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Co-Implicated Literatures in East-Central Europe

Joseph Roth's *The Radetzky March* and Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge over the Drina*

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Abstract. World literature can only come into being against the background of what it excludes from its area, but in the form in which it is rendered today, it denies that its representatives are not easily implicated in their non-representative counterparts. To examine the asymmetric relationship between world literature's uneven but co-implicated constituents, the article focuses on the East-Central European post-imperial constellation whose writers were traumatized by the collapse of their empires. It confronts two narratives of disaster, Joseph Roth's novel *The Radetzky March* written from the perspective of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's rulers, and Ivo Andrić's novel *The Bridge over the Drina* written from the perspective of imperial subjects. For Roth, who focuses on a military Austrian family, the Empire entered its disintegration when its children renounced their fathers. For Andrić, who departs from the political family of the South Slavs, that took place when its authorities abandoned their subjects. The article analyses the two novels' seemingly opposite but ultimately co-implicated answers to this trauma.

Keywords: world literature, co-implication, empire, paternal relationship, post-empire.

World literature and denied discrimination

Voltaire's idea of the World Republic of Letters, which laid the foundation for Goethe's idea of world literature, has a neglected but illuminating prehistory. It did not spring from nothing but was prepared by the French moralist writers who connected on the horizon-widening tradition of the ancient Greek 'care of the self'.[1] After the moralists had revivified the old-Greek emancipation of the human self from inherited prejudices, the encyclopaedists resumed and broadened their liberating project. However, unlike the successors who canonized this project, their predecessors had still been aware of its exclusive, discriminatory character. For example, Michel de Montaigne remarked: "The destinies of half the world stay where they are and, for want of record,

1 See Foucault, *On the Government*.

do not last but vanish".[2] "Fair deeds without number must be wasted, unwitnessed, before one of them proves profitable".[3] On the one hand, he did caution that our comfortable habits "lull to sleep" "our judgment's power to see things";[4] so, if we want to pursue the truth of these things, we must get rid of habitual constraints. But on the other hand, he warned that those who possess the desire, courage, and means to inquire into this truth—Foucault's 'courage of truth'[5]—should not pretend to be superior to those who do not possess them: "human reason is a dye spread more or less equally through all the opinions and all the manners of us humans, which are infinite in matter and infinite in diversity".[6] Each of us, wherever s/he happens to be located, is no more than "a tiny, feint point" in "the mighty idea of Mother Nature in her total majesty"[7] and constant variety and is, therefore, bereft of authority to derogate the restricted horizons of others.

Yet, precisely this is what the enlightened truth-seekers as epitomized by Voltaire tend to do. Usurping divine attributes, they adopt a know-it-all attitude. Nevertheless, from the very beginnings of Western civilization, their commitment to the truth was considered indispensable. Thus, the educated Greeks refused to take the Olymp gods' rendering of events for granted, engaging human truth-seekers to counterbalance it. They regarded gods as biased as humans, both requiring a careful weighing of their truths.[8] Already Homer epitomizes the Greek 'dialectical' striving to "observe one and the same thing from opposite sides".[9] This explains why, in *The Odyssey*, the Phaeacian king Alcinous invites Odysseus to present his truth of the fight in Troy against that of the divine singer Demodocus.[10] Because delivered on behalf of gods who caused the city's destruction, Demodocus' report could have been prejudiced. But Odysseus, who is invited to correct it, is himself an epitome of cunning intelligence (*metis*) that camouflages, disguises, and postpones the truth. Since the latter hurts those who face it, not everybody is willing and able to seek it. In ancient Greece, such search was "the symbol of social superiority" or "the advantage conferred by wealth, status, and birth",[11] meaning that slaves, women and barbarians, forced to perform hard labour outside the polis's agora, were excluded

2 Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, 713.

3 Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, 707.

4 Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, 126.

5 See Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*.

6 Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, 126.

7 Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, 177.

8 See Foucault, *On the Government*, 43.

9 Arendt, *Was ist Politik?*, 96, trans. mine.

10 See Homer, *The Odyssey,* VIII, 541–49.

11 Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 493.

from it. Coerced into subordination, they were disqualified *a priori* from Odysseus's cultivated 'care of the self' and sentenced to create the conditions of its possibility.

When discussing Odysseus's outwitting of the Sirens, Horkheimer and Adorno pointed out in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*[12] that his search for truth implied the immobilized sailors having to row in the lower deck. He could never afford it without the assistance of his sailors who, after binding him with his broad-open ears to the ship's mast, continued their service with clogged ears. Their deaf bondage gave rise to his sublime pleasure in listening to the Sirens' enchanting song. Recall that, in Dante's *Divine Comedy,* Odysseus first invites his sailors to abandon their 'lives as brutes' and to follow the 'proper' human need for knowledge;[13] but thereafter he unhesitatingly betrays them by driving them into the 'world without humans' (*mondo sanza gente*).[14] So, he confirms his reputation of an immoral manipulator who convinced Achilles to join the Trojan War, leaving behind his pregnant and heartbroken wife to die of grief; and who stole the statue of Pallas that protected the city from its enemies.

