

Beyond the Ecology of Common Sense: Grasping the World from the Other Edge

Alaner Imamoglu

Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Buyukdere Mah., 26040 Eskisehir, Turkey

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3509-066X>

alaner.imamoglu@gmail.com

This article discusses the idea of the world in terms of literary expression and the conceptual translation of space. The term “world” in this sense designates a complex entity that is subject to different interpretations, as is the case in comparative literature, which tends to develop its definition of the world in order to theorize the relationship of literature to space. With reference to the works of twentieth-century Turkish writer Tezer Özlü, this paper addresses the autonomy of the travelling writer in the context of a textual enjoyment that renounces heteronomy vis-à-vis the Earth as an inflexibly concrete geographical reality. Özlü considers travelling as an act that goes beyond the ecology of common sense and thus claims independence from the collective and stagnant translations of the world so as not to be reduced to a uniformity of expression in the coherence of things. Considering the concepts of identity and alterity, the main issue here is to discuss the translation of the world as a reality to be grasped, as a possibility to expand in the mind, in ideas that resist the rigidity, banality and ordinariness of space as a system.

Keywords: Turkish literature / Özlü, Tezer / travel narrative / comparative literature / cultural studies / identity / alterity

Introduction

The notion “world” is a tough one to translate. In literary studies, comparative literature took the charge to propose several translations of the world to expand or criticize the meaning, nature, or function of literary presence in space. Such translations are often related to the facts of marketplace, crossroads, circulation, reception, popularity, or canonization to underscore the cultural movement and influence of literary expression across borders. So, world is considered as a concept of exchange to explain transnational relations by referring us to borders or spheres that gather common contents of nations, cultural

geographies, or regions. In this respect, Ben Hutchinson explains that the aim of comparative literature is to “conceive a world without borders” (Hutchinson 118). The latter represents in this sense a significant entity and reality in translating the world. Border functions, in Hutchinson’s definition, as a useful limit to overcome, but it also denotes a problem when it comes to conceive the idea of the world which seems to depend on the manifestation of borders. In other terms, world is conceived in terms of limits to better define the relationship between cultural spaces which indicates a complex situation to translate due to the presence of the Other.

The significance of the translation of the world in interpreting common identity and otherness reveals to be obvious in literary studies and it therefore becomes pertinent to get a critical and varying view out of such translational motivation in terms of alterity and diversity. To address that significant act regarding the conception of space, in this paper, the notion of world will be reconsidered after the works of twentieth-century Turkish writer Tezer Özlü who suggests, on several occasions in her fictional and non-fictional texts, including short story, travelogue, journal article or letter, mostly written in the 1980s, her translation of the world while formulating her literary perspective through the notions of autonomy and independence. Here, the aim is then elaborating an idea of world based on the perspective of Özlü to discuss the position of the writer in national and transnational spheres, the conception of space in literary means, and the role of travel in the development of this conception. Hence, it will be possible to revisit the term “world” in the context of literary expression to expound such complex entity that keeps preoccupying and inspiring the terminology of comparative literature. To do so, in the first chapter, the main purpose consists in inspecting how travel becomes an impetus to think about elsewhere and the world and thus to go beyond the ecology of common sense, representing the systemic translation of the world. In the second and last chapter, the focus will be on the notion of autonomy as a situation which makes sense for the writer-traveler after leaving the ecology of common sense and which is represented through enjoyment, in the sense of the word used by Roland Barthes, inside the texts produced for expressing such autonomy. Altogether, Tezer Özlü’s conception of space will be examined to rethink the idea of the world with regards to the state of travel and to the independence of the writer who tries to grasp a sort of enjoyment beyond the bounds and structures that form a calculated environment for producing literature.

