the “countries” I named.)

Peter L. Berger, who assumes a defensive position with regard to the ongoing Americanization in our “globalized” world⁸⁹, has attempted to point out its interesting and in his view, perhaps productive effects. There can be no doubt that exchange relations *that are based on equality*, or that at least occur in a context in which the recipient is weaker and unequal but *conscious and critical*, can be extremely productive and cultural enhancing. But I object to Berger’s use of terms like “hybrid” and “hybridization.” (Berger 10) When applied to cultural exchange relations, hybridization is in a way *a meaningless term* because practically all human cultures, throughout history, have been engaged in cultural exchange and have absorbed “other” influences and – if you want – “input”, and are thus “hybrid,” just as all populations, almost from the very beginnings, are “mixed.” But the term “hybridization,” applied in this context, is also a *biologically colored, kind of Darwinist*, and in that sense, in the last analysis, *a racist term*. It is unnecessary and damaging, because it camouflages, as an ideologically loaded concept, the fact that different types of cultural exchange relations exist: some that are characterized by *this or that form of dominance* of one side and a related suffering of domination, on the part of the other; and then, hopefully, we may also discover exchange relations based on a sort of equality. There exist also exchange relations in contexts of – say, political and military, and perhaps also economic – inequality, as for instance between China and the West between 1840 and 1910 or 1920 that can be characterized by a defensive attitude of the recipient – warding off the pushed contraband, and selecting carefully what seems of use. Selective reception resulted; and it was not *high volume transmission* from one side to the other: no rush of uncritically imported ideas and goods, even though Western knowledge was accumulated to an important extent. In the next period, in the 1920s and 30s, reception increased, but the critical spirit increased, too. I would describe this as – to a large degree – conscious reception that was governed by rationality and awareness of that which corresponded to one’s own needs. It had “use value” – especially for critical writers and thinkers like Lu Xun. But there existed also, in most likelihood, parallel examples of reception characterized by alienation, on the part of those who uncritically desired and who tried to embrace “total Westernization.”

If Berger alludes – in a positive way – to “hybrid” forms of cultural exchange by pointing to the example of the Japanese fashion industry and Japanese fads, especially among teenagers, I would describe this as an example of extreme alienation. Instead of putting use value in the center, the fetishization of commodities has become extreme in the act of reception. This is of course a quality of capitalist social relations that exist anyway, in Japan, I think since the early 20th century, or perhaps the final decades of the 19th. But the extreme extent of consumerist fetishization that is implied in recent consumer behavior, especially among

89 Berger says that “[t]here is indeed an emerging global culture, and it is indeed heavily American in origin and content. (Berger 2) He then goes on to find positive examples, but also examples of so-called “alternative globalizations.” The way he uses this term, it remains a muddled concept. American adoptions of “Buddhism,” for example, are quite often just American obscurantist fads, similar to the interest in theosophy in the 19th and early 20th century. Are they really examples of “globalization” processes that are running in the “opposite” (East-West) direction? But perhaps, America’s globalization success, apart from its politico-economic and thus also military dimensions, is largely a cultural surface phenomenon – pushing consumerism, fetishization of “cultural” commodities - including all those heavily promoted bestsellers and blockbusters, and thus also “fads.”

teenagers, is the result of the latest wave of American cultural aggression, pushing consumerist imbecility in a direction where it attains new levels, and resulting in an acerbated *deplacement* of genuine human desire to a shale surface level and cheap *ersatz*. The Japanese aesthetics involved in this, that Berger discovers, are merely the decorative varnish of the entire process of estrangement and cultural alienation that is implied in a yet more intense, and yet more naïve and unthinking adoption of the consumerist American dream and American way of life. Which is, after all, a middle class way of life, or lifestyle of an already disappearing “middle class”, thus of an increasingly economically status-reduced and “impoverished” stratum of white-collar workers within the once relatively privileged working class of a rich imperialist country.

But Berger is right in one respect: Americanization is a complex phenomenon. And the extent to which it occurs and “succeeds” must be empirically ascertained. It is not something that pervades “everything” overnight.

Even in West Germany, where American cultural influence revamped the cultural landscape – delegating Fascist socio-cultural remnants to the corners that let idiosyncratic gestures survive (as with the architectural and name-giving priorities of the Oetker “dynasty”) and pushing pre-fascist forms to the area of corny entertainment for the masses, as in the case of German *Heimatfilm* –, it is apparent that manifold individual routes were taken by writers, though most of these aesthetic and ideological routes did in fact subject them to the general consensus that few flaws could be found in a country that had become a US ally and junior partner, as long as the Nazi past was routinely condemned. And this, without, of course, putting Hitler’s willing helpers on trial or sacking professors like Jauss who had committed cruel war crimes wearing the black uniform of the SS. The Krupps, Thyssens, Roechlings, and others who were bosses of large family-owned enterprises, and who were accused and in many cases condemned in Nuremberg as war criminals, did not spend too much time in jail. Neither were their corporations nationalized. As a writer, in the 1950s and early or mid ‘60s, you had better not focus too much on this, and even though the times changed around 1968, I think that too much criticism of the sharp sort would do the career of a writer no good, today, either. Can we blame it on the American influence? Yes and no. Yes, because the Western allies determined a course of history that implied “restoration.” No, because the interests of the German bourgeoisie, and thus also the interests of major publishers and owners of influential media, welcomed this lucky turn of their fate, after they had played a “win or lose all” game in 1933-45.

