Practices of Colonization in Regional Literary Histories

Space Creating Processes of German and Hungarian Literary History Writing in Romania

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ABSTRACT:

The discourses on 20th century Eastern European regional literatures are predominantly determined by the use of terminology and interrelationships of national and ethnic literatures, which originated in social and state organizational embeddedness. Besides, the majority–minority relation is significantly present in the discourse on these literatures, with this relation representing a – sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit – approach of colonization. If ethnic (or minority) literatures are not only examined as opposed to national (or majority) literatures, it might occur that ethnic literatures themselves often resorted to practices of colonization when describing the literary context. This paper aims at examining the processes of literary history writing of German and Hungarian literatures from Romania, and by looking at them from a transnational perspective, identifying the in-between space where the mutually oppressive spatial practices are eliminated.

Keywords: regional literature, national literature, colonization, post-colonialism, transnationalism, in-between space, German literature from Romania, Hungarian literature from Romania

When it comes to regionality in Hungarian or German literature and culture in the second half of the 20th century (especially in the period between 1945 and 1990), there is a list of phenomena whose conceptual terminology puts them in the reference scope of Hungarian and German literature beyond the borders. These terms appeared in the 20th century, i.e. are products of the era and significantly contributed to the way in which regionality is used in discourses on Hungarian or German literature as well as on literatures in certain areas. At the same time it is worth considering that these terms are not born in a void, but have a long tradition, and before pointing out their similarities and differences, I intend to explore these traditions. In the process of their coming into existence, some fundamental spatial and

space creating practices can be detected; in tackling these categories, this paper approaches the terms, more specifically the literary history writing of non-Romanian literatures from the creation and operation of spaces as well as their symbolism. Besides, examining the construction of Hungarian and German literatures in Romania from a comparative point of view hypothetically might lead to removing these constructions from the discourses of national literatures, making it possible to examine them from a more comprehensive, regional aspect. Moreover, this comparison might evoke the theoretical background of postcolonialism as a possible point of view in the analysis. As Gertrud Szamosi puts it, “Central European history carries the promise of a multi-layered metahermeneutical interpretation, as our world is rather rich in interpretative networks composed of interwoven acts of mutual colonization”.¹ (Szamosi, *A posztkolonialitás* 418)

While the (re)identification processes of the above mentioned regional literatures were taking place in the 1960s and 1970s in terms of literary history writing, theoretical approaches pointed out – in this very period – that the points of view of spatiality became more significant. As Michel Foucault, who is considered to be one of the forerunners of the spatial turn, pointed out: “The present age may be the age of space instead. We are in an era of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition, of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the scattered.” (Foucault, *Different Spaces* 175)

For Foucault, this statement is connected to revisiting the relationship of space and time, and in the text – as the quotation indicates – synchronicity has more emphasis as opposed to diachronicity. All that points out that besides synchronicity and conjunction, it is a system of interrelationships pictured as spatial, a constellation of individual items that is becoming slowly the focus of attention. Space and spaces were not only revisited in terms of relationships and as a network of links, but simultaneously the question arose how space and space come into existence and what representational processes are displayed. (Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*) The criticism of orientalism mostly connected to Edward Said (Said, *Orientalism*) is closely linked to that, and so is postcolonial theory, which “can be seen as an indirect criticism of eurocentrism based on the political and economic domination of space as well as of the distinction between centre and periphery.” (Dánél, Vincze, “Tér” 182) The questions that appear along with these tendencies are more and more determined by the operations of space creating practices, about which Michel de Certeau says “Space is a practiced place” (Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* 117), and therefore, emphasizes usage and action (and how it is done).

1 All the citations from works not published in English are my translations. F.V.

The Ideology of Periodization

If we look at Lefebvre's premise and look at space as part of a creative means as well as a product of social practice closely related to cultural power relations, space will always have a physical as well as social component. (Hallet, Neumann, "Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur" 14) In the literary histories examined here, spatial terms started to be used, which can easily be identified as the products of spatial practices, and it can also be seen that these methods and the spaces constructed by them have social references. The source texts of my analysis are two literary histories of a well-known period of Hungarian and German literatures from Romania, which offer an overview of these regional literatures from the end of WWII to the 1970s or 1980s based on a set of aspects. The Hungarian literary history was written by Gusztáv Láng and Lajos Kántor, and the work was published first in 1971 (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom*), and in 1973 for the second time with the title *Romániai magyar irodalom 1944–1970* (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom*),² [Hungarian literature from Romania 1944–1970]. The author of the German literary history is Peter Motzan; his book, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik nach 1944* (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik*) [German Poetry from Romania after 1944] came out in 1980, and offered a narrower scope than that of the Hungarian work, focusing on the phenomena of poetry. The reason why these works were chosen for analysis can be found in their reception history, as while Kántor and Láng's work became part of the pivotal literary history ("Spenót") [Spinach] (Béládi ed., *A magyar irodalom története*), published as a series by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, moreover, the final text was written as an assignment from HAS,³ and later reached the status of a "founding text" in terms of the conceptualization of Hungarian literature "from Transylvania" or "from Romania" (Balázs, "Histories" 53), Cristina Tudorică's book on the last period of German literature from Romania partly reproduces the structure of Motzan's work (Tudorică, *Rumäniendeutsche*, 7–62) and becomes a major point of reference in other comprehensive works. (Weber, *Rumäniendeutsche?* 7–11)