Going beyond the ecology of common sense

To literary extent, ecology may stand for consonance of a culture which forms an environment for common means and ends and which tends to expand its influence and power through relations and transformations with other cultures. For Alexander Beecroft, ecology corresponds to a “system” that reflects an “interactive nature” of various inputs related to various phenomena such as sociocultural and political circumstances (Beecroft 18–19). That ecology can undergo changes, but this is also part of the ecology which keeps designating a cultural whole. The world is therefore composed of those ecologies as systems, and borders are seen as “zones of transition rather than fixed lines on a map.” When translating the world, Beecroft talks about “ecological constraints operating on the circulation of literary texts” (25). The circulation names at this point an ecologically constrained interaction between systems that incorporate conflicting sociocultural wholes, forming together a literary world totality. Akin to that view, Pascale Casanova also takes the world as totality. For her, the hegemonic and conflictual relations between nations and territories define that totality composed of centers and peripheries (Casanova 20–21). Before Beecroft, Casanova developed an idea of the world that prioritizes such kind of relations occurring in terms of power and influence. And more recently, Stefan Helgesson and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen who take the notion “systemic relations” as the key fact of their critique (Helgesson and Thomsen 18), consider the world as system, based on sociocultural geographies and zones, separated by borders, or interacted through borders. The Other in those approaches simply translates a common body, being a component of world-systems that, in Eric Hayot’s terms, constitute self-organizing, self-enclosed and self-referential totalities (Hayot 32).

To propose on her part a more inclusive term against the translation of the world as a global entity “around which the other ceases to be imagined or encountered except as the derivative of the same” (Moore and Rivera 282), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak puts forward the term “planet” with the intention to emphasize the significance of alterity in our living space: Earth. And yet, not unlikely to other approaches mentioned here, she considers the planet as “another system,” inhabited by us, “on loan” (Spivak 72). For Spivak, Earth, as a “paranational image,” stands “beyond our control and representation,” it is “something that we know is there, though we can never directly grasp as an object with our senses” (Wainwright 70, 73). That sort of alterity promotes, according to Spivak, a sense of “collectivity” for all human beings who would

be aware of their absolute common otherness toward or against Earth, that unapologetically foreign ecology. Despite its alterity-focused consideration, such view that reduces the world into the definition of a planet is still not in tune with Tezer Özlü's conception of space. In the vocabulary of Turkish writer, Earth signifies a stern reality which is not accurately convenient for re-translations as it manifests in its tedious appearance and severe limits and forms. Özlü compares Earth to a foreign "external object" like the educational globe that she remembers from geography lessons (Özlü, *Çocukluğun* 23). That school globe reminds the writer how the common sense gets systematically established thanks to the institutional education which transforms the world into a superficial reality, not apt to inspire affection or enjoyment. The writer enunciates that she never could have embraced the world in its form taught at school or have felt a belonging to any part of Earth during her life (Erbil 52). She considers herself in exile everywhere and not immigrant anywhere as she "keeps displacing" her "self" from one place to another (Özlü, *Yeryüzüne* 111). Nevertheless, she assumes that Earth functions as a solid ground for passing through worlds and consequently re-inventing the space where herself and others live.

The translation of the world relying upon the systematic structures makes the world a rigid entity unlikely to get envisioned as a sensible, subjective, and yet unsystematically diverse reality. This is the reason why "common sense" is a suitable term for identifying the systemic translation of the world, conceived as the interactive scene or arena of different common bodies that reflect the holistic view concerning every world culture. That being the case of the recent approaches mentioned above, for Tezer Özlü, the conception of space seems to indicate a different direction. By the agency of her literary outputs, she presents an idea of the world which draws forth the deviating and flexible dimensions of space rather than conceiving the latter as a solid structure that reduces people and cultures into general, formal, and collective entities. In Özlü's conception of space, common sense is something toward which a writer should take a distance to be able to "grasp the world." The latter notion means, for her, faraway places and times (Özlü, *Eski* 103), it is a "longing" for "faraway harbors" induced by the image of ships ready to sail (Özlü, *Çocukluğun* 11), or buses full of travelers going to big cities (8).