Whenever literature shows the ambition to 'world' itself, it has to pay this price: while it worlds one group of its agencies, it rivets others to their earthly confines, thus bereaving them of its blessing. But the carriers of world literature tended to disregard that their worlding implicates others' earthing, i.e., they deprive others of the right to the world. In *Being and Time* (or. 1927), Heidegger rendered this deprivation as *Entweltlichung* or "unworlding". In a manner that he has significantly dubbed "presumptuous handling" (*vermessender Umgang*), this process allocates the things of the world to a mathematically measurable space of earthly facts.[15] The very term *vermessender Umgang* associates the *Landvermesser* or land surveyors whose task is to reduce the elusive depth of the world to the calculable surface of Earth. Significantly, five years before the publication of Heidegger's influential study, Kafka's novel *The Castle* (1922) introduced a *Landvermesser* as its hero. It seems that in the aftermath of the First World War 'the age of the world picture'[16] entered the scene of history, turning the ready-at-hand things which people had earlier used to *identify with*, into calculable and manipulable items which people henceforth used to *identify as* abstract commodities. Everyone became the operator of this marketing operation with the exception of its engineers who shaped and set it in motion. As its uttermost beneficiaries, they pulled themselves out of its application.

12 See Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, 34–36.

13 See Dante, *Inferno*, XXVI, 112–20.

14 Dante, *Inferno*, XXVI, 117.

15 See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 111.

16 Heidegger, *The Age*.

In the realm of literature, the role of such standard-setters was allocated to the authors of exceptional works, whose self-exempting operations had as their consequence the historical and geopolitical positioning and ranking of their non-exceptional counterparts. Kant states that their unique law can only be established through the detachment from the rest of the works with which they consistently disidentify.[17] Such 'reflective judgment' sets them apart from other works, which become the foils of their relentless self-cultivation. Their degradation in Kant's aesthetics anticipates his later political philosophy that, in its turn, derogates 'ordinary man' as an irresponsible and selfish fellow. For his 'natural' inclination toward self-sufficiency to be corrected, he must be subjected to the "condition of compulsion" (*Zustand des Zwanges*, trans. modified) that "break[s] his self-will and force[s] him to obey a universally valid will under which everyone can be free".[18] To become free, individuals must steadily cultivate their ability of self-reflection. Conceived as an interminable 'reasoning on reasoning', reflective judgment is this ability's epitome. In Kant's opinion, only very rare individuals are fully up to it; it is far from being appropriate for 'ordinary men' that are riveted to their earthly confines.[19] The only way to make use of these for the higher goals of humankind is to implement them as negative foils. The same holds for ordinary literary works.

It is against this background that Goethe's idea of world literature should be interpreted. Its elitism is no less baffling than Kant's—and has nevertheless been ignored by its recent promoters. Goethe, for example, claims that "Chinese, Indian, and Egyptian antiquities are always just curiosities; it is recommendable to make oneself and the world acquainted with them, but they would not be especially fruitful for our moral and aesthetic formation".[20] This is the reason why "Orientals", in his view, can never stand comparison with the Greeks and Romans.[21] They simply belong to different categories, since Orientals represent false or transient values, while Greeks and Romans are true or deep. The same holds for *Naturdichtung*: original but primitive, it can be reasonably exploited only as raw material. In sum, 'proper writers' use Oriental literatures outside and within Europe merely for rude *orientation*. Goethe advises them to "appropriate what is good, as far as we can".[22] 'Orientals' remain up for arbitrary grabs for their European mentors who take advantage of their motives, but certainly not of their language, discourse, or style. More recently, David Damrosch has embraced this attitude:

17 See Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 138–39.

18 Kant, *Political Writings*, 46.

19 See Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 45, 136–37.

20 Goethe, *Schriften zur Weltliteratur*, 284, trans. mine.

21 See Goethe, *Schriften zur Weltliteratur*, 174.

22 Goethe, *Schriften zur Weltliteratur*, 250, trans. mine.

> "Certainly some works are so culture-bound that they can be meaningful to a home-grown audience and specialists in the area […] "[T]hose texts remain within the realm of their original national or regional culture".[23]

Ultimately and certainly unwillingly, both Goethe and Damrosch subscribe to Hannah Arendt's cynical proposal that for "humanity as a whole" to prosper, "it would be better to liquidate certain parts thereof".[24] Arendt believes that no one can be free alone but merely "together with his equals and *only* with his equals".[25] However 'inhuman' they might appear to be, Derrida adds, other humans with whom we share the world are constitutive parts of our existence; therefore, our much-cherished freedom is in fact bereft of autonomy.[26] Because the 'free' part of the world, despite its denial, is deeply implicated in the 'unfreedom' of the other part, it cannot avoid facing this haunting legacy.

Centre and province in the East-Central European post-imperial constellation

Taking this into account, I propose to examine in more detail what kind of unintended cohabitation emerges in one and the same political constellation, between the aspirants to the status of 'world literature' and their disregarded but indispensable 'earthly' counterparts. For example, after the disintegration of its empires, the East-Central European political space was characterized by a permanent clash of its successor states' universal and its new states' national claims. In the subsequent competition, neither the successor states nor the new ones enjoyed equal starting positions, which was the source of the permanent frustration of their politically and economically underprivileged and deeply affected their attitude to the representatives of the other category. It is in this context that Milica Bakić-Hayden introduced her influential concept of 'nesting orientalisms':[27] frustration in the relationship with one's 'family members' proliferates frustrations in relationships with 'foreigners'. Thus, after the partition of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation into the Protestant northern and Catholic southern parts in 1806, and especially after the defeat of Austria by Prussian forces at the Battle of Königgrätz in 1866, the Austrians felt persistently irritated by the supremacy of their German 'brothers'. They started to heal this inferiority complex through what was called "Austro-Slavism", a 'generous' mission of civilizing the Slavs that had been exposed to harsh exploitation for long centuries.