2 In the following I refer to the 1973 edition as Kántor–Láng.

3 See: "For the (immediate) history of the book and the launch of the work, I must recall a meeting in Budapest: György Bodnár, senior associate of Institute for Literary Studies of Hungarian Academy of Sciences sent me a message, so we sat down for a face-to-face conversation. [...] He told me that there is an ongoing project, a comprehensive historical overview of Hungarian literature in the institute. [...] The institute's plan is to write a comprehensive overview examining the period between 1945 and 1970, and they count on me to write the part about Hungarian literature in Romania. After a short consideration, I answered on the spot, that I would be able to do this with Gusztáv Láng, but of course, I needed to talk to him. Returning to Cluj, we talked it over with my friend, Gusztáv Láng, got back to the contact, divided the genres and authors between ourselves – and wrote the manuscript." (Kántor, "Láng-dosszié" 27)

It is striking that the forewords of both books offer a precise and detailed explanation for the regional term used in the title, and it is also noteworthy that both works clearly indicate – as early as in the title – the starting point of the overview. The difficulty of the title as well as the social and political referentiality is demonstrated by the difference between the two editions: the scope is from 1945 in the first edition, whereas it starts from 1944 in the second one.⁴ This difference highlights the change in the Romanian political conditions during WWII, i.e. Romania who had been fighting alongside Germany until 23rd August 1944, changed sides on that day by order of King Michael, which marks the beginning of a new era in Romanian history. As Neagu Djuvara puts it: “because we had lost the war against the Soviets, we were now forced – despite promises of protection from the Allies – to adopt a regime imposed by Moscow.” (Djuvara, *A Brief* 405) The clear mark of the starting point of the literary historical overviews as well as the title correction in the second edition of the Hungarian work clearly indicate the fact that the practice of setting up periods in literary history writing was influenced by social and political events. It is no coincidence that the epochal distinction in the titles of the two literary histories indicates 1944 as a starting year, which is the beginning of the new social setting. This temporal mark of the beginning of literary history suggests a spatial perspective as well, in the sense that the starting point of a literary-historical overview is decided by neither immanent or aesthetic features, nor literary historical ones, but is based on an ideologically determined starting point in history, i.e. the re-establishment of the Romanian nation state. The choice of time in these literary histories is also interesting because at this point the perspective of colonization can be detected, if Djuvara’s claims in the above quotation is confronted with the view of history in the texts examined. While the starting date of Hungarian and German literary histories (even if not by choice) is interpreted as a liberation from national socialist influences and interests, Djuvara’s words indicate the forthcoming suppressing Soviet power. In that sense it might be claimed that the colonized status of Romanian society does not change, it is only the colonizer that is different. Moreover, setting an exact point in time is closely related to setting the space, as the date (23rd August 1944) does not only mark Romania’s change of sides, but the development of the territorial integrity of Romania. A territorial concept of space can be detected here, about which Doris Bachmann-Medick says: “It coincided with conception of space rooted

4 “The date of 1945, indicating ‘the liberation’ refers to Hungary; this led to one of the police reports, because our ‘liberation’ was on 23 August 1944. The person, who pressed charges and the ‘authority’ did not consider the fact that the next change of power only took place in Transylvania in October – but regardless, literature does not follow socio-political changes day by day, week by week (as much as it does, of course). So 1945 is the real milestone, or at least more realistic, than 1944. The publisher did not object, so we didn’t either, so the title of the second edition changed.” (Kántor, “Láng-dosszié” 27–28)

in the nation-state, with a view of space and place as static ‘containers’ of cultural traditions that, during the rise of the nation-state, confined culture to a national space with territorial borders.” (Bachmann-Medick, “Spatial Turn” 219) How this idea of container manifests in the practices of regional literary history writing will be examined in the following, with a close eye on Kántor and Láng’s as well as Motzan’s literary histories.

Before I focus on the terms by looking at the attempts of definition in the forewords, it is just as important to mention once again the emphasis placed on the time frame, as it cannot only be interpreted as historical reference but has spatial relevance as indicated above.