Americanization of pop culture is a fact worldwide, some assert.⁹⁰ Is that so? Yes, U.S. pop is listened to in many countries. But what about the resilience we find? Are the famous singers in Egypt really Americans? What about *fado* in Portugal and *flamenco* in Spain? Is it just for the tourists – a mere remnant, or still anchored in the culture of the subaltern classes (as Gramsci called them)? In countries like Columbia or Guatemala, a Guatemalteco friend told me in the early 1970s, the so-called elites were speaking English instead of Spanish even at home; they sent their kids to U.S. universities; sons received military training in West Point or the School of the Americas. They listened to radio stations that broadcast in English, and lived in gated communities, were fenced in and Americanized. Separate from the people. Yes, if that is so,

90 With regard to Americanization in Taiwan, Kuo Mingfong and I wrote some years ago: “The political and economic hegemony established by the US had and has its cultural dimensions. This means good preconditions for the marketing of American cultural commodities, furthering the spread of US ideas, values, literary fashions, and aesthetic preferences - although it would be wrong to say that they were absorbed in Taiwan without undergoing certain changes. They contributed however to a far-reaching reception of contemporary Western literary ‘models’ and thus to a great impact of a certain ‘modernity.’ On the other hand, this cultural impact, to the extent that it penetrated not only the middle classes but pragmatic factions of the KMT bureaucracy, did not only serve to finish off the old, supposedly ‘neo-Confucian’ and starkly ‘anti-Communist’ propaganda literature of the 1950s. It also helped construct an ideological bulwark against critical social realism with Chinese-Taiwanese roots, at least in the regime-dominated media and in large sections of academia.

Perhaps, however, the opposition between strongly Western-influenced ‘modernist’ currents in Taiwan and critical, realist *xiangtu wenxue* trends is not an absolute one. We hope that it was possible to show to what extent authors like Qidengsheng, although they belong to the first current, in some sense also seem to succeed in bridging the gap.” (Kuo) It is clear that we noted the American cultural influence, but refrained from speaking of full-fledged Americanization. This is also my position now. Americanization tendencies exist; people are influenced, sometimes unwittingly, and different people (including writers, and audiences) can also opt for them; but others can and do also resist. The specificity of Chinese socio-cultural in Taiwan remains a fact; but so are outside influences, the Japanese that was strong being increasingly replaced by the ‘global’ American socio-cultural impact. To some extent, the widespread existence of American cultural influence is of course a very real aspect, not of what our concept of ‘world literature’ should be, but of what the homogeneous or ‘homogenizing’ trends inscribed in globalized dominance actually are. In a sense that is a *really evolving* global literature that we must resist.

that would constitute thorough Americanization. But is it indicative of cultural imperialism? These comprador “elites” of the periphery are not subjected by it, they choose sides. They throw their lot with the American “elites” in the U.S. center. But what about the common people? Can cultural imperialism penetrate their culture when Micky Mouse is translated into Spanish and read avidly in Bogota? Is it read there? Is it seen on television in Cairo, the sound track being of course in Arabic? And what sort of readers will evolve in Cairo or Bogota if this is so, if they watch Micky Mouse every so often in their native language television programs? What sort of imagination will be virulent in young writers who have seen Micky Mouse twice a week when they were four and Star Wars when they were fourteen? (Youssef [b]).

It is possible to dive more deeply into such questions but I want to return to where I started, taking up the question then uttered.

To pose the question, “What is world literature?” appears to me to correspond, in a way, to the question, “What unites distinct literatures of the world?” Perhaps we should start out by providing a rather simple, general answer that is, of necessity, lacking in concreteness. What unites the literatures of the contemporary world is that their authors as well as their audiences are confronted with the same dangers, unsolved problems, and seeming *impassés*, which reach from the permanent exposure to bombers, subs, and silos loaded with nuclear weapons ready to be fired at shortest notice (Aron), to continuing devastation of the planet (which undermines the very conditions of any material existence of life on earth), to recurrent famines and endemic millionfold starvation⁹¹ especially in the so-called Third World, acerbated inequality (Arrighi 39ff.), rampant media manipulation, subversion of democracy where it exists, the denial of it where populations clamor for it, and which also include the inability, in many if not all countries, to overcome (or *fully* overcome) patriarchy. Some add the so-called population explosion as a key unsolved problem (Gehlen 311ff.), but I am convinced that this problem would be solved almost immediately if other problems, like endemic poverty and increasing misery in countries with high birth rates would be solved.

We live in the same world, we face the same existential problems, even though some of them in different degrees. What makes us distinct – as writers, as artists, filmmakers, dramatists etc., and also as a specific public in a specific place, endowed with a specific history and specific approaches to traditions – is our perspective: the diverse perspectives, and how we formulate them, putting them across in words, as images, sounds, etc.