Traveling means leaving "home," that earthy-physical and limited place which, according to Özlü, only generates sameness and immobility. Home is where life and death lose their meaning inside the routine of things, and time is felt under its indifferent dimensions that help

to conserve the moderate condition of daily life. For Özlü, “there is nothing more horrifying than order and safety” (Özlü, *Kalanlar* 47). Though, Earth provides the possibility of taking distance so the writer might realize her travel to experience intensive moments for envisaging a more sensible, subjective, and diverse translation of the world. She thus feels excited by the fact that “every road opens to a new one” as a “network in endless world,” a network which seems paradoxically huge and tiny like the idea of the world (Özlü, *Zaman* 23). Anyhow, Earth becomes literally a ground to realize such particular experience that implies a condition of alterity and diversity, and this is where things get complicated.

Despite the objectivity of Earth, world, to Özlü’s view, is about transient details continuously renewed, it is about moments which are lived intensively, and which give her the impression of feeling all times, looking at all landscapes (Özlü, *Eski* 53). For Turkish writer, each person inhabiting Earth incarnates a world which is always complicated to understand. So, Earth is populated by the embodiment of worlds that make the planet a more interesting and exciting place to live in. With their unpredictable and limitless aspects, the alterity and diversity of worlds turn to be a subterfuge against the inflexibility of the planet as they provide “strength and happiness” to “resist the rigidity of Earth” (Özlü, *Zaman* 44). This happiness is about escaping from every country, every border and “tasting the timelessness” (Fidan 92) which shows another aspect of “time,” deprived from its common sense dominated by conventional and abstract ideas such as past and future that make the present a tasteless reality of time. In Elsewhere, the writer-traveler is in “her own time” (Erbil 61) due to being far from the annoying abstractions of daily life and wherefore being closer to grasping the world “as a fruit that she can squeeze in her hand,” stimulate her senses, and feel strength (Fidan 48).

According to Özlü, a writer realizes the act of writing because s/he feels the individual need to do it. The writer is not someone who “behaves in accordance with society” by following the direction institutionally promoted and by staying inside the limits that determine the nature of current artistic tendencies and mediums of communication; s/he is someone who makes her/his progress “against the stream” to show the possibility of different directions and new ways of expression (Özlü, *Yeryüzüne* 110). This is why she wants to write something that could “disturb the reader” and “agitate her/his inner world,” something that could relate a world view (Erbil 31). And for realizing that kind of writing, she affirms that one needs to get disunited from all

links attaching her/him to *the* world. And Elsewhere becomes the ideal place to offer such temporary moment of detachment during which the writer enjoys an isolation from common sense and accordingly a freedom to see and think from the other edge. In that case, the fact of writing appears to be an “islet,” as Roland Barthes names it, illustrating that “exceptional space of language” (Barthes 25) where takes place the critique of the “illusion of totality” and the dissociation of “solidarities” concerning the society (53). To emphasize the excitingly and contradictorily possible dimensions of the textual expression that are able to go beyond the common sense, Barthes firmly assumes that “rule is abuse” and “exception is enjoyment” (57).

So, after being dissociated with all links, how is it possible to grasp the world? The latter, like space, explains Özlü, is not dissimilar to a “riddle” evoking “emptiness” and “infinite” (Özlü, *Çocukluğun* 11). For her, world is all about forms and feelings through thinking (Özlü, *Kalanlar* 52). Therefore, going beyond the ecology of common sense does not mean being marginalized in terms of thought. On the contrary, it is about being away from the abusive effects of links and solidarities, and hence, being closer to the Other that makes the world a riddle, an unpredictable reality which might stimulate the process of thinking in a more comprehensive manner. Going beyond the ecology of common sense means grasping the world from the “other edge,” in the sense of the term used by Barthes who points out the “asocial nature of pleasure” (Barthes 25) which renders, as in the case of Özlü, travel a necessary action and vagrancy a compelling idea for “escaping from the alienation of society” and eluding the “*enkratique* language” which is a “language of repetition” maintained by the power (56), or, as Édouard Glissant calls it, the “powerful unicity” that distracts people with illusory rules and fails to provide new and sensible horizons to go beyond the repetition and abuse (Glissant 63). Indeed, for Barthes, repetition is the spurious aspect of mass culture which depends on systemic production of contents, ideological schemes, superficial forms, and all other artifacts such as books and movies with apparently diverse forms and different fashions but hinting at the same direction and sense (Barthes 57–58).