The structure of the two literary histories in terms of time is orientative and similar, and so is the spectacularly unfolding, somewhat implied contrast. The first three bigger chapters of Kántor and Láng [Prelude; Life of Literature; Literary Publications, Literary Criticism, Literary History] are indicative and serve as an overview. The chapter titled *Prelude* looks at and summarizes the period before 1944 after a short introduction with a starting point of 1919, the year which found the Romanian society within new borders – after the unification of 1st December 1918.⁵ In this respect Transylvanian Hungarian literature which was considered to be a prelude to Hungarian literature from Romania existed between 1919 and 1944 and it is summarized by this literary history. The opening sentences of the following chapter (“In the development of Romanian society 23rd August 1944 brings a major turning point. Leaving Hitler’s alliance and joining the fight against fascism means the victory of democratic, antifascist forces in the life of the country, and literature also carries the promise of enfolding humanist or revolutionary endeavours” (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 27) clearly reinforce the assumption evoked by the title, i.e. the starting point was chosen based on (socio-)political considerations. In this respect, highlighting the temporal aspect of the structure of Kántor and Láng’s work, it might be claimed that it contrasts the prelude, the old era between 1919 and 1944 with the new era after 1944, and deals with the birth of Hungarian literature from Romania in the latter one. The parts following the three introductory chapters examine the poetry, prose and dramatic works of the era after 1944, and are followed by a bibliographical addition by Andor Réthy, which comprises almost half of the book.

The structure of Peter Motzan’s literary history is similarly organised. After the Vorwort [Foreword] introducing the six big chapters, the next part focuses on the history of literatures in German in the Romanian territory (*Deutschsprachige Literatur im rumänischen Raum*) [German-language Literature in Romanian Areas], and it is followed

5 See: “The extraordinary creation of Greater Romania in December 1918 was the embodiment of a centuries-old dream of the Romanian people: to be united, from the Banat to the Dniester.” (Djuvara, *A Brief* 370)

by the critical commentary on poetry (*Rumäniendeutsche Lyrikreflexion*, 1944–1979) [Reflections on German Poetry from Romania, 1944–1979] and an analysis of German poetry from Romania in the period between 1919 and 1944 (*Rumäniendeutsche Lyrik*, 1919–1944) [German Poetry from Romania, 1919–1944]. The chapter following the foreword, which reflects upon the historical events of German-speaking culture in the region, marks the exact date of 23rd August 1944 twice: first with regard to the new establishment and the German population,⁶ and later with respect to the approximation of German and Romanian culture.⁷ Besides the dates and therefore periodical segmentation, the fourth bigger chapter (*Rumäniendeutsche Lyrik*, 1919–1944) starts with a quotation from Stefan Sienerth, which places the 1918 unification in the centre along with the hope that the life of the German-speaking population would turn for the better.⁸ As we could see in Kántor and Láng's literary history, here also the opening lines of the chapter on the era indicated in the title of the book⁹ highlight the periods by marking the exact date, which not only divides, but contrasts the idea of literature, literary politics and the social setting with those of the previous era.

Both the Hungarian and German literary histories apply similar practices in terms of structure as well as periodization. The dividing points in time are 1919 as well as 23rd August 1944 in both works which mark the beginning of new eras. It is true for both dates that neither

6 See: „Nach dem 23 August 1944 forderte die Situation der deutschen Bevölkerung ein entschlossenes, aber auch taktvolles Vorgehen seitens der neuen Regierung, da jene der Nazi-propaganda besonders stark ausgesetzt gewesen war.” [After 23 August 1944 the status of the German population required decisive but tactful actions on behalf of the new government, as this group was strongly influenced by the Nazi propaganda.] (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 21)

7 “Es ist einleuchtend, daß nach dem 23. August 1944 eine stärkere Annäherung an die rumänische Literatur stattfand.” [Clearly, after 23 August 1944 there was an increased interest in Romanian literature.] (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 31)

8 See: „Gleich nach der Vereinigung Siebenbürgens mit dem Altreich (also nach 1918) glaubte man allgemein, die Bildung einer relativ starken deutschen Minderheit in Rumänien und die verlockenden Versprechungen des bürgerlich-gutsherrlichen Regimes würden jedwelche nationalen Zielsetzungen überflüssig machen”. [After Transylvania's unification with Old Romania (i.e. 1918) it was generally believed, that there would be a strong German minority in Romania, as well as the attractive promises of the bourgeois-gentry regime would make all nationalistic endeavours unnecessary.] (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 56)

9 See: „Die antifaschistische und antiimperialistische Revolution vom 23. August 1944 leitete die soziale und nationale Befreiung Rumäniens ein, führte zum Sturz der Diktatur Ion Antonescus und zum Abbruch der Beziehungen mit Hitlerdeutschland.” [The antifascist and antiimperialist revolution of 23 August 1944 led up to the social and national liberation of Romania, and led to the collapse of Ion Antonescu's dictatorship as well as cutting ties with Hitler's Germany.] (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 84)

reflects the conventional dates of the world wars, but they mark events¹⁰ that are clearly linked to the happenings of the birth of the Romanian state power or its integrity.¹¹ Although forced to do so, the authors of regional literary histories did include the establishment's ideological interpretation of history in the periodization of literatures identified as Hungarian literature from Romania and German literature from Romania, somewhat indicating and demonstrating the eagerness of the colonizer to influence the way in which the topic is handled. Besides, there is a clearly contrasting element in both literary histories when it comes to structure: the literature of the era after 1944 is described as a contrast to the earlier period, as exceeding it and distancing from it: both Kántor and Láng as well as Motzan outline the literary events between the two world wars, and their interpretation is conveyed from the viewpoint of the succeeding chapters dealing with the horizon of and developments leading to the present.