But even these perspectives seem to converge, up to a point. World literature appears to *become a reality*, faced with a world market that has *become a reality*.⁹² This concept, *Realwerden des Weltmarkts*, “the [process of] a world market that is becoming a reality”, may well correspond with the “Becoming Real” of World Literature (*Realwerden der Weltliteratur*) in a dual sense – because not only big markets were formed, big publishing firms, and mass markets⁹³ of captured publics, but also resisting audiences, and resisting communities of writers trying to link, and this on a worldwide scale.⁹⁴ As the dangers grow, as the

91 See Arnold Gehlen’s analysis of the implications in his essay, “Über kulturelle Kristallisation” (Gehlen 311-328).

92 In his essay “Decolonizing Literature”, Magdi Youssef asks, “Without studying the laws and mechanisms of the World Market, how can we understand such a phenomenon as ‘World Literature’ in modern times? Aren’t books and newspapers, and subsequently the electronic media today, a commodity in the first place that circulates in the market? Doesn’t this present a significant difference with regard to previous stages of human history? Are books and papers mainly geared to their cultural and literary ‘missions’ and ideas, or else ruled by the reigning market laws?” (Youssef) - For a critique of this market and its ‘logic’, see: (Altvater, *passim*) and (Altvater [b]). See also (Mahnkopf).

93 High volume markets, sales people prefer to say, but I speak of envisioned markets desired by corporations that design “mass products” for “(the?) masses.”

94 Of course, the refusal to say - further above - that the cultural production of Hollywood, like that of the cultural industry in its entirety, is “monolithic”, needs clarification. It is clear that increasing capital concentration, the internationalization of capital, and the global economic activities of ever larger - in many cases oligopolistic - corporations that are active in *high volume markets* (targeting ‘big publics’ or ‘the masses’) sharply increase homogenization of ‘mass products’ (like the i-Phone or glyphosate or serial podcasts). “Monsanto decides how the ideal tomato tastes, which water melon is sold in supermarkets, and how the cucumber of the future will look.” (Werner, 17) – Capital concentration tendencies affect the film market and the book market, as well. With foreseeable results? Yes (in fact, a big YES) - and no. It is still possible for a political activist or a *cinéaste* to produce a film with few resources. It can be shown locally, in a given political and cultural context. It may have an effect. Small publishers still exist and can resist trends. On the other hand, mass production for big audiences is no myth; the ideological assertion that ‘*diversity*’ is taken into account and that increasing ‘*individualization*’ is rampant is the real myth, and likewise – in a world with an overpowering hegemon – the assertion that we live in a “world without center.” (Kornelius 11) The fate of New Taiwan Cinema, pushed into nonexistence by American film exports to Taiwan is a case in point. To say that things are nonetheless *not monolithic* is an attempt to make us aware of the gaps in the increasingly homogeneous cultural field, of the possibilities of resistance, and of different heritages and histories that color human memories and thus voices, and that in such ways lend credence to the possibility that human beings can still identify their real needs, instead of succumbing to globally similar political phraseology, the tastes promulgated by bestsellers and television, and the seductions of advertisements that let us buy ideal capitalist products like the i-Phone – an object “that nobody needs and that everybody wants.”

homogenizing tendencies propelled by the market increase, as globalized standardized cultural products filled with the debris of “Western decadence” swamp globalized markets, all of which runs counter to a human presence of literature, film, art (in one word, of culture), the fire of resistance, the concert of voices in the wilderness begins to be heard – more and more.⁹⁵ For this much is clear after all: At its root, as a human urge and need, literature, like the cinema, and visual arts, is not meant to be an exchangeable commodity. And it is also at the core, as process and result, the reflection of a genuine human act that ‘means’ and that is more than the *aesthetic* perception and experience it invariably must produce. It is the testimony of specific fears, hopes, visions and insights that spring from lived lives perceived and experienced “in situations.”⁹⁶ Concretely situated human beings could – and hopefully still can – attempt to access such testimonies in the literatures, films, visual arts of all parts of the world, from all “cultural spaces” – all “societies with their specific cultures”, thus all “socio-cultures.” Writers, artists⁹⁷, audiences – in one word, human beings⁹⁸ – speak with distinct voices, of distinct experiences, concretely anchored, yet human and accessible to every human being.

But we can only ‘learn’ from the experience of others, in our own and in other socio-cultures if we recognize *the specificity of their experience* and *how it is situated in the context of their specific culture*. This is especially true if we turn to the testimony of works from outside our own socio-cultural space. Only by perceiving and comprehending it *in its own* rather than in our context, and thus only thanks to our awareness of the specific difference of what may be broadly comparable historical, socially situated human experiences, can we abstract that which is valid also under our conditions, in our place and time. Basic human urges and needs, hopes and visions may well be the same everywhere; but we violate the concrete human being in us and in the other if we abstract from the concrete shapes they invariably take under specific conditions, in a specific place, at a specific time.

All of this, however, tends to be blotted out by market forces that homogenize, that blur and extinguish all difference, and that tell us we need the “universal product” with exchangeable qualities, true everywhere and thus nowhere.⁹⁹

And exactly therefore it is perhaps no wonder that in the late 18th century and early 19th century – when the process of a world market that took shape in a more apparent and forceful way than ever before in the centuries following the so-called *reconquista* and the proto-imperialist and colonialist spread of European market power and military power in Africa, the Americas and parts of Asia – , that exactly in this key period a Mexican, an inhabitant of a colony aspiring to independence, would for the first time speak of world literature, as opposed to Spanish literature (or European literatures). He was asserting a right – the right of Mexicans and others outside the European and North American orbit, to be heard and taken seriously, in the concert of voices.