23 Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, 2.

24 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 299.

25 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 301.

26 See Derrida, *Rogues*, 152.

27 Bakić-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms."

One of the proponents of this revised attitude toward the underprivileged was the prominent Austrian writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal who, during the wartime, replaced his previous attachment to the German Enlightenment ideals of liberalism and education with a new attachment to the underprivileged Slavs. He began to identify with these victims of long-term discrimination not only as an Austrian who felt discriminated against by the Germans but also as an assimilated Jew, whose Jewishness suddenly became exposed by his Austrian co-citizens. Reorienting his attachment in this way, Hofmannsthal in fact resumed Herder's regenerative attitude to the Slavs as representatives of an infantile, mythic phase of human history who have to be preserved and taken care of. It was through such protection that Herder, analogously, intended to heal the German wounds of the time. Instead of expelling the Slavs, both Hofmannsthal and Herder permitted them to integrate into humanity, yet only on condition of sticking to their far remote collective origins. For, according to Herder, "[d]espite their incidental deeds, they were never as undertaking, belligerent, and adventurous a people as the Germans; they rather tacitly followed behind them, occupying the emptied places and lands".[28] Because nature has denied them "nobler gifts", attributing to them a terrible "slavish inertia", they have taken up "a much larger space on Earth than in history".[29]

Hofmannsthal tacitly shares this denigrating opinion, following Herder in approaching Slavs as an amorphous agglomeration, i.e., seeing them as an ethnic, linguistic, and cultural *area* rather than a group of *distinct languages and cultures*. The more indistinct they are, the better they fit his remedial invocation of the Austro-Hungarian emperor's lost fatherly protection. Thus, in his lyric comedy *Arabella*, the Croatian Mandryka figures as a generous landowner and master of a harmonious multiethnic community. His small provincial world is rendered in idyllic familial terms, like the incomparably bigger one of the Emperor that Mandryka speaks of as if he was his parent.[30] But like each utopia, here the setting is also elevated to an extraterritorial sphere—"Hungary or Wallachia" or maybe "Sissek" or "Slavonia"[31]—because one does not invent "noble savages" in their interest but for the sake of one's therapy. How murky was the idea of the Croatian province in Hofmannsthal's mind is testified by Octavian's reply to the Field Marshal's wife at the very beginning of his *Rosenkavalier.* Octavian is calming her fears that her husband will suddenly interrupt her amorous activities with the lover, assuring her that he is now hunting somewhere in the "Croatian forest" "behind Esseg in the Raitzenland".[32]

28 Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie*, 696, trans. mine.

29 Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie*, 696–98, trans. mine.

30 See Hofmannsthal *Arabella*, 546.

31 Hofmannsthal, *Arabella*, 525, 537, 545.

32 Hofmannsthal, *Rosenkavalier*, 14, trans. mine.

However, in Habsburg times, the term *Raitzenland* referred to the Orthodox parts of Vojvodina, religiously and culturally completely different from Catholic Croatia, which from the Western perspective was, in addition, *in front of* Esseg. Nevertheless, Hofmannsthal did not have to fear that the geopolitical confusion would shock Viennese theatre goers because they were equally ignorant. Turned into the mystical *mythomoteurs* of their Austrian inventors, provincial savages were generally deprived of the right to individuality. Their difference was accepted only to the extent to which its inferiority nurtured their masters' feeling of superiority, such as for example Mandryka's rudeness, clumsiness, naivety, bad German, and bad manners. Obviously, Hofmannsthal's delineated 'paternal despotism' was omnipresent in Austrian interwar literature when he composed his *Arabella*.[33]

Joseph Roth's *The Radetzky March* and Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge over the Drina*

It is in the context of the 'self-evident' asymmetry between the post-imperial centre and the periphery that I will focus on the two novelists of the outgoing Austro-Hungarian Empire, Joseph Roth and Ivo Andrić, who in *The Radetzky March* (1932) and *The Bridge over the Drina* (1942) portray the disintegration of their empires out of the central and peripheral traumas that were inflicted by it.[34] It is the first major difference that while Roth's novel emerges in a major language and literary tradition that, after the political partition of Austria and Germany, managed to culturally reconnect these countries, Andrić's novel emerges in significantly smaller and conflict-ridden languages and traditions that, after the collapse of Yugoslavia, triggered the separation of South Slav peoples. In fact, *The Bridge over the Drina* settles accounts of the two imperial political formations on South Slav soil, the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian, both of which, in accordance with the imperial tradition, tended to downplay ethnic, religious, and cultural differences between locals for the benefit of their family unity. The same 'familial attitude' to their populace was resumed by the two new states that emerged after the collapse of the Dual Monarchy. Both the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and the subsequent Kingdom of Yugoslavia were shaped on the family principle, i.e., united by and ruled in terms of the 'parental' language of their state administrations. This language—Serbo-Croatian—was officially not considered national but 'common', which implied that it operated in the interest of all state residents rather than particular ethnicities.