Establishing Concepts and Constructing Spaces

The publication of the two literary histories may be seen as pivotal points in the literary history writing of the region, because the two works are not simply a summary or overview, but they might be treated as attempts for definition, which involve the important practice of renaming or changing terms. I do not claim that the terms indicated in the titles ("Hungarian from Romania" and "rumäniendeutsch" [German from Romania]) appear here for the first time in connection with these literatures, however, as comprehensive literary histories these works are the ones that take stance as literary histories for the first time,¹² i.e. as significant works worthy of attention in literary studies.

10 It can be seen from Lucian Boia's words that the uncertainty around the dates is produced by the spatial aspects of the birth of the new Romanian state. See: „Învinsă, Austro-Ungaria s-a sfărâmat, iar din ruinele ei s-au recompus noi alcătuiri politice. Bucovina s-a unit cu România în noiembrie 1918, iar Transilvania la 1 decembrie, prin votul unei mari adunări românești convocate la Alba Iulia. [...] Tratatetele de pace (cu Ungaria, la Trianon în 1920) au consfințit modificările teritoriale, nu fără dificultăți însă în ce privește trasarea graniței de vest a României.” [The defeated Austria-Hungary was crumpled, but new political formations arose from its ruins. Bukovina united with Romania in November 1918, and Transylvanian on 1 December on grounds of the Romanian national assembly gathered in Alba Iulia. (...) The peace treaties recorded the territorial changes (in 1920 in Trianon with Hungary), not without difficulties in terms of the Western border of Romania.] (Boia, “Cum s-a făcut” 95–96)

11 Imre József Balázs's periodization suggests uncertainty as well: “Hungarian literature from Romania” is born around 1918, at the time of the occupation of Transylvania and/or the national assembly in Alba Iulia; and in terms of international law, in June 1920 with the Trianon Peace Treaty” (Balázs, “Szótáralapítás” 16)

12 Pál Sóni's university handbook mentioned in Kántor and Láng's work is probably not treated as significant due to its university textbook nature. See: (Sóni, *A romániai magyar*)

The first sentences of Kántor and Láng can be viewed as a gesture of legitimization: “the temporal and spatial borders of Hungarian literature from Romania are ready-mades of history. Its date of birth is 1919, its geographical home is Romania.” (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 5) In terms of the physical borders, it is the territory of the state that determines the geographical and geopolitical borders of this literature, so Romania is the birthplace of this literature. The earlier name for the literature born here (“Transylvanian Hungarian literature”) is excluded from literary history with this gesture, and it is done so with the following justification:

Its cradle, its more specific home is Transylvania (which kept its central role in the life of this literature) and the neighbouring parts, but as early as the thirties, Gábor Gaál felt it appropriate to change the word ‘Transylvanian’ for ‘Romanian’ in order to acknowledge the high number of Hungarians outside of Transylvania throughout the country and also because he felt that the issues of national existence were inseparable from the fundamental questions of the whole of the Romanian society. (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 5)

Here Transylvanian was omitted as an earlier attribute of Hungarian literature, and one of the reasons for omission, as the authors point out, is the fact that this Hungarian literature is written all over Romania, and not just in the area of historical Transylvania. In terms of location the contextual extension also means that the phrase “from Romania” serves the identification of this literature better than “Transylvanian”, which is more restrictive in this context and in this sense. Besides, the justification also suggests that the definition of the literature is controlled by social considerations, as it is further elaborated later what is mentioned in the introductory part of Prelude.

Besides the geopolitical borders of the nation state, the authors attempt to outline the “intellectual” borders, by which they mostly mean Romanian social reality, reflected in this literature, as “it responds to it, it is determined by this reality”. (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 5) The “intellectual” borders are not only explored from the point of view of social embeddedness, as when the introductory text says that “it is sameness of ‘political and social conditions’ that connects Hungarian literature from Romania to Romanian literature; the peculiar features of Hungarian literature from Romania which are characteristic of the time and place were carved by the same imperatives of history that formed the whole of Romanian culture” (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 5), so this claim also suggests borders and border crossing from the perspective of simultaneously existing literary systems. In other words “the best works of Romanian and Hungarian

literature from Romania are credited on the same or similar aesthetic and political grounds” (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 5), so the extension of the “intellectual” borders can be seen as an attempt to create a mental space, the geographical and geopolitical frames of which are specified by the Romanian nation state. Ultimately all this represents “the geographer’s major ideational and ideological ‘discourses’” (Soja, “Thirdspace” 266), as Edward Soja puts it, and is covered by the concept of Secondspace, a way in which authors think and write “about this text and about geography”, and how they represent it. (Soja, “Thirdspace” 266) While the introduction of the literary history defines the entity as “Hungarian literature from Romania” with regards to Romanian literature and social environment, the reference to tradition includes Hungarian literature in the explanation of the term, which “is given all the values of national literature as a heritage, from a standard language of literature to a set of values formed by tradition.” (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 6)