World literature, in that sense which implies a resistance, is nothing but the ensemble of the literatures of the writers and the audiences of the world, who grapple to come to terms with a reality that – despite its concrete differences – poses the same essential problems of survival, problems of life and death caused by (neo-)imperialist hegemony (Callinicos [b] 188ff.) and world capitalism, including its perverse technost-structure, its pollution-increasing, species extinguishing dynamics, its ways of heating up the atmosphere of

95 The concept of resistance was employed by Peter Weiss (Weiss) in his *Ästhetik des Widerstands*, a three-volume novel that reflects the defeat of the Left in Europe. It resurfaces in Yowa’s *Eine Poetik des Widerstands*. (Yowa). See also (Imfeld), (Ngugi wa Thiong’o), and (Nascimento). Today, resistance is congruent with the voice of the weak in a world in which individuality is a product to be bought, and in which individuation remains possible only for those who preserve an awareness of family history, defeats of subaltern classes, and ‘Vorschein’ (as Bloch called it) of humane hopes and possibilities rediscovered in age-old traditions. See also (Hudson 173) and (Geoghegan 37).

96 We know that some, in the wake of Freud, place ‘desire’ [le *désir*] in the center as a motif force, a driving propellant, and I think they hit the nail on the head much better than those who see A TEXT and A LITERATURE as a part of a chain and of a chain reaction in the historical evolution of genres, or as some prefer to say today, of discourses. For those who say so *fail to say what drives us* to create texts, and to look back to existing discourses or genres, and what makes us transcend them.

97 In using the term “artists,” I include here, for the sake of brevity, visual artists, sculptors, film, opera, dance and theater directors etc.

98 Basically, we instinctively know that “everyone” among the public can be – at least potentially – “an artists,” as Joseph Beuys said long ago, and don’t we hope for it? Brecht knew it, too, in a way, when he sought to activate both the actors and the public.

99 In this way, capitalism has abstracted from the start from the concrete quality of human labor, turning it, based on the logic of capitalist accumulation, into abstract, exchangeable labor (and value of labor).

the planet, its rapacious agriculture and its decimation of forests, its neglect of rural populations worldwide and its often absurd and inhumane urbanistic strategies that fail to cope with the unsolved contradiction between town and countryside, as they give rise to the megalopolis and its unsolved problems, while people continue to flee from impoverished regions. Don't we see the stark difference between *boom regions* devastated by the very progress they make and all the *bypassed regions* of the world that are unable to escape from the devastations caused by poverty or extreme misery – scourges that weigh upon the soul and shoulders of people in so many different ways?¹⁰⁰

World literature – understood in a sense that is new – must transcend that which is. Of necessity, then, it is a *notion* that tells writers and audience that they are members of the same often hopeful and often despairing humanity, sailors on the same ocean, with its objective vastness and its objectively different winds and currents. It is a possibility that can only be manifold and diverse – yet united in its humane perspective. It is also a discovered need, a flower that is beginning to bloom, here and there, in unsuspected places. Don't we hear already the voice of African poets, somewhere in the hinterland, attached to oral literatures of old yet inspired also by new rhythms and driven by a new recognition of present needs?¹⁰¹ They do not always need English¹⁰², French¹⁰³, Spanish, Portuguese¹⁰⁴ to express what they think and feel and to speak to the *povo*. They have their languages of old, and if they choose the languages of the colonial masters of old, they transform them; they make them their own. Magdi Youssef has alerted us to the vibrancy of street theater created by workers from the Maghreb in France: it is another example of a new form of expression discovered, a new genre rising: improvised theater in France, indebted to Arab genres that discard the rigor of Western theater, its enclosed universe that wards off interjections, participation, direct comments by the audience during the performance of the play. (Youssef[f]) We can think of more such expressions of popular needs that foreshadow the new: street theater in Brazil¹⁰⁵, Mapuche poetry, for instance, and the rediscovery of their voice and native language by indigenous poets in Central America. But also the voices of resistance in the U.S.A., not only of beatniks, but Native Americans!(Kelly 87ff.) Radical black poetry, doesn't it exist since the moment when Leroi Jones changed his name? (Jones [b]) And do not Latina and Latino writers embrace the future when they listen back to the past, its hopes and its sufferings?¹⁰⁶

Such diversity of the new voices – never purely individual voices, despite their individual strength, their tones, accents, perspectives – is indeed needed, for it contradicts the real and present *homogenizing trends* in literature today, trends that are brutally asserted and pushed by *a market that knows only a different, a pseudo-diversity*: that of market segments, of targeted customer groups who are fed the stale, pre-cooked meals of mass production: high-brow versus low-brow, exquisite nonsense versus easily identified trash, categories of books directed at the 'educated', at the striving careerist 'middle class type', at the conservative, at the cosmopolitan yuppie, at the tired worker who is so tired that he accepts distraction, at the

100 Octavio Paz, like perhaps many cherished colleagues, attributes this misery to Western civilization. "Each day," he said, "it becomes more obvious that the building erected by Western civilization has become for us a prison, a bloody labyrinth, a collective battle field." (O. Paz, quoted in (Jaeggi 9) – My translation.) It is true that American military might continues to bring war and misery to many world regions. But are they the only ones? It is true that Western corporations continue to pillage the so-called Third World. But aren't there also Brazilian corporations like Odebrecht? Are South African corporations engaged in Zambia and Zimbabwe innocent? Do Chinese ventures abroad shun free-market brutality? Today this civilization that Octavio Paz refers to and describes as "Western", makes itself felt, above all, as a politico-economic mode of production. This mode of production has reached every corner of the globe, with perhaps tiny exceptions. It has caused antagonism everywhere – in almost every society, throughout the different socio-cultures of the world. This forms a common basis for the joint resistance of all writers, all literatures, and their audiences – everywhere.