33 See Kożuchowski, *The Afterlife of Austria-Hungary*, 72–77.

34 In the following, I am recontextualizing and revising my previous argument (see Biti, "Past Empire(s)").

It was Joseph II's introduction of German replacing Latin as the language of the Empire's administration that established linguistic uniformity as a prerequisite for the family of peoples' political cohesion, efficiency, and expediency. It relied on the following tacit principle of behaviour: Only the imperial collectivities that succumb to the envisaged linguistic standardization are proper, i.e., progressive and modern state family members. Those that remain loyal to their mother tongues confine themselves to their ethnic spaces, excluding themselves from the general progress of civilization. Since the Austrians spoke imperial German, they did not experience themselves in ethnic but rather in civic terms, which is why, from their point of view, it was solely the non-German speakers that were entrapped in ethnic backwardness.[35] Since the native tongues of these speakers, although officially recognized, were considered 'tribal' and incomprehensible, they never became proper 'citizens of the state'. They were faced with the choice: either their 'tribe' and its 'barbarous' tongue or humanity. Could this choice, in each and every case, be considered free?

This is where Roth's and Andrić's novels part their ways. Although born and raised as an Austrian Jew in the Austro-Hungarian Empire's uttermost province, namely in the Ukrainian–Russian frontier region, Roth refused both the retrograde and fanatic Jewishness and the stubborn self-enclosure of his Ukrainian co-citizens. He joined the enlightened orientation of progressive Jewish intellectuals who, in the aftermath of Joseph II's linguistic reform, firmly attached themselves to the German language, aiming at Jewish assimilation into humanity.[36] At the turn of the century, however, when Roth arrived in Vienna, Austrian national feelings were suddenly taking centre stage, which left him alone and exposed in his Jewishness. The liberal project was destined to failure and the Empire to its breakdown. The proliferation of ethnic passions throughout the imperial provinces endangered the Austrians' comfortable feeling of being at home in the entire territory of the Empire. Provincial residents refused the Austrian 'generosity', insisting on their ethnic distinction. Note that the Austrian officers in the novel must additionally suppress their provincial roots, like Roth himself did, which invigorates their contempt for such ideas. In their denigrating view, 'tribal' languages and cultures, fixed to local boundaries and entrapped into the labyrinths of everyday petty battles, are bereft of the right to distinction.

For instance, District Commissioner Trotta refuses his son's wish to continue his military service at the Empire's "southern frontier" in Slovenia, directing him instead to its "northern sister" Ukraine.[37] First of all, thereby he follows the rule that an Austrian officer must remain cut off from his place of origin.[38] Second, regardless

35 See Cornwall, "The Habsburg Monarchy," 174–76.

36 See Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*, 134–36.

37 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 138.

38 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 138.

of who 'signs' his geographical disorientation in the imperial space, the narrator or he himself, this testifies to a complete disinterest in distinguishing between the provinces since, at that time, the Empire's southern frontier was Dalmatia, while Ukraine was its "eastern" rather than "northern sister". As a matter of fact, the Emperor's servants were not expected or even allowed to distinguish between the various Slav provinces and 'tribes'. The latter were not addressed individually but merely as an indistinct ethnic agglomeration, i.e., "Slavs" rather than "Russians or Serbs".[39] This is why District Commissioner Trotta resolutely refused the national claims of "Slav tribes," treating them as a revolutionary disobedience by ignorant "sons" to their benevolent father.[40] Using his present ethnic environment as a metonymy for all such barbarians, he identifies all rebels with "unruly, stubborn and stupid" Czechs who proliferate everywhere.[41]

Trotta increasingly sees the world in the same amorphous manner as the Emperor himself does, who, in the "crystalline armour" of his "icy and everlasting, silver and dreadful old age",[42] perceives Ukrainian Jews as the "strange black grain in the wind".[43] Why in God's name, he is wondering, is this "black rout" approaching him while he, immersed in his thoughts, is riding his horse.[44] The Emperor had a feeling as if he was drifting away from them, as though they were all shrinking and "the things they said reached his ear from a vast distance and then bounced away meaninglessly".[45] This growing distance from his subjects renders him unable to listen carefully to his visitors and interlocutors. Instead, remote and unapproachable in his utter isolation, he casts at them a tough and freezing glance.[46] During an inspection of his troops in Ukraine, he thus promotes an Olmütz barber from corporal to sergeant completely against the man's will and wish. Although by doing so he destroys the barber's life, the narrator presents him as extremely pleased at having accomplished a great deed and making the barber happy.[47]

While unreservedly committed to Trotta, his dislocated officers display an analogously radical solitude in the provinces that he has allocated them to, demonstrating the Emperor's humiliating disregard for the locals in an even stronger form. Is the proliferation of desperate insular lives an unavoidable corollary of the inimical interdependence

39 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 154.

40 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 155.

41 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 252.

42 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 75, trans. modified.

43 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 242.

44 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 242–43.

45 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 243.

46 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 75.

