

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**Reading and Writing In and Between
Languages: The Dynamics of Multilingual
Literary Creation**

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**ABSTRACTS &
SPEAKERS' BIOS**





Mateusz Antoniuk, Jagiellonian University of Krakow

Translator at Work. Czesław Miłosz between languages

ABSTRACT

Czesław Miłosz (1911-2004), the greatest Polish poet of the 20th century, winner of the Nobel Prize in literature (1980), was also a prolific, eminent translator. In his archive one can find numerous rough drafts and working holographs, that give us insight into the translator's workshop. In my talk, based on the evidence of manuscripts, I will examine the creative process, that led Miłosz to his published translations of poems by another Polish poet, Anna Świrszczyńska (1909-1984). I will try to argue that Miłosz, while dealing with Świrszczyńska's poetry, regularly faced one recurrent problem of both lexical and philosophical nature.

BIO NOTE

Mateusz Antoniuk is a Professor of Polish Literature at the Jagiellonian University of Kraków, Poland. His field of research includes theory and practice of genetic criticism as well as the history of modern Polish literature. Founder and head of the Centre for Creativity Research (at the Jagiellonian University), member of the board of the international conference series “Genesis – City – Year”. He is the author of several books and essays, devoted to creative processes, modern manuscripts, archives and 20th century Polish literature, and the editor and textual scholar to the works of the eminent Polish poets and writers: Czesław Miłosz, Witold Gombrowicz and Zbigniew Herbert. Recently he has published: “Les memory studies et la critique génétique: une rencontre possible” (“Genesis” 59, 2024), “The Unfinished Text in the Thickening Description: From Genetic Criticism to Cultural Transfer Studies” (“Textual Cultures”, vol. 13, no 2, 2020).



Olga Beloborodova, University of Antwerp

Translating a Self-Translator: Beckett-Tophoven Collaboration as a Creative Translingual Ecology

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the long-standing collaboration between Samuel Beckett and his German translators, Elmar and Erika Tophoven, framing it as a case of creative translingual ecology. Drawing on materials from the Tophoven Archive in Straelen, Germany, it addresses the paradox of the translator's archival presence and historical invisibility. While translators are often effaced in literary history, the Tophovens' extensive documentation – notes, drafts, and recorded discussions – offers rare insight into the collaborative processes underlying the German translation of Beckett's oeuvre.

Using Patrick Hersant's typology of collaborative translation (2017), this paper identifies multiple modes of interaction between Beckett and the Tophovens, rooted in a long-lasting friendship and ranging from consultative exchanges to deeply integrated co-creative practices. Beckett's own fluency in German and his experience as a self-translator complicate traditional hierarchies between author and translator, positioning him as an active participant within a multilingual creative network.

The paper also delves into a number of methodological challenges. Much of the collaboration between Beckett and the Tophovens took place in undocumented meetings, leaving much room for (informed) speculation on the distribution of creative input between the author and the translator. Furthermore, while the archive is exceptionally rich, its stewardship by the Tophoven family raises questions about long-term accessibility and preservation. Through selected examples, the paper demonstrates how translation emerges not as secondary reproduction but as a site of literary production in its own right. It concludes by proposing the Beckett-Tophoven collaboration as a model of creative translingual ecology, in which authorship, (self-) translation, and language intersect, adding to our understanding of a complex dynamic between agency and authority that any literary translation process entails.

BIO NOTE

Olga Beloborodova is a Postdoctoral Researcher and Lecturer at the Department of Literature, University of Antwerp (Centre for Manuscript Genetics). She has published extensively on Samuel Beckett, cognition and genetic criticism. Her first monograph, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's 'Play' / 'Film'* (Bloomsbury) was published in 2019. Her second book, *Postcognitivist Beckett* (Cambridge University Press), came out in 2020. Together with Dirk Van Hulle, she has edited *A Comparative History of the Literary Draft in Europe*, an essay collection that was released in open access by John Benjamins in November 2024. She is a member of the Editorial Board of the *Beckett Digital Manuscript Project*. She is currently finalizing the digital editions of Beckett's short play *Play* and his only film script *Film* for the BDMP, to be published online in 2026.