Hungarian literature from Romania is defined with respect to two national literatures and in the space of the in-between, as it differs from one in terms of language, whilst in terms of social environment from the other.¹³ In that sense it is demonstrated that a new definition is born not only as part of the dichotomy, but the literary history evokes and imprints trichotomy on the definition, one which shapes the discourse on the topic just by its very existence.¹⁴

13 See: A „romániai magyar irodalom Románia 1919 utáni területén kialakult magyar nyelvű irodalom. Társadalmi meghatározója a romániai társadalmi valóság, valamint a romániai magyarság kisebbségi, illetve 1944 utáni nemzetiségi helyzete. Mindkét vonás megkülönböztető a magyarországi irodalomhoz viszonyítva, amelyhez azonban a nyelv és a kulturális hagyományok tágra értelmezett közössége fűzi.” [The Hungarian literature from Romania is literature in Hungarian developed in the post-1919 territory of Romania. It is socially determined by Romanian social reality, as well as the situation of Hungarians as a minority, and after 1944 as an ethnic group. Both features distinguish it from literature in Hungary, which it is also connected to by the language and shared cultural traditions in the broad sense.] (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 7) [Emphasis in the original work.]

14 The work published in 2018, which we have already cited was co-written by Lajos Kántor and Gusztáv Láng, and it highlights the problem of the definition of literary history in the seventies. As Gusztáv Láng puts it: “The definition which I do not intend to quote here marks two definitive factors of Transylvanian – in general and minority – literatures. One of them is the social, political context they exist in. It is the question, idea and existence of the much-debated concept ‘from Romania’. The other factor is its nature bound to Hungarian literature, and this connection is ensured by the same language and – as we used to say as if from Dodona, aimed at the censor – by the shared nature of literary traditions in the broad sense. I claimed that this definition is no longer valid today, I must say with some satisfaction that it has run a nice course; [...] What do I think is still problematic about it? It is not whether these two factors exist or not, because these are facts, and facts do not need justification. The problem is – and that is what my explanation and other later ones suggest – that the co-existence of these two factors result in some kind of emulsion. We must come to recognize [...], that these two factors do not complement each other, moreover, they might be contrasting.” (Láng, “Séta” 16)

At this point, we must examine the relationship of the “new” definition with tradition, more specifically, its two distinguishable and closely related aspects. When looking at the present or the recent past (the period from 1944), the effects and expectations of literary politics can be seen clearly, but the narrative and emphases of the literary history also apply all that in order to describe the past, i.e. the text marks the past, somehow ideologically colonizing the earlier period (1919–1944) by the very act of using the term. Kántor and Láng’s book mentions in the very first paragraph in connection with Gábor Gaál, the editor of *Korunk*, that he “felt justified to change the attribute ‘Transylvanian’ to ‘Romanian’.” (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 5) Certainly, it is no coincidence that the editor of *Korunk* (considered to be a rival of *Erdélyi Helikon* or *Pásztortűz*) was quoted by the authors, and nor is it an accident that in the chapter on literary history writing and critical comments Gábor Gaál’s profile as an editor, critic and literary historian is the most detailed (Edgár Balogh who was known for his ties to the left wing could also be mentioned here as having a detailed description. Kántor and Láng’s book refers to Gaál’s 1937 article in *Korunk* which goes: “It is hasty to talk about Transylvanian Hungarian literature. Not because there is no Hungarian literature in Transylvania. There is. It is hasty because Transylvania is just a part of Romania. There is a great number of Hungarians outside of Transylvania”. (Gaál, “Transzilvániai-e” 214) It also says:

Transylvania is a historical concept. It is an old Hungarian category of the estates, with a solid meaning and clear outlines. An honourable realm of Hungarian cultural tradition. But only a tradition. A concluded, finished, unrevivable scope of cultured Hungarians. This Transylvania ceased to exist a long time ago, it didn’t use to exist even before the change of power, and since then the category not only failed to be reborn, but has been disintegrated for good. (Gaál, “Transzilvániai-e” 214)

It can be seen that by referring to Gaál’s text, the authors of the literary history highlight his gesture of trying to find a new term as early as in the 1930s (i.e. from the point of view of the work), before 1944, in other words, within an earlier political regime. The ideological practice of literary history reveals itself, if we make note of literary historian György Kristóf’s much earlier work of literary history published in 1924, which – for the first time – draws attention to the tension between the attributes “Transylvanian” and “Romanian” in terms of the problem of space:

Let us not speak of Transylvanian literature, but examine Hungarian literature from Romania. Let us not think about the life of Transylvanian literature, but

about organising Hungarian literature in Romania. The attribute 'Transylvanian' excludes, forgets or considers everything alien that is outside of the geographical territory and spirit of old Transylvania. Hungarian from Romania includes everything that is Hungarian in this country [...] (Kristóf, "A romániai" 287)