47 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 242.

of the imperial centre and its peripheries? Relations between characters in *The Radetzky March* seem to be suggesting so. Transfers between the centre and its peripheries take place both between and within respective groups, which disrupts their much-desired homogeneity. Anytime they may be threatened by geographic or historical 'intruders'. As regards historical intruders, the Emperor's officials perceive Commissioner Trotta as if having come "from a historically distant province".[48] As for geographic intruders, they are scattered everywhere. In fact, once cut off from their geographic, social, cultural, and linguistic roots, all imperial officials were compelled to live a lonely and dislocated settler's lives. The development of their careers affiliated them to locations that they had no emotional attachment to, and that, in their turn, regarded them as strangers incapable of understanding local customs and habits.

Thus, Commissioner Trotta's grandson, Lieutenant Carl Joseph, was transferred to the 'penal colony' of the borderland between Ukraine and Russia on account of his most embarrassing misconduct in the imperial centre.[49] In the region's small towns, streets had no names and houses had no numbers.[50] This "forgotten world," covered by the "dust of centuries" and accompanied by the "incessant fat chirruping of frogs",[51] aggravated the amorphousness of provinces from which the Trottas were at continuous pains to keep a distance. When Commissioner Trotta undertook a journey to it, he packed a revolver to protect himself from bears and wolves, one of the numerous perils that endangered a "civilized Austrian" in this region.[52] Ukrainian residents resolutely resisted all the democratic changes characteristic of the centre.[53] This uttermost dislocation that hosted the "last of all the stations in the Monarchy"[54] swallowed the lives of uninitiated newcomers, soldiers, and officers,[55] while the natives commuted across it as "living ghosts" "jammed in" between "East and West," "day and night",[56] and struggling to come to grips with its unbearably fuzzy rules. How could Lieutenant Trotta, coming from the Austrian centre, possibly understand this godforsaken transit zone crisscrossed by the most diverse of earthly interests as embodied in its inhabitants' trading, smuggling, negotiating, catering, usury, and spying activities? He reacted with the same dumb incomprehension that characterized the inhabitants' reaction to him.

48 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 302.

49 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 167.

50 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 143.

51 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 141, 222.

52 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 167.

53 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 184.

54 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 142.

55 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 141.

56 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 139.

Joseph Roth chose to detach himself from these 'frontier men' by attaching himself to the language and culture of the centre. As testified by Commissioner Trotta's remark, the centre regarded Ukrainian Jews as ordinary thieves who waged "an incessant campaign of rapine" against foreign property and belongings.[57] As portrayed in the novel, Ukrainian Jews had no doubt that with the Empire's breakup they were approaching catastrophe.[58] Indeed, when Ukraine lost the Emperor's protection, the Jewish destiny in the godforsaken periphery was disastrous. The *provincial* solitude of Ukraine in terms of the Empire—the very name of Ukraine means something marginal, at the edge of visibility—drove its Jews into an even more frightening *ethnic* solitude in their godforsaken province. If the Austrians regularly confused Ukrainian identity, in its insignificance, with other provincial identities, in a defence reaction against this accumulated denigration, the Ukrainians clearly demarcated the identity of their Jews, stigmatizing them and sentencing them to extermination. Therefore, was Roth's attachment to the German linguistic and cultural tradition not only an escape from his Jewish compatriots' bad reputation but also from their impending erasure? Unfortunately, like his characters, the Austrian officers who fail to repudiate their origins, Roth merely drew closer to what he was trying to escape. As we know, after having fled the growing antisemitism in Austria, he finished his novel in Weimar Germany shortly before the Nazis seized power. Rather than becoming a 'proper' German writer, he was forcefully relegated back to his denied Jewish origins.

Joseph Roth also failed in his attempt to detach himself from his protagonists. Although in composing the novel he acts as a typical epic narrator cut off from his protagonists, as they do not belong to his world anymore, and entrusting his account of their lives (in the time-span from 1859-1914) to his present readership (1932), he never stops reminding us of this temporal gap, using it to make ironic comments about the protagonists' shortsightedness and naivety. They stubbornly avert their eyes from the approaching catastrophe of their Empire.[59] By presenting his characters as sheer toys of fortune whose design he comes to realize after two decades, Roth revivifies an outdated literary technique. Hofmannsthal did the same in his lyric comedy *Arabella* (finished in the same year as *The Radetzky March*), into which he introduces the fortune-teller, in the same way as the German playwright Bertolt Brecht included the interpreter in his contemporaneous 'epic theatre'. This deliberately 'pre-modern' refashioning of the modern literary and theatrical genres finds its explanation in the fatalist atmosphere of the 1930s, after the First World War had destroyed the nineteenth century's optimistic belief in the human shaping

57 Roth, *The Radetzky March,* 167.

58 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 243.

59 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 98, 133, 212, 247, 269.

of history. Before the war, this utopia was getting darker in the imperial provinces' godforsaken inertia, which horrifies the narrator of Roth's novel and leaves an indelible impact on him.