101 See (Dili Palati); (Bodunde); (Bodunde [b]); (Guillén Preckler); (Ngandu Nkashama); also (Andrzejewski); (Bearth); (Oed); (Winkelmann); (Zabus); (Falola); (Adeaga); (Lindfors); (Wolff). See also (Davidson).

102 See (Bodunde [b]); also: (Keszthelyi); (Imfeld); (Ngugi wa Thiong'o); (Hegenscheidt); And see (Jones); also (Owomoyela); (Owomoyela [b]); (Osofisan); (Osofisan [b]).

103 See (Garscha); see also (Riesz); (Gierczynski-Bocandé); (Ortner-Buchberger).

104 See (Traumann); see also (Armbruster). Exchange relations are documented in a way that does not focus on European influence of African writing, in (Debrunner).

105 With regard to new impulses offered by A. Boal and M. Youssef to the theater in non-western societies, see for instance Magdi Youssef's *Brecht in Ägypten* (Youssef [g]) - a study that underlines the active reception of Brecht's Puntilla-Matti play by both the actors and the audience in Egypt, and the strong impact that indigenous, thus pre-Western Arab theater had on the way the play was performed and on the actively intervening audience, and see (Boal), (Boal [b]), etc. And see: (Youssef [h]); (Dessaive 105-106); (Bharucha), (Bharucha [b]); (Schutzman); (Gokdag); (Lutz 12).

106 See for instance (Salivar), also (McKenna)..

teenager, at the child. And always ALWAYS ALWAYS the same “Western modernity”: marketable stuff, approved by the watchdogs of the hegemonic culture, added to the publishing list of its publishing business, its rights marketers, added to the ‘Must read’ list of its professional reviewers, added – if it is regarded as high-brow – to the list of books considered for a prize, a Nobel Prize perhaps, or even “the canon.” The Western canon? Did that ever exist? Wasn’t that *something* that might be close to a modern “canon” – the idea which books are important – different in Italy, France, Spain, German states, and so on? And wasn’t even this idea changing, in the course of time? And never agreed upon by all the “educated”? And who asked “the masses”? No, “the canon” as sold us today is an idea filled with arrogance: the attempt of professors in U.S. universities to tell students “what they must read.” It is a brainwashing exercise, not the enthusiastic enunciation of lovers of literature who tell people – the young and the old – what they *loved* to read, and why.

If world literature, understood as the possible unity in diversity of all the literatures of the world is something surviving since times forgotten perhaps, and a flower that also begins to bloom, the real, market-driven reality of most published and read books underscores the existence of a different “world literature”, the outcome of Western and above all U.S. *domination of markets for cultural products* (film, television, print media including books, e-books, the visual arts, computer games, and so on). It is what we must reckon with: it is a fact.

Thus, leaving projections of a future aside that draw on the small new beginning *at the margins of recognized literature and rewarded culture*, what kind of picture do I think I can paint? Really only that simplistic categorization of commodities destined for a global book market? Aren’t there hidden treasures within the mainstream? Don’t we discover diversity within the widely accepted, too? Wasn’t even Brecht accepted by serious mainstream critics, by bourgeois readers? And performed on stages that are condemned to make money, or else were subsidized by the state?

Yes, mainstream critics and professors of literature will accept the existence of traditions, of histories. Many will say that such diversity is a thing of the past. It can be appreciated, but the times are a-changing. What was national merges into the global and gets transformed. The superiority of U.S. academe cannot be doubted, and it is good that serious publishers are located in New York, Boston, London, in Leiden and Amsterdam, and in university towns throughout much of the U.S.A. They listen to advice, one may say – these ‘readers’ (the watchdogs!), employed by the book merchants. The critical journals function well; the way of rating them is as perfect as Moody’s rating of Greek, Spanish, Italian, and Mexican debt. And last but not least the Nobel Prize is a gateway to heaven; it singles out those destined to join the Parnassus of writers. Isn’t it fair and representative the way it is managed? There is even an Egyptian laureate, among so many from the West. And why not: we represent, after all, humanity’s values – universal, like the dollar, and our insights. We allow dissidence, if the writer is already old and acknowledged. We are tolerant – within reasonable limits. The New York Review of Books is pretty rebellious in spirit – so why do you complain? There never was a society more open than ours.

The logic of the market, when scrutinized, tells me a different story. It is rude; it apportions. Turning to Unsel, the boss of the Suhrkamp publishing house, the German writer Thomas Bernhard complained that he would have sold more copies of a book he recently published with Suhrkamp if he had walked across the land, a migrant trader, with a knapsack on his back. Suhrkamp had printed 500 copies in all.