Barthes notes that mass culture is either historical or prospective and not about one’s present (32). Avoiding the influences of mass culture and systemic thought is then getting to the “other edge,” which signifies a “mobile” and empty space, “able to take any outline” and never fixed only to the limited and physical place where it occurs (13). Thus, during her long-term stay in Berlin, and her short-term travels

to other cities in Europe like Trieste, Zagreb, Vienna, or Prague, Özlü states that for the first time, in those faraway places, she could have had the opportunity to follow her thoughts to their “deepest edges” and to perceive the world by “translating it into words” (Erbil 33). In other terms, the writer gets to the other edge, embodied through the landscapes of different cities located outside her home-country, and there she tries to give a literary outline to her world view that could reflect an unsystematic and sensible translation of space based on temporary experiences of Elsewhere. In this respect, Glissant describes the act of translating as an “art of fugue” (Glissant 28) that tends to drift away from the fixity of movement (63) by instigating the inventiveness of the language to “tackle uniformities, dominances and standards” and to provide it with new spaces (225) that indicate the uncertain and the being in its present time (28). World, for Özlü, is better understood and contemplated when translated from such a “fugitive” perspective to not fall in the simplicity of common sense which tends to avoid the Other and the unpredictable diversity of things for the sake of preserving its integral and prosaic ecology.

By leaving the comfort zone of language and literature and by improving her own way of expression to formulate a new view about the world, Özlü explains that she gets distant from the abusive and reducing circle of repetition and formation concentrated on past and future at the expense of present. That experience of a new view occurs on Earth, on that solid ground offering different landscapes for the writer who enjoys moments of autonomy during her travels which result in the creation of texts, standing at odds with the domination of common sense. More than a simple picture, a distant object or a stern basis for abstract structures, Earth becomes meaningful when it is considered as a ground for imagining and thinking about worlds (people, feelings, etc.), and thus forming a perspective that does not give priority to ones over others. And in Özlü’s opinion, the most effective and aesthetic way to do that is literature. Rather than being a theoretical reference for systemic thought, literature functions in this case as a critical disruption to resist the rigidity of Earth and to bring the idea of the world into a state of enjoyment, in the Barthean sense of the word. Travel becomes then a key action to go beyond the ecology of common sense, which is an environment isolated from enjoyment, and therefore to grasp the world from the other edge which is nowhere and the middle of everything.

Autonomy and enjoyment

What occurs beyond the ecology of common sense? Özlü says that beyond the ecology of common sense, it is “nowhere” (Özlü, *Kalanlar* 47). Although, that nowhere has a meaning. It is not the end of things. It is rather being able to see the world from a useful distance and to be “in the middle of everything” that promotes new things to see as long as one keeps moving (Erbil 58). It is where one can claim her/his independence and autonomy because this place belongs to no one. It is obviously somewhere in the world, it is Berlin, Zurich, Prague, etc., but it does not have fixed location or limits because it depends on the mobility and change. It is virtually not motherland or a country by adoption or any other place chosen for exile. From the perspective of Özlü, being nowhere is about “moments” that need an authentic attention to be intensively lived. Those very moments are the earmarks of independence that comes along with the feelings of strength, solitude, unease, and joy (Özlü, *Yaşamın* 62). The “independence” of the writer-traveler thus occurs by “living the environment” and having senses and sensations never known or perceived before (94).

Beyond the ecology of common sense lies Elsewhere where the rules of heteronomy are not felt as imposing as in home-country. A better perception of that space thus requires a debility of rules and standards so its various landscapes can appear in a more sensible way to the view of the writer-traveler (58) whose “insatiable hunger for the life” (79) and “intuition to go elsewhere” seem to be intimately related to the “course of landscapes” and never-ending horizons of the world (67) which may be perceived through the window of a train in motion or from the balcony of a hotel room. Travel constitutes “fragments” inside the continuity of life. Those fragments are “new lives” opening to “worlds” (66). The unfamiliar landscape of a country, a random walk in the streets of a city makes one start a process of translation that reflects the images of travel (80), awakening a sentiment of resistance vis-à-vis the heteronomy of common senses. This is a moment of ease about the conventional titles, such as “citizen,” “local” or “petit bourgeois,” that mean a belonging to a societal group to form a coherent and concentrated whole (93). In Elsewhere, grasping the world becomes probable thanks to the fact that travel allows mind to extend its streets and boulevards, reinforcing the intellectual and narrative autonomy of the writer-traveler who has the desire to “give form to the life” with her words (95) instead of accepting the taught facts about the world, practicing the repetition and staying an indifferent element inside the limits