Certainly, when it comes to György Kristóf, it must be noted that his early proposal for the term is not independent from his affiliation with his institution – as György Gaál's lexicon entry says: "from April 1922 he is the acting substitute lecturer of the Romanian university in Cluj, from 1926 a permanent teacher, lecturer of Hungarian language and literature, the only Hungarian university professor from the region at the time." (Gaal, "Kristóf" 265) Besides, he was an editor of *Cultura*, a quadrilingual journal, which was launched in 1924 in Cluj, and was cancelled the same year due to lack of state funding. (Mikó, "Cultura" 311) The journal that published articles in French, Romanian, Hungarian and German – as Imre Mikó writes in his paper originally published in *Korunk* in 1965 – can be placed next to "the joint publication of Sámuel Brassai and Hugó Meltzl's, *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok* (Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum) launched in 1877" (Mikó, "Közös" 122), and it can be seen as a successor of this journal and with a purpose of nationalities in Romania [...] learning about each other." (Mikó, "Közös" 123) Certainly *Cultura* was not free of political considerations, either (involvement of League of Nations after WWI), as its editor was Sextil Pușcariu, "who was a permanent member of the League of Nations delegation in Romania at the time". (Mikó, "Közös" 122)

If the aim of Kántor and Láng's literary history had been to identify the earliest appearance of the term and its use as a definition, Kristóf's text could (also) have been set as an example in the introduction, as Gábor Gaál's piece published in *Korunk* was born much later, and it could not be perceived separately from the ongoing debates of the time on the function and tasks of literature. In this respect, highlighting Gaál's text and the detailed profile of the editor later rewrites and replaces the emphases about the period between 1919 and 1944 retrospectively. Besides, outlining the institutional background of György Kristóf also indicates that highlighting Kristóf's text would have possibly evoked some aspects of tradition that would not have served beneficially from the point of view of literary politics.

Peter Motzan's literary history does not set out to provide an overview of the whole of German literature from Romania, as the title indicates, it only examines the history of poetry between 1944 and 1980, but the author clarifies in the foreword that the subject is to be defined and the development of this literature in the 20th century is to be looked at. (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 7–9) That essentially indicates

there had not been a comprehensive work about German literature from Romania, which would have recorded the debates and concerns around the attempts for definition in terms of identity that took place in the sixties and seventies. Before Motzan's literary history, Gerhard Csejka who is considered to be the one who introduced the term, pointed out in 1971 that German literature from Romania defines itself as opposed to two national literatures, i.e. he examines it in a clearly identifiable state of the in-between. (Csejka, "Eigenständigkeit") Therefore, Motzan's definition had its prelude, which repeatedly referred to the changed socio-political conditions as well as the new framework of a nation-state.

The title of the second chapter – *Deutschsprachige Literatur im rumänischen Raum* [Literature in German in the Romanian space] displays a gesture of space construction, and prepares the introduction of "German literature from Romania". With the first sentence, this literature is defined: „Die zeitgenössische rumäniendeutsche Literatur ist die Literatur der mitwohnenden deutschen Nationalität in Rumänien.” (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 10) [Contemporary German literature from Romania is the literature of the German nationality living together in Romania.] In what follows, the text elaborates on the meaning of the phrase "mitwohnend" [living together], and cites Eduard Eisenburger's text (Eisenburger, "Von unserem Werdegang" 265–266) – "living together" in the sense that an ethnic group lives together with other nationalities or ethnicities in the same area. However, the text does not proceed as one would expect reading the phrase "living together", i.e. it does not define its subject in relation to other nationalities, but cites Eisenburger as well as the writer Alfred Kittner, and comes to the conclusion that "German literature from Romania" is not born out of a homogenous tradition, but is a unification ["Zusammenschluß"]¹⁵ of various, culturally different groups of people who share the same language. This is the point where the chapter title becomes meaningful as highlighting this threefold tradition clearly indicates that literary history writing distinguishes between German-speaking communities in historical regions and therefore their literatures too. The rhetorical structure of the text is noteworthy, as it speaks about the unity of three literatures that had been treated as different and separate. Later it gives a comprehensive account of the cultural and historical tradition of these three regions and then it examines them in detail. Therefore, the chapter title writes itself onto the above mentioned three regions with a significant space constructing move, moreover, it overwrites these regions' connection to the establishment, although it does that very similarly to colonization: the clear distinction between the various territories

15 See: „Das, was wir heute rumäniendeutsche Literatur nennen, ist aus der Vereinigung dreier Ströme entstanden: der deutschen Dichtung des Banats, Siebenbürgens und der Bukowina.” [What we call German literature from Romania today, is born out of the unity of three streams, the literatures of Banat, Transylvania and Bukovina.] Alfred Kittner is quoted in (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 10)

that belong to the Austro-Hungarian Empire disappears, and they are dissolved in the Romanian space – more specifically, in the Romanian nation state. At the same time it must be noted that while tradition is demonstrated throughout the logics and argumentation of the text from the perspective of unification or revealing colonization, it still fixes these regions, their traditions and – last but not least – their linguistic differences. That kind of description of Germans from Romania reappears later, i.e. this one serves as an example – for example in Cristina Tudorică's book quoted earlier. (Tudorică, *Rumäniendeutsche* 18–27)