Is that the diktat of the market that Unsel succumbed to?¹⁰⁷ 500 copies printed – no more, *of a writer* (we

107 Paul Mattick gets across, in brief words, Marx’s insight that explains why Unsel risked already too much at the time referred to here, when he printed 500 copies of Bernhard’s book, and why it might have been a good decision to print 20,000 copies or perhaps ten times as much, of an amusing novel by an author whose books already sold very well in the United States: “Because every capitalist reckons his capital in money terms, he engages in production in order to increase it in terms of money. If he fails, he has not employed his capital capitalistically, that is, he has not increased its value. Unaware of the actual use-value production requirements of social existence, capitalists strive for the maximum of exchange value, as the only criterion for success of their operations; if they succeed in their endeavours, they have by that token also satisfied capitalistically determined social needs in terms of use value. If they do not succeed, their capital, insofar as it is not lost, must be differently engaged in order to function as capital. Thus it is the amassing of exchange value, or its universal equivalent, money, that serves as the allocator [...]” (Mattick 20)

may not count him among the progressives) who is *good*?

How do you drag down a public until things are trivialized and its sense of beauty, its taste for the good, its awareness of issues that matter, are finally truly corrupted? Isn't it the market that is doing the work, the dirty job? No, behind the market are those who defend it. But they, we know, also obey its rude "logic".

It is the market that largely conditions *the reality of much literary production* today. And due to all the inequalities that the world market has produced and that it continues day by day to produce, the reality we encounter as a result *affects contemporary writers and readers*. And this it to say, all of us, as concrete, historically and socio-culturally situated (rather than merely abstract, kind of 'ideal-type') readers.¹⁰⁸ For it marginalizes literatures, relegating them to the club of minor literatures, and it privileges others, or segments of others¹⁰⁹ – and this in different forms, by bestowing big sales on some writers and treacherous praise on others. This is true on the international scale, and it is true within national markets. Today, it cannot be questioned that Anglophone publishers are dominant; they market what they prefer at home, what they *think* will sell, and what they *want* to sell. It is they who decide what to translate into English. And their strategies of selling rights determined largely what literature written in English reaches the rest of the world. By comparison, on the international scale, Irish literature, German and French literature, Italian and Russian literature, even Chinese and Spanish literature are marginalized, to say nothing of books in Malayalam, or Ewe, Shona, or other little-known languages.

But this is not all there is to it. The market, according to its logic, wants big numbers, economics of scale. Godard was right, given the conditions today, the real relations of forces, when he said that *the idea of art for the masses* (and this includes of course film as an art form as well as the theatre, music, poetry, the short story and the novel) *is an idea of the capitalists*.¹¹⁰ Yes, but the idea has more than a commercial side to it; the East Bloc - *whatever its flaws* - showed us again and again that when you want to, you can print quality books – art books, children's books, poetry, novels – in big editions. Why don't publishers betting today on bestsellers promote good books and then print a lot of them, well-designed and on good paper? Instead, they tend to push trash for the masses, the way the "pusher man" pushes heroin. Those seduced must become caught by the product, their money matters, the price they pay for cultural heroin.

The effects of television on the sensitivity and the comprehension of reality by the masses cannot be doubted. What does this imply with regard to bestsellers – "literature for the masses"? What does it imply for the cinema, for film as an art form? It is not only the commercial aspect that interests me here, it's the fact that *more than ever in history* currents in literature are pushed to the sidelines because cultural products for the "masses" are designed to appeal to the lowest common denominator. We hear that it guarantees commercial success, but the side-effect is imbecility and vulgarity, among the captured segment of the market, and this is a large one. Is that side-effect intended as well? Those who control production and distribution

108 We may note here that the approach of Jauss and Iser, referred to as "reception aesthetics" (Rezeptionsästhetik) by these renowned German scholars, presupposes the idea of an *abstract* reader. This approach has been justly critiqued by Magdi Youssef as a reflection of the idealism inscribed in the "orientation herméutique de l'école de Constance." (See the editor's note appended to the paper of Andreas Pflitsch, in: Magdi Youssef, ed., *The Contemporary Arab Contribution to World Culture*, forthcoming.) Youssef contrasts the theoretical approach of the Constance School with his own theory that starts out from a concept of *active* reception (of texts, plays, etc.) by *concrete* readers respectively audiences who belong to a socio-cultural entity – for instance, in the case of a play by Brecht performed in a Nile delta town, to an Arab socio-culture – and who may well organize their reception processes according to their own "real needs" when they choose to receive such a foreign play actively. Youssef rejects a merely philological approach and demands its insertion into an interdisciplinary approach that should take the socio-cultural and politico-economic determinants of an active reception process on the part of a concrete (thus concretely situated) readership or audience into account.

109 What this means becomes obvious when you cannot get certain books or films *as a customer* (the one who according to the dominant ideology determines what you can buy). None of the bookstores in the area where I live could order a book by Paul Dakeyo for me. The absence of his works in public libraries is also conspicuous.