of the ecology of common sense. In Barthes's terms, the question here is not about destroying the ecology of common sense or denying it in a way to not accept its existence. It is not either to enter in a "dialogue" with it and find a common ground (Barthes 25). Rather, it is about refusing the life translated by "fortuities," as Özlü formulates it (Özlü, *Yaşamın* 52), and emphasizing its "points of failure" and "aporias," impressively exposed to someone "at the heart of enjoyment" (Barthes 14). While acknowledging the significance of the ecology of common sense, Özlü compares the one who can find a way to look that ecology from the other edge to someone able to embrace a joyful meaning of being in space and to possess a power of expressing herself in text and in life due to the moments of discontinuity compelled by mobility and travel. Such moments are the reason and the expectation of the state of enjoyment that makes one think the world in its disruptive dimensions, revealed in a temporary manner to the senses of the writer-traveler.

To figure out the notions of independence and autonomy in the senses used by Özlü, it would be convenient to look at the term "enjoyment" (*jouissance* in French), being an important part of the Barthean terminology. Enjoyment, for Barthes, is what turns pleasure to a "place of lose, failing, disruption and deflation" (14). The text of enjoyment "discomforts," it shakes the cultural grounds of the reader, and produces crisis in terms of language (23). It is "intransitive," defined by edge and extremities and not reflecting a moderate nature of things (70). This is indeed what Özlü is looking for in realizing how her writing and her autonomy take place. She desires an active life freed from the control of fortuities. For her, literature is charged with more life, more love, more feeling, more death than the life itself (Özlü, *Zaman* 31). She is not looking for a compromise with mass culture to give a moderate pleasure to the reader in order to claim her independence while trying to keep at the same time her position and status inside the society and system (Özlü, *Çocukluğun* 45). Özlü tells in this respect that she never felt the enthusiasm to dig for her "roots," and furthermore, her mother and father always seemed to her as foreigners, no more exclusive than any other person. Again, like her parents, her mother tongue, indicating where she "comes from," stands for an "estranged" reality in her life (Özlü, *Kalanlar* 44–45).

Concerning roots, Barbara Cassin talks about a "staggering equivocation" which describes the human condition, related at the same time to the "unrivaled existence" of mother tongue and to the presence of other languages as meaningful differences. For Cassin, such presence is fundamental because those other languages permit someone to

“disquiet” and “shake” the mother tongue and accordingly, the world (Cassin 64). Using also German to draft her books, Özlü recognizes the essential role of mother tongue without trying to assign an exceptional or central position to it and this is why she uses multiple times the verb “escape” to make clear her intention about keeping her distance toward the unpleasant ecology of origin-centered world view. Like other countries, other languages make possible to get to the other edge of things to grasp the world more comprehensively; they provide space for movement and change to disrupt the sameness and monotony. And this is exactly what produces enjoyment: that feeling of staggering the grounds of the established entities and facts to express an autonomy by using the language in unfamiliar manners and thus translate the world differently.