João Dionísio, University of Lisbon

“The seefahrer” by M. S. Lourenço: multilingualism without genesis

ABSTRACT

This presentation focuses on a poem by M. S. Lourenço (1936–2009) which is arguably the most overtly multilingual work in the history of 20th-century Portuguese literature. The paper begins with a brief discussion of compositional issues in the absence of genetic materials. The subsequent overview of multilingual practices throughout the history of Portuguese literature suggests that the analysed poem does not belong to this literary tradition, but instead draws on Ezra Pound’s poetics. A general profile of 'The Seefahrer' then provides the framework for a source analysis of its section 4, organised around three questions: Wherefrom? What are the modes of appropriation at play? What for? Tentative answers to these questions discuss concepts such as 'non-marginalia' (Gellhaus), 'extraction' (Ferrer) and 'code-switching' (Grutman). The conclusion reflects on the current debate surrounding the political implications of multilingualism (Grønlie), as seen through the lens of Lourenço’s poem.

BIO NOTE

João Dionísio is Associate Professor of Portuguese Literature at the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon, where he directs the area of Literatures, Arts and Cultures. He has taught as a Visiting Professor at King’s College London, University of L’Aquila, and University of Parma, and was President of the European Society for Textual Scholarship from 2013 to 2016. His research focuses on the interaction between textual materiality and hermeneutics. His most recent publications include editions of *O Labirinto da Saudade* by Eduardo Lourenço (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2023) and *Frei Luís de Sousa* by Almeida Garrett (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 2022).



Daniel Ferrer, ITEM, CNRS/ENS

James Joyce between languages

ABSTRACT

There are many examples of multilingual manuscripts preparing for monolingual works (Petrarch, Solomos) but in the case of James Joyce's ultimate book we seem to have a very different situation: *Finnegans Wake* is well known for its multilingual puns and its use of approximately 72 different languages, but if we look at its earliest drafts, they are purely monolingual (if such a thing exists). How can we explain such a situation?

BIO NOTE

Daniel Ferrer Director of Research Emeritus at the Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes in Paris, is the editor of the journal *Genesis*, which he founded 35 years ago with Almuth Grésillon. He has published on Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner, Poe, Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, Proust, Barthes and Hélène Cixous, painting, digital humanities, film theory and genetic criticism. His most recent books are *Genetic Joyce: Manuscripts and the Dynamics of Creation* (University Press of Florida, 2023), *Genetic Criticism and its Logics. The Draft and the Text* (Edinburgh University Press, 2025, translation of *Logiques du brouillon. Modèles pour une critique génétique*, 2011) and an edition of *Virginia Woolf's Reading Notebooks 14 and 46* (Brepols, 2025).



Julia Holter, Catholic University of Angers

Pushkin Multilingual

ABSTRACT

About 20% of the Pushkin manuscripts that we have are bilingual. Of these, only 7% relate exclusively to artistic creation. Such a relatively low percentage is explained, of course, by the fact that the main language of the "adult" work of the writer is Russian. However, we know that bilingual writers are guided in parallel by both languages in their creative process, though their functions may be different. Even though the majority of Pushkin's survived plans are formalized in French, the plans for three texts, "The Guests Were Arriving at the Dacha", "The Russian Pelham" and "At the Waters of the Caucasus", display abundant cases of code-switching between Russian and French-- as well as between writing and drawing. Rather than an exception, I see the bilingual plans as tangible proof of linguistic interferences used to the benefits of creativity. Having chosen one language for recording the plan, the author cannot completely "turn off" the second: the "noise" of the latter is always nearby. It intrudes and informs all literary production, and its intrusions visibly satisfy the author - otherwise, strikethroughs and corrections appear in the drafts. I argue that, semiotically speaking, Pushkin's multilingual talent was decisive in the formation of modern Russian.

BIO NOTE

Julia Holter was a Visiting Professor at Seijo University in Tokyo this year, where she taught genetic criticism. She is a Lecturer at the Catholic University in Angers and at the Nantes-Saint-Nazaire School of Fine Arts, and an