110 Godard was aware of the fact that cultural industry, in Late Capitalism, is addressing the masses; it is no longer elitist, it seduces, it "entertains", it distracts, it created false needs and false desires. And therefore, Godard was critiquing commercial ways of targeting the masses, cheap art (including cinema) churned out for "merely" the masses. And that means that he was not critiquing the activity of the masses when they begin to make art. Therefore, the quotation on the front cover of the journal *Filmkritik* (Munich) - "Godard: Die Kunst der Massen ist eine Idee der Kapitalisten" - (*Filmkritik*, April 1969), which we must translate as "The art of the masses is an idea of the capitalists," is misleading, due to its ambivalence. The kind of art the masses are offered and supplied with (if at all) by Capitalist companies is the problem. The prevailing positive view of the masses among the French literary as well as film-and art-focused Left of the 1960s and 70s was in fact expressed by Alain Bergalam when he spoke of the "langage riche et vivant des masses." He had in mind the vernacular of the subaltern classes, to the extent that they have not adopted and internalized the language of the media, but preserved a measure of authenticity. Indeed, it could turn out that their language was "rich and lively": expressive, authentic, thoughtful, revealing a historical consciousness, an awareness of the problems of the present, but also of its beautiful aspects, and an otherwise rare belief in the possibility to create a different future.

keep telling us about anthropological constants: Man does not want to think, it is painful. Man is coarse. The inane attracts more people than the thoughtful. Most people are like that, wake up to this fact. – But what if stupidity and inanity and coarseness are *produced*? What if violence in our violent world is also produced?

Eduardo Galeano says, “The consumer society, that consumes human beings, forces human beings to consume while television teaches scholars and alphabets a lesson in violence. Those who have nothing are far away from those who have everything, and still they can look at their place, by way of the little screen. Television celebrates the extravagance of consumption, and simultaneously it teaches the art to get access to it through bullets. Reality imitates television, violence in the streets is the continuation of television by other means. Street kids practice the private initiative of crime, the only field in which they are allowed to develop.”(Galeano 184) Can we deny that he makes a point?

Today, the literatures of the world, for the most part, are in the hands of a publishing industry that has experienced, like all industries, the effects of mergers, fusions, buy-outs, and the disappearance of even old and renowned publishing houses that once were founded as a family business that maintained a certain liberal or conservative “ethos” within the dominant cultural sphere – many even taking pride in what they regarded as the quality of their “intellectual and aesthetic products.” All of this is disappearing fast. Old-style capitalism has become largely a thing of the past. This is so because *the logic of the market* has led to enormous concentration of capital in almost all the important sectors of the “globalized” or world economy, affecting one sector after the other – the most profitable first of all.¹¹¹ And thus, even in peripheral regional markets of the world that are exposed to global hegemonic domination, the prevailing economic dynamics have brought about *increasing homogeneity* of market segments. And this implies apparently, within the so-called “cultural industry,” a certain homogenization of typical “cultural” products. Marketability counts. Competition remains a fact, even in oligopolistic Late Capitalism. Damrosch has alerted us to the trends that lead to *the phenomenon of successful and coveted translators* who know how to adapt novels from different corners of the world to a taste that is defined *by a mass market* – a high volume market, as they call it – that is close and dear to major Western publishers, and thus, *by what* – if not middle-class expectations, sensitivities, and prejudices in the U.S.A.? And then, translations of – say, Chinese novels – follow everywhere, in Germany, in Spain, in France, in South America: based on the American adaptation that has already proved so successful in the home market. Is this what we conventionally refer to as the “Americanization” of much of the post-WWII world, in the sphere of literature?¹¹² Such homogenization obviously contradicts ideological claims that assert the contrary: added variety, the presence of manifold products, and “differentiation.” As we see, the tendency towards more standardization and homogenization is not limited to material “consumer goods” – but indeed affects (*increasingly!*) all fields of the intellectual and material culture of the regions exposed to such overwhelming hegemonic impact. This impoverishes cultures and makes them more “standardized” or “normalized” than ever.¹¹³

Yes, there are still small publishers, some admirable and courageous. But by and large, their existence,

111 Winfried Wolf has noted what he calls “zerstörerische Auswirkungen von Globalisierung und Kapitalkonzentration”, i. e. destructive consequences of globalization and capital concentration (Wolf 18). He also notes that in the history of capital concentration it never was the purely quantitative aspect *how much capital had been accumulated* (in US dollars, Pound Sterling, French francs, German marks, Yen etc.) that mattered, but *the question who* (respectively which corporation, which country, etc.) *controls a specific sector of real material production.*(Wolf 14) Thus we may ask us today “who” controls the news agencies, the media, the film and television sector to a large and probably overwhelming extent – and this very nearly on a global scale. Who dominates? Really internationalized capital? Or U.S. economic “elites”? Don’t we have to look for an answer to this question in the U.S.A.? And in which big cities do we have to look for the important publishers that make themselves felt internationally? Where, if not in New York, London, and perhaps also Boston, with secondary centers in Amsterdam and Paris?

112 Peter L. Berger is not only admitting that “[t]here is indeed an emerging global culture, and it is indeed heavily American in origin and content. (Berger 2) Berger also makes us, willy-nilly, aware of something else: It is no “innocent” fact that American translations of literary works serve increasingly as the starting point for secondary translations, because “people do not use language innocently. Every language carries with it a cultural freight of cognitive, normative, and even emotional connotations,” as Berger notes (Berger 3) And now we all get the cultural freight of 20th and 21st century American English as inbuilt contraband when we read secondary translations (say in German) of – let’s say – Chinese novels.