As the historical and cultural tradition of these regions is mentioned, Peter Motzan places the linguistic differences of these groups in focus. Besides, the author points out another significant difference: the problem of the difference between spoken and written language. The spoken language variants of the Swabians in Banat, Transylvanian Saxons and Germans in Bukovina are naturally different from each other. However, not only this or these oppositions are important, the intercomparative perspective includes the German dialect spoken in the German-speaking nation states, with its similarities and differences: while Transylvanian Saxon is significantly different, Swabian in Banat is much closer to them (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 25), Motzan says; in terms of German in Bukovina the connecting link is "Austrian-German", with reference to Karl Kurt Klein. (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 25) Due to the linguistic relationships as described above written language is determined by these, and Motzan does not exclude the effect of the Romanian linguistic context, which is strongly present in the linguistic definition of the so-called "German literature from Romania".

The Romanian-speaking context is examined in the chapter on internal and external influences, from (mainly) the perspective of literary political practices involving Romanian–German translations published in books or journals. Motzan points out that while this has a significant impact on the representation of Romanian literature in the pan-Germanic language area, it is unavoidable that Romanian literature has an impact on the development of German literature from Romania in terms of either themes or poetic form. (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 31) Besides the Romanian language and social context, the connection with German ethnic literatures (not treated as one unit to be a point of reference), considering their traditions once again creates a manifold in-between position: on the one hand some kind of German-speaking unification or synthesis of the culturally and linguistically different regions (Banat, Transylvania, Bukovina), in other words an intersection of sets, and on the other hand as a phenomenon between Romanian literature (and social context) and German literatures, and therefore it has or can have the features and characteristics of both. While Romanian literature has an impact when it comes to translations, the relationship with German and regional German ethnic literatures is demonstrated well in the quotation below:

[...] so darf man schlußfolgern, daß die Traditionsbildung durch die Stärke exogener Einflüsse erschwert wurde. Rainer Maria Rilke stand Wolf Aichelburg näher als Eduard Schullerus, zwischen Paul Celan und Irene Mokka sind die Analogien evidenter als zwischen dieser und Hans Diplich, Anemone Latzina fühlte sich eher von Bertold Brecht als von Adolf Meschendörfer angezogen, nicht Hans Kehrer's, sondern Marin Sorescu's Texte entsprachen dem Lyrikverständnis Richard Wagners. (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 35)

[...] therefore, we might conclude that the making of traditions was made difficult by strong external influences. Reiner Maria Rilke is closer to Wolf Aichelburg than Eduard Schullerus; the analogies between Paul Celan and Irene Mokka are more evident than between Celan and Hans Diplich, Anemone Latzina belonged more to the circle of Bertold Brecht than to that of Adolf Meschendörfer, and Richard Wagner's approach to poetry resembles not Hans Kehrer's but Marin Sorescu's texts.]

It is quite clear that the construction of German literature from Romania is represented in a spatial arrangement, which places it between two literatures (Romanian and German-speaking) in terms of the impacts. Moreover, it seems evident that the concept itself is used in a collective sense due to the structure of Motzan's text to indicate the literature of culturally different German-speaking groups of people in Romania.

A Promise of an In-between Space

When comparing the space constructing actions of Kántor and Láng's as well as Motzan's literary histories, it can be claimed that in both cases the literature discussed is to be found in the in-between, and this medial nature is formed fundamentally with respect to two national literatures. However, due to one of the poles which is Romanian literature and its social context, the concepts are imprinted by literary and mainly (social) political aspects, as "Romanian social reality" (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 7) appears a significant – integrative – element, which determines the development of literature as an economic, political and state organisational environment. (Motzan, *Die rumäniendeutsche Lyrik* 10)

There is a display of significant colonizing gesture, which is also connected to the appearance of the term "Romanian". While it might be less perceivable in the Hungarian literary history, as "only" the attribute "Transylvanian" is changed, the introduction of the German literary history makes this phenomenon more significant due to its own tradition. When the phrase "German from Romania" stands in front of the given literature instead of Transylvanian Saxon, Swabian from Banat or German from Bukovina, it not only unifies, but eliminates the spatial

markedness of these literatures, in fact, it eliminates the earlier status of being bound to space, and designates the arrangement of a different space. All that becomes highlighted in terms of language when it comes to German-speaking literatures, because – as I mentioned in relation to Motzan – the attributes did not use to signal territorial boundedness and regions but the language variant of that context, which (to use Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s phrase) became deterritorialized. (Deleuze, Guattari, *Kafka* 16–17) An interpretative attempt when looking at Kántor and Láng’s work with an eye on the German literary history highlights the act of colonization in the phrase “Hungarian literature from Romania” as well as the elimination of the earlier historical region.