At the same time, Roth is equally abhorred by the accelerated present of the new nations, which all too easily obliterates the memories of class, family, and personal honour.[60] The epitome of this indecisive neither-nor-attitude is his doppelganger Doctor Skovronnek, the only important character who, like the narrator, survives the catastrophe and whose "fondness of people matched his low opinion of them".[61] In fact, his tireless attachment-through-detachment reflects the narrator's own ambiguous stance toward his characters. Skovronnek states that, in the contemporary compartmentalized world, nobody can take responsibility for others anymore: the Emperor for his subjects, parents for their children, husbands for their wives, or men for women: Social cohesion is forever lost, and every individual and group must follow their own way at their own risk.[62] This corresponds with the Polish Count Chojnicki's opinion that, in the contemporary world, trust in the nation-state has replaced belief in God.[63] Given that Chojnicki and Skovronnek strike the attentive reader as the narrator's two doppelgangers that contest and complement one another, this correspondence is hardly accidental.

However, although Chojnicki spits on the rising petty nations,[64] and Skovronnek appears reserved concerning the emancipation of women,[65] this does not mean that they yearn for the old world. On the contrary, in the same way as Chojnicki dismantles the illusion of the late Empire's political cohesion, Skovronnek clearly sees that its social cohesion is fake. This obviously necessitates the emancipation of its constituents. Yet inasmuch as it merely substitutes one (imperial) solitude for another (post-imperial), neither of the two *Zeitdiagnostiker* can enthusiastically welcome such emancipation, which surreptitiously reflects Roth's own hesitation. The walled-off collective self (i.e., the new state) is an equally fragile refuge for one's identity as was the protective other (i.e., the Emperor as God's envoy). Equipped with his bitter postwar experience—many liberation movements resulted in reactionary nation-states—Roth's narrator realizes that anchoring one's identity in the collective self instead of the protective other merely reestablishes solitude. So, rather than being an uncritical adherent of the monarchist ideology, as he was usually considered, the

60 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 120, 206, 292.

61 Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 258.

62 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 258, 268.

63 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 176.

64 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 148.

65 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 258.

narrator of *The Radetzky March* turns out dislocated from both the epoch before and the epoch after the First World War. Like Brecht's interpreters of stage happenings, he belongs neither to the darkness beyond the stage nor under the lights of the stage.

This hovering in-between position disrupts Roth's *intended* detachment from the world of his protagonists. If their departure has left him alone, then his detachment is *enforced*, which means that he is affected by the same traumatic developments as they were. He is their involved messenger rather than their unbiased observer. It is indicative of Roth's authorial position that he obstinately denies his involvement and points out his detachment by stating, for example, that Lieutenant Trotta was unable to express the reason for his depression but that "we" (i.e., he and his reader) can explain it on his behalf.[66] Precisely through this detachment though, he redoubles his heroes' pattern of keeping 'inferior others' at a distance. If his protagonists' paternalist behaviour ultimately catches him up, then he happens to be an exemplary proponent of their world. Next to the historical distance between the narrator and his protagonists, this puts in question also the 'spatial' distance between the protagonists' fictional entrapment and the narrator's 'external' situation of communication with his addressees. Despite his consistently highlighted 'outsideness', the narrator's attitude to the protagonists compulsively repeats their 'traumatized paternalism'. It is not so much his benevolence that sets it in motion but his wound of uprootedness and solitude. Contrary to the intended detachment from his fictional subjects, Roth thus cannot escape being implicated in them.

Unlike Roth, Andrić composed his novel in a language and tradition that, to recall Herder's formulation, took up "a much larger space on Earth than in history".[67] The Slavs as the "dragged-along (*mitgezogene*), auxiliary, or serving peoples",[68] whose 'personality' was degraded by their masters through the "centuries of [their] subjugation" to a "terrible slavish inertia" (*Knechtsträgheit*),[69] are like the South American natives in Hegel's description, destined to submissiveness and dependence.[70] Like these natives captured at the stage of spiritual infancy,[71] the Slavs had better "attach themselves firmly to their roots"[72] instead of aspiring to participate in history. Dwelling in "no more social structure than family, no laws but that of nature, no language but that of gesture and some inarticulate sounds",[73] they conduct the life

66 See Roth, *The Radetzky March*, 122.

67 Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie*, 698, trans. mine.

68 Herder *Ideen zur Philosophie*, 702, trans. mine.

69 Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie*, 698, trans. mine.

70 See Hegel, "Race, History, and Imperialism," 113.

71 See Hegel, *Elements*, 378.

72 Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie*, 510, trans. mine.

73 Rousseau *The Social Contract*, 31.

of "people without history".[74] Unlike the developing peoples that catch up with the *Geist* of world history, they remain entrapped in the contingent labyrinths of everyday historicity or the whimsical "prose of the world".[75]

If Roth attached himself to *future-oriented subjects* who exempted themselves from their retrograde surrounding, Andrić in contrast passionately adhered to *past-oriented communities* and their 'indistinct' language and tradition.[76] Unlike the Ukrainian Jew Roth, Andrić was *born* into the South Slav community and was, therefore, probably more indebted to it than Roth was to the Ukrainian Slavic heritage. Already during the Austro-Hungarian rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a member of the Young Bosnia movement, Andrić fought for the South Slav political autonomy. After the collapse of the Empire, his dreams came true in the form of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The emergence of this state gave Andrić's generation the opportunity to replace their predecessors' long-term *affinity* to the South Slav linguistic and cultural identity with the *affiliation* to their own political entity. Previously, due to the centuries-long circumstances, the Bosnians and Herzegovinians had been politically affiliated to the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, but emotionally attached to their external homelands, i.e., the Muslims to Istanbul, the Orthodox to Montenegro and Serbia, and the Catholics to Hungary, Venice, Austria, and Zagreb. This long-term experience of in-betweenness that characterized all imperial transit zones[77] manifested itself as a permanent clash between their residents' belonging and longing.