Translation is the “weakness” of assumptions in language, explains Henri Meschonnic, because it is where the confusion and disorder take place more often as a consequence of re-evaluating the representation of language and thus putting the systemic thought in question. Being “con-temporary of what moves in language and society,” translation is not operated from the language itself for particularly stylistic means, but it reconsiders, in the form of literary writing, the established values in expression and culture, and transforms the way of expression through an “organization of subjectivization.” So, for Meschonnic, literature and translation are the most vulnerable and most strategic activities to figure out what one should do with language (Meschonnic 12–15). In fact, Özlü’s perspective echoes with that view for being a writer who “learnt to get the autonomy of her world by virtue of literature” which showed her what to do with language thanks to “world literature” writers like Italo Svevo, Cesare Pavese and Djuna Barnes who perfectly reflected the “agitations of literary creativity” to translate the world through the subjective need of expression (Özlü, *Yeryüzüne* 11). For the Turkish writer, literature is a space full of contradictions that represents different dimensions of culture including the ones that stay inside the comfort zone of expression with their local preoccupations and have no saying about the world. However, Özlü is interested in literature not because of its repetitive and conformist illusion but for its power to widen and transform one’s world view as well as the conceptions of alterity and identity. That literature is the one she describes as “the most loyal and sincere world” and “the most trustful feeling” of hers (Özlü, *Yaşamın* 65). And this is why one can use it as a strategic activity to retranslate the world and get the autonomy of her/his world, or instead, can follow the familiar paths and make no meaningful

change at all. Here the words of Jonathan Culler become relevant who tells that “literature is the noise of culture as well as its information.” And he adds: “It is an entropic force as well as cultural capital. It is a writing that calls for a reading and engages readers in problems of meaning” (Culler 41).

Özlü tells that as she “approaches” people by virtue of travel, she gets more “distant” to her family and so-called roots. To put it otherwise, her world view becomes larger while her “tiny world” loses its dominance over her daily life, and this is how a process of autonomy takes place. Hence, after displacing her “self” beyond the comfort zone of sameness and repetition, her language, in its broader sense used by Meschonnic to mean “way of expression,” which is initially learnt inside the limits of home-country under the form of an instrument of common sense, is transformed into an instrument of independence for translation. With the desire to improve aptly that once conventional instrument, Özlü explains that, through her writings, she has to relate everything more correctly, live them more intensely, translate every object, every being, every person into a lived experience by making them more sensible, for instance, “making them blow like winds” or “make precipitate them like rains” (Özlü, *Eski* 93). In that lived experience, she does not perceive specific spots or feelings that would appear more important than others. What she perceives is an “onlooker” who, as the traveling self of the writer, observes herself and her life, who “makes her fly with storms, gives birth to her with sunrise, drives her to make love with darkness” (93). Özlü uses life and death as the metaphors of her erratic being in space as she says that she “dies every night” and “comes to life again” every morning (Özlü, *Zaman* 44), and that to underscore her world view based on momentary fragments that disrupt the continuity of systemic time. So, every day is a new occasion to give a present form and sense to the world. Therefore, to grasp the world accurately, her “life” and “death”, under all dimensions of her writing, must include “all lives, loves and deaths” (32) without imposing her roots or any continuity of time as an exception. The writer thus tells that she tries to express herself quite openly because she feels an endless independence and freedom, and those feelings go beyond times, countries, and cities (Özlü, *Eski* 57).

“One writes because world is painful and because feelings overwhelm,” says Özlü, according to whom, “it is a complicated task for the human being to get beyond her/his powerlessness in the world and claim independence” (Özlü, *Yeryüzüne* 10). Nevertheless, once the task gets compassed and individual freedom becomes a sensible thing,

one can actuate a more authentic direction for her/his life, and at that stage, emerges the need to tell such accomplishment to other people through writing as a literary implementation (10). The writer explains that one should live with courage, with a strident tone, and overcome “excessive sensitivities” and “strange family attachments” (Özlü, *Eski* 102). The complication of this process pertains in this sense to challenge one’s limits that can even result, as it is the case of herself, in the experience of “madness.” The latter caused for Özlü a forced isolation from the streets of the world, from its grand squares, from “the noise of people and of the outer world” (11) when she was on the other edge of reason. During the time spent in the isolated space of the hospital, she was deprived of travel and mobility, the fundamental elements of her independence and autonomy, and her “freedom of behavior” was mainly restricted, like her freedom of walking in any direction she would like to take and meditating beyond every object she would see in her way (52). Although, despite its extremely painful consequences, Özlü says, the emptiness of madness made possible for her mind to go “higher, larger and deeper” (Özlü, *Kalanlar* 48) as she could have seen the world in its bigger dimensions and understood the importance of the presence of others, their bodies and their noises, as well as the veracious meaning of the freedom of movement. In that context, madness becomes another metaphor in the terminology of Özlü who tells that “one should insist upon her/his own madness” for the reason that life becomes “existence” due to the “courage of challenging the limits in order to get to the untried and the unreached” (Özlü, *Yeryüzüne* 37). The Turkish writer transforms madness to a “reasonable” metaphor for the reader to explain her worldview which is intimately related to the limits of mind and thought. In other terms, she makes from her lived experience of madness a literary concept to contribute to her freedom of expression in translating life, love, and death.