Also looking at the two literary histories from each other’s horizon, makes the interpretation open to the act of silencing both in literary and (evidently) political sense. Both literary histories represent a bipolar social context that can be seen as of dual nature, and the literary scene is presented to the reader as a predominantly bilingual space: in Kántor and Láng’s work it is Hungarian–Romanian and in Motzan’s it is German–Romanian. Peter Motzan uses (and interprets) the idea of “living together” (*mitwohnend*) many times in the introduction, Kántor and Láng do not set out to do so in the chapter of the status of literature and phrasing, only later; they make a short digression in connection with András Sütő in terms of the birthplace of the writer: “in this heterogeneous village with Romanian and Hungarian population he learned the rules of living together, the necessity of people with different mother tongues respecting each other.” (Kántor, Láng, *Romániai magyar irodalom* 194) While the Hungarian literary history only deals with the situation of the Hungarian population and their literature as ethnic literature, the German one elaborates the idea of “living together”, but fails to name another ethnicity or their literature as a potential aspect in the social and literary context. The comparative analysis of the two literary histories points out that works displaying similar colonization practices seem to ignore and remain silent about the very presence of another ethnic literature, while defining the identity of their own literature and emphasizing their own traditions. In this sense the act of silencing itself and placing it into one of the poles described above can also be interpreted as an act of colonization, because the two literary histories construct a social and literary space that altogether can be described as intercultural. This space constructed as intercultural can be seen homogeneous from the perspective of the ethnic group, as in the in-between as well as on the periphery there is only one ethnic literature: either German or Hungarian. When Homi Bhabha says that postcolonial approach “[a]s a mode of analysis, it attempts to revise those nationalist or ‘nativist’ pedagogies that set up the relation of Third World and First World in a binary structure of opposition” (Bhabha, “The Postcolonial” 173), and the claim about revision is valid in this case, as a contrast of the two literary histories eliminates

majority–minority or centre–periphery displayed as binary oppositions. It is by the very act of comparison that the gesture that colonizes the periphery or minority position can be identified and eliminated, which conceals the heterogeneous and hybrid nature of the in-between space. In this sense the colonised is seen as colonizer.

It is no coincidence that Edward J. Soja quotes Bhabha when speaking about thirdspace: “For willingness to descend into that alien territory [...] may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture, based on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s *hybridity*.”¹⁶ The alien territory in this case is the very space, the characteristics of which are concealed by Hungarian and German literary histories and which can be revealed only by their comparison, by implementing a transnational perspective and approach.

The outlines of an “in-between space” [Zwischenraum] appear, which – to quote Sigrid Weigel: “establishe[s] [itself] as the leading theory within minority discourse. Forging a counter-discourse, however, should not proceed from a vantage point that opposes cultures, but from one situated in-between.” (Weigel, “On the “Topographical” 191) The counter discourse is aimed at eliminating not only the national–national or national–ethnic discourse sets in terms of the above literatures in Romania, but the gestures of colonization which reveal the logics of homogeneous minority spaces in an earlier sense or that of mapping based on silencing or exclusion. All that has a great significance, because the German and Hungarian literary history writing after 1990 remains to partly use the earlier colonisation practices – even if along the lines of different logics and the rearrangement of traditions (without present considerations). In terms of German literature, the practice of extension or expansion of cultural and literary space remains within the national perspective when it comes to South-eastern European German or South-eastern German literatures, similarly to Hungarian literary history writing, which is not moved out of that, either by the gesture of eliminating the local or regional attributes of “Hungarian literature beyond the borders” with no respect to this in-between space.¹⁷ Ignoring this in-between space also means discarding the counter-discourse, which would create a fertile presence for new perspectives, transnational

16 Bhabha is quoted by (Soja, “Thirdspace” 275)

17 It is necessary to mention the Romanian literary history edited by Eugen Simion, which has a dictionary format, and tackles heterogeneity in terms of space, which heterogeneity is due to the literatures in various languages that are born in the area of Romania. The various entries (e.g. *Literatura în limba germană în spațiul românesc* [Literature in German in Romanian space], *Literatura în limba idiș în spațiul românesc* [Literature in Yiddish in Romanian space], *Literatura în limba maghiară în spațiul românesc* [Literature in Hungarian in Romanian space]) demonstrate the linguistic and cultural difference and indicate the dominance of a national space in this form. See: (Simion, *Dicționarul* 745–743). [The entry with Hungarian relevance was written by Imre József Balázs.]

and transcultural approaches. As Andreas Herzog put it in words twenty years ago when referring to one of Motzan's later papers (Motzan, "Die Szenerien" 73–102): "instead of keeping in contact with the linguistic mother country or cultural nation, more attention should be paid to the comparison of literatures in the immediate surroundings." (Herzog, "Transkulturalität" 33)

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