The imperial tension between affiliation and affinity,[78] or *Staat* and *Heimat,*[79] underwent an important transformation in the post-imperial circumstances. The new states' minorities felt endangered by their majorities' national unification, while their majorities felt imperiled by their minorities' resistance, which made both sides frustrated by the other. Faced with the polarization of his new state, Andrić created a narrative technique that systematically disengages passionate investments on both sides. Being, like Roth, a writer of a hyphenated identity—in his case a peculiar mixture of Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian components—he did not fully belong to any of his new state's ethnic constituents. He therefore advocated a persistent exemption from their confines for the sake of building a more comprehensive South Slav identity. Following this strategy, he established a meandering narrative perspective that prevented both affiliation and affinity from translating into ethnic

74 Engels, "Der demokratische Panslawismus."

75 See Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 245.

76 See Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*, 41–42.

77 See Bhabha, "Culture's In-Between."

78 See Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 1–10.

79 See Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 77.

fanaticism. This comprehensive South-Slav orientation was spontaneously inherited from imperial times, which, based on Herder's pattern, used to regard Slavs as an amorphous agglomeration. The imperial centre considered indistinguishable whatever was remote from it, which gradually made peripheries adopt their 'indistinction' to resist the centre's 'distinction'. So, if Roth's narrator detaches himself from the provincial attachment to the past, Andrić's narrator sympathizes with it, sensing that past-oriented collectives question and subvert future-oriented imperial narratives.[80] Already in the first 'synoptic' chapter that summarizes the past developments around the bridge from the present vantage point, he mediates his perspective by that of collective myths and legends, which he keeps transmitting also in the third and fifth chapters in order to interrogate the official rendering of events. This scepticism toward any smooth narrative construction of essentially contingent human affairs explains why *The Bridge* is not a historical novel but a chronicle, which strategically refuses to integrate all its constituents into a straightforward narrative. Put in Hegelian terms, in defending the provincially whimsical and scattered 'prose of the world' from the higher necessity of 'world history', Andrić clandestinely subverts the empires' assimilation of provinces into their supposedly all-embracing stories.

Andrić's sympathy for the passionate South Slav attachment to the past explains the peculiar composition of his novel. Three and a half centuries of Ottoman rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina are fitted into just eight out of the twenty-four chapters, while the remaining sixteen chapters are dedicated to a mere thirty-five-year period of Austrian administration. As this blatant asymmetry indicates, Andrić's main concern is to unravel the transition from one civilizational pattern to the other, rather than to carefully register happenings around the bridge. *The Bridge over the Drina* shows how Austrian civilization gradually ruined Ottoman heritage until, ultimately, it even destroyed the bridge as its most valuable symbol. In other words, the Austrians introduced a new type of imperial administration that replaced the Ottoman model, and the novel recognizes no continuity between them. In his *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explained this transition as a shift from sovereign to disciplinary power. Indeed, Andrić primarily represents the sovereign Ottoman power through its brutal public spectacles, which perfectly matches Foucault's definition. We find several such manifestations in the novel, but two are foregrounded. First, the so-called blood tax, i.e., the violent abduction of small boys from the imperial provinces from their parents in order to raise them as elite Ottoman troops, and second, the execution by impalement of a rebel against the Empire. Foucault cautions that the scenario envisaged by this public spectacle of sovereign power may fail if its participants disobey, i.e., deny recognition,[81] and this is exactly what happens in

80 See Foteva, *Do the Balkans Begin in Vienna?,* 124.

81 See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 62–63.

the novel, turning the demonstration of power into a source of unrest and rebellion. This, in its turn, effectuates the containment of the despot's autocracy, which in the novel paves the way for the transition to a new, disciplinary type of law.

Contrary to the mainstream reception of his novel, Andrić does not represent the two types of imperial rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina in a way to expose the first type to sharp condemnation, while the second to approval. On the contrary, the cruel type of Ottoman power is 'humanized,' whereas the disciplinary type of Austrian power is not nearly as human as it pretends to be. Like the Ottoman type, it is portrayed via its most characteristic manifestations: public announcements, a census, the establishment of the administration system and of the police, conscription, introduction of water supply, railways, banks, stock exchanges, newspapers, barracks, casinos, and brothels. This systematic 'civilizing' of Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on the invisible network of laws, regulations, and provisions that cover not solely humans but also animals, things, cities, and villages by penetrating into established customs and habits, confronts the population's resistance. Although Ottoman cruelty and robbery is over, the 'capillary' normative surveillance reduces and constrains individual liberties, classifies, reshapes, and disciplines subjects, proliferating their duties and obligations to the edge of the absurd. Leisure is replaced by a feverish activity that becomes an end in itself, spawning devastating consequences. Ultimately, as a place of collective memory, the bridge itself is blown up by explosives, as it does not contribute to the planned exploitation and profit increase.