113 Such homogeneity, that had already – at least tendentially – increased under absolutism and in the bourgeois ‘nation-state’ (in Europe), and that is acerbated in our era of ‘globalization’, was not always the dominant social reality and must not be taken as something that is ‘a naturally given social fact.’ The ethnologist and sociologist Georg Elvert has shown that *diverse* cultural forms – for instance of coping with conflict – have existed side by side in one and the same society, for instance in 19th and 20th century Benin.(Eckert 26) Similar coexistence of different cultural forms can be deciphered in Imperial China with regard to Confucian and Taoist ethics and their practical application.

side by side with the big players in the market, does not produce a heterogeneity of literature that is - quantitatively and in terms of social impact - comparable to the coexistence of different schools of philosophical literature in ancient China or Greek antiquity. The diversity that the big players can afford to permit, due to considerations of the market (thus when promoting and gauging likely demand) is a very limited one; the currents outside this trend are minimal in their real effect, at least at the moment – and certainly much more restricted than they were, in the West or in, let's just say China, during the 1930s and '40s.

Marketing means assessing the publics, worldwide, and it matters greatly who can pay with relative ease. Such a logic of the market that supplies vast numbers of 'middle-class consumers' with what is – by and large – a product that must sell well, and that is designed accordingly, in order to be easily consumed, appears to result more and more in an alienating “internationalization of national literatures” (Sáez Delgado 151) under the direction of globally dominant media and publishing houses, while it leaves others illiterate, or destitute: without libraries, book shops, and books. It lets writers penniless and turns others into members of the club of the rich. It marginalizes entire countries.

Thinking of countertrends and real diversity in the sphere of culture, the *nouvelle vague* came to mind, New Taiwan Cinema and Das Neue Deutsche Kino of Fassbinder, Schroeter, and others. Also West German “politicized” literature of the 1960s and 70s, and socially committed realist literature in Taiwan during the '70s. I think it is no wonder that all of these vanished. Today, films by Godard are practically boycotted in the West. It should let us ask whether similar trends can be felt in the field of literature.

But what made such fruitful phenomena possible when they bloomed? What unites literatures as distinct as say the New German Literature of the 1960s and '70s and oppositional *xiangtu wenxue* of roughly the same period in Taiwan?

Both developed in a context of anti-authoritarian contest, both spearheaded the effort of a largely rebellious generation, and both learned from it, and sought to express it. It is clear that the two literary currents were both literary and social; thus socio-cultural expressions of resistance to a status quo. And they negated and sought to sublimate earlier and contemporary literary practices of writing – and practices of receiving written literary texts! – that asserted the autonomy of literature. Such autonomy had been interpreted by those who embraced it, *not* as an autonomous revolt against the powers that be, *but* as the autonomy of those content to ignore real things in the real world, ready to leave them as they are, as long as the innocent, supposedly radical writing (as an act of “writing for its own sake”) could be enjoyed. And this by the creator of the text in the context of creation, and by the autonomous reader (sheltered from concerns regarding the outside world, the extraliterary world), as long as he could submerge herself or himself *in the act of reading, as such*.

Here, we have a chance to turn concrete. What did the ones, and what the others, stand for? What did they covet, what hidden interests in the preservation or overcoming of the status-quo were tacitly in play? Those who speak of beauty as such and for its own sake, should not limit beauty to the beauty of words, of images painted or captured by the camera; they should also see the beauty of what is outside art, and should be ready to become painfully aware of the fact that it is absent and denied so often in real life. The texts that speak *of beauty, and its absence*, relate! And this to an outside world. That has been – and perhaps for long – the starting point or premise of all radical poetry, drama, and prose. Here we find the roots of *the humanist and progressive strands* of the diverse and specific literatures that form, in their ensemble, the most hopeful movements of “world literature.” Let us not close our eyes to the fact that this “world literature”, like the world it reflects (a class-divided world), is a literature characterized by antagonism, where the committed clash with the lukewarm and with explicit as well as implicit proponents of an unequal, unjust, and in many respects grossly deficient if not irrational social order.

Today, world literature, if it is to be more than the reflection of market power in a globalized book market, has to move beyond the diktat of the market.

It needs to reflect – without doubt, in many ways – the shared aspiration that humanity must be saved and must save itself.

As a world literature that transcends that which is, it will amount to a concert of voices – attached to the *concrete*, aware of *history*, of *traditions*, linked to a *place*, a *time*, *specific needs of specific people*.

In that way, it is needed – within every socio-culture of the world. And as exchange, among them, for the sake of mankind, the sake of all who exist “within the four seas”. And therefore, let me point out the need of critical “self-reflection of the period with regard to its struggles and wishes... It can only be the work of a united effort.”(Marx:346) The writers of the world, whatever their (socio-)cultural backgrounds and their languages used, are needed in this respect.

Let us give up no one. Let us believe in fellow writers, in publics – even if they find themselves exposed to temptations of success – the ones, and shallow entertainment, the others.

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