Tezer Özlü positions herself against the word “order” not in a sense to praise anarchy but to explain joy-killing aspects of the heteronomy which tends to moderate the conception of space by reducing it into repetitive and systemic views. By recognizing the place of such reality in everyday life, Özlü articulates the significance of autonomy for a better understanding, imagination, and representation of the world. Here, it is not an egocentric autonomy, a sovereignty over others or separation from others. It is about self-accomplishment whose aim would be a very personal autonomy over words and realities, relying on the ability of understanding everybody else’s feelings. She talks in this sense about “the necessity of the breath, the living skin, and the temperature of not

only one person but many people” (Özlü, *Eski* 100) and their bodies which can make life more credible. For Turkish writer, desiring the Other, other people, other landscapes, other cities, other streets, other sunsets, other feelings is a sign of life that makes everything (orgasm, love, even the depression) meaningful (Özlü, *Yaşamın* 40). That kind of desire makes someone strong because it is not reduced to one person, one family, one language, one city or one country. It goes beyond the conforming definitions of the “wise edge” of things, as Roland Barthes names it (Barthes 13), and this is how the feelings of freedom and enjoyment persist: aspiration to keep going for other exciting worlds and to not be trapped in the melancholy or fake happiness of sameness. In other terms, it is an autonomy whose existence is granted by a traveling and observing self, open to see new things, and by the unpredictable and sensible alterity.

Conclusion

Twentieth-century Turkish writer Tezer Özlü, through the elements given in her writings, presents a conception of space that takes the notion of world as an extensible and timeless idea of space, susceptible of re-translations. Unlikely to theoretical concepts of the “world” or “planet” suggested by literary figures who consider space as system by insisting on common values, appreciations, and directions, Özlü presents a different insight regarding those very concepts. On her literary account, the Turkish writer neglects the system-based conception of space which makes the world an unpleasant and mediocre reality. Without denying the significance of the systemic thought which promotes formation and repetition inside ordinary limits that generate a preserved ecology, Özlü gives priority to the desire of having independence and autonomy to go beyond such ecology of common sense which does not offer a sensible image of the diversity and alterity in the world. To her view, Earth is obviously an inevitable ground and systemic structure that provides to the human being a certain necessary basis in space. However, this is because Earth is not suitable for re-translations due to its concrete and immediately unchangeable forms; world emerges as a key notion in the vocabulary of Özlü for overcoming the restricting limitations of Earth. As a translation of alterity and diversity, the term “world” is used by the Turkish writer in a sense to indicate the presence of each living person which represents a complicated individual world from the perspective of another person and can only be conceived by

a dynamic and inclusive thought. Living the world is about intensive moments stimulated by foreign landscapes, people, languages, noises, and the like. Özlü explains that during those moments, the sensation of grasping the world becomes something exciting to feel and think and therefore appears the need to write it down. Literature and language become at this point the strategic instruments of the writer who claims autonomy through her freedom of expression and world view.