Focusing on the shift from sovereign to disciplinary imperial rule, *The Bridge over the Drina* displays the same scepticism toward historical progress as its modernist novelistic predecessors located in colonial settings, such as Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*. The civilizing of the wilderness of imperial provinces faces embarrassment and failure in both cases. In the wake of such resilience to the disciplinary society that creates greedy subjects, Andrić bereaves his modernist novel of two key attributes of the realist novel as an exemplary instrument of such a society. These are the *hero* and the *plot*. His novel is deliberately left without a goal-oriented hero who strives toward autonomy and sovereignty. Such future-oriented agencies became impossible in the post-imperial world ruled by contingency that turned its residents into sheer toys of their destinies. Like Roth, Andrić is a writer of the uprooted human condition following the Great War in which nobody really knows where they belong, since this now depends on an elusive, constantly shifting global perspective. The permanent state of exception tears post-imperial subjects out of their old affiliations and pushes them into new ones. In such unpredictable circumstances, one is best advised, according to both Roth and Andrić, to delve into the past to figure out how contingency managed to conquer the present. Following this thread, both writers reorient the novel's teleological plot toward tracking back the

development of the catastrophe. For Roth's epic narrator, the present disaster was caused by the provincial sons who abandoned their fathers' loyalty to the imperial centre, whereas for Andrić's narrator-chronicler it was induced by the provincial ethnicities' disloyalty to their joint past.

However, as if following in the footsteps of Roth's narrator, Andrić's narrator compulsively repeats the 'sin' of his protagonists. In fact, he expects provincial ethnicities to sacrifice themselves for their commonality in the same way as, in imperial times, the Austrians believed they were acting in the common rather than in the national interest. But in the end, Andrić's narrator dismantles the Austrians as betrayers who, like their Ottoman predecessors, victimize imperial provincials, in the first place Serbs, for their selfish goals. Sanctified in the Serbian collective memory, these victims expect reward and redemption. Andrić's narrator takes up this mission by artistically refining and sublimating the rudimentary, 'gesturing' expression of their sacrifice. The third and fourth chapters delineate the Serbian rebel Radisav, the sixth the echoes of Serbian uprisings, and the twenty-first the Austrian revenge against the Serbian rebels because of the Sarajevo assassination. This does not exhaust the list of executed Serbian martyrs who are artistically sublimated in the novel. The religious pilgrim Jelisije and the poor Serbian youth Mile, who sings a Serbian revolt song, complete the list.[82] At one point when the narrator speaks about the rebels' fires in Serbia, that could even be discerned from the Drina's other bank, he states that "both Turks and Serbs saw the fires clearly and looked at them attentively".[83] Subsequently, however, not only does he not hide which of these camps is his, but points out the sacrificial continuity of this camp's rebellious historical existence:

> "The Serbian women crossed themselves in the darkness and wept from inexplicable emotion, but in their tears they saw reflected those fires of insurrection even as those ghostly flames which had once fallen upon Radisav's grave and which their ancestors almost three centuries before had also seen through their tears from that same Mejdan."[84]

"The Serbian women" are in the original "naše žene" (our women), which clearly identifies the allegedly ethnically hybrid narrator as a member of the Serbian community. He acts on behalf of the Serbian victims who, in order to compensate for the bitter feeling of dispossession generated by the reiterated execution of the Austrian imperial authority over them, now execute this authority over their South Slav 'brothers'.

82 See Andrić, *The Bridge over the Drina*, 85–87.

83 Andrić, *The Bridge over the Drina*, 83.

84 Andrić, *The Bridge over the Drina*, 83.

This explains why the narrator uses the Ekavian literary standard, while his characters' everyday speech is, as a rule, Ijekavian.[85] This hierarchical distribution of linguistic standards in the novel's fictional world subtly reproduces the Serbian paternal (inter)nationalism from the time of the Yugoslav community of nations. Like the Russians in the Soviet Union, the Serbs in Yugoslavia saw not only Serbia as their home but rather the whole multiethnic country.[86] That is to say, instead of following the proclaimed egalitarian program, Andrić replicates the attitude of Yugoslav rulers to their populace, which proved to be just as discriminating as that of their imperial predecessors. Yet, whereas he explicitly deconstructs the cynicism of the latter, the cynicism of the former is only involuntarily 'hinted at'. The novel ironically portrays the Austrians as the 'liberators' from the Ottomans who, in fact, destroy their predecessors' memorable cultural heritage. But *The Bridge* comes into existence in 1942, after the celebrated 'liberator' from the Austrians, the Yugoslav monarchy, experienced its bitter capitulation. Those who read Andrić today know what happened some decades after the Yugoslav communists 'broke the shackles' of the Yugoslav monarchy with the aim to establish a more just togetherness. Both states' political strategies relied on the South Slav 'brotherhood', and through its very structure and almost contrary to its author's intentions, the novel demonstrates why their projects collapsed.

Andrić thus failed in his attachment to the indistinction of the province in the same way as Roth did in his attachment to the distinction of the centre. The centre is smuggled back into the province, and the province back into the centre by making their renderings of disaster in the final outcome co-implicate each other.

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85 See Foteva, *Do the Balkans Begin in Vienna?*, 122. The Serbs use the Ekavian literary standard, whereas the Croatians, the Bosnians and Herzegovinians, and the Montenegrins use the Ijekavian literary standard.

86 See Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 74.

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