As a writer-traveler, Özlü conceives a conception of space which is not based on conflicts or collectivities, or centers and peripheries. Her idea of the world does not consist in defending or destroying the rules and conventions. What she conceives is an autonomy in translating herself and other worlds while avoiding commonplace translations, and for that reason, she says that she escapes from places and situations that remind her of the mediocrity and boredom of home. Here it is not about losing her own identity or language and entering in a non-subjective state of things through a kind of transcendence. It is about freedom of auto-translation which inevitably relies upon the languages of common use like Turkish and German but which at the same time tends to find aporias and discontinuities of those languages by inventing new uses to find new ways of expression. It is the subversive power of literature that helps to shake the ground and the limits of literary expression to make diversity and alterity more sensible realities without reducing them inside stern definitions, commonplace entities, and homogeneous groupings. Hence, what appears in the writings of Tezer Özlü is a desire to retranslate the world without feeling the heteronomy of common senses, insensible systems, and any ideas based on insignificant totalities, and without adopting a moderate tone to not say anything disturbing or unusual in literary expression. By illustrating and inspecting the pertinent elements and features of an individual conception of space after the works of Özlü, whose life is deeply marked by the act of traveling and by the idea of sensible alterity, this paper demonstrated to what extent a possibility of translation of the world in literary terms could mean an enjoyment through independence and autonomy compared to the dominance of mass culture and to the power of collective uniformity.

WORKS CITED

- Barthes, Roland. *Le plaisir du texte*. Éditions du Seuil, 1973.
- Beecroft, Alexander. *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day*. Verso, 2015.
- Casanova, Pascale. *La république mondiale des Lettres*. Éditions du Seuil, 1999.
- Cassin, Barbara. *Plus d'une langue*. Bayard Éditions, 2019.
- Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Erbil, Leylâ, editor. *Tezer Özlü'den Leylâ Erbil'e Mektuplar*. Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2023.
- Fidan, Burak, editor. "Her Şeyin Sonundayım": *Tezer Özlü-Ferit Edgü Mektupları (1966-1985)*. Istanbul, Alfa, 2019.
- Glissant, Édouard. *Traité du Tout-Monde*. Gallimard, 1997.
- Hayot, Eric. *On Literary Worlds*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Helgesson, Stefan, and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen. *Literature and the World*. Routledge, 2020.
- Hutchinson, Ben. *Comparative Literature*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Meschonnic, Henri. *Poétique du traduire*. Éditions Verdier, 1999.
- Moore, Stephen D., and Mayra Rivera. *Planetary Loves: Spivak, Postcoloniality, and Theology*. Fordham University Press, 2011.
- Özlü, Tezer. *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2023.
- Özlü, Tezer. *Eski Bahçe-Eski Sevgi*. Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2022.
- Özlü, Tezer. *Kalanlar*. Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2023.
- Özlü, Tezer. *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2023.
- Özlü, Tezer. *Yeryüzüne Dayanabilmek İçin*. Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2023.
- Özlü, Tezer. *Zaman Dışı Yaşam*. Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2022.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Death of a Discipline*. Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Wainwright, Joel. *Geopiracy: Oaxaca, Militant Empiricism, and Geographical Thought*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Onkraj ekologije zdravega razuma: razumeti svet z drugega konca

Ključne besede: turška književnost / Özlü, Tezer / potopisi / primerjalna književnost / kulturne študije / identiteta / drugost

V tem članku je pojem sveta predstavljen skozi literarni izraz in konceptualni prevod prostora. Izraz »svet« v tem smislu označuje kompleksno entiteto, ki je deležna različnih interpretacij, kot denimo v primerjalni književnosti, ki svojo definicijo sveta običajno razvija za potrebe teoretične opredelitve odnosa literature do prostora. S sklicevanjem na dela Tezer Özlü, turške pisateljice iz 20. stoletja, članek obravnava avtonomijo pisatelja-popotnika v kontekstu

besedilne *jouissance*, ki se odreka heteronomiji v odnosu do Zemlje kot nepri-
lagodljive in konkretne geografske realnosti. Za Özlü je potovanje kot dejanje,
ki presega ekologijo zdravega razuma in s tem terja neodvisnost od kolektiv-
nih in stagnantnih prevodov sveta, da se ne bi v želji po koherenci omejili z
uniformnostjo izraza. Ob upoštevanju konceptov identitete in drugosti sestoji
tukajšnje glavno preizpraševanje iz razprave o prevodu sveta kot realnosti, ki jo
je treba dojeti, ali kot možnosti nadaljnje miselne razširitve ter iz zamišljanja
možnosti, da bi se uprli togosti, banalnosti in običajnosti prostora kot sistema.

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek / Original scientific article

UDK 821.512.161.09-992Özlü T.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3986/pkn.v47.i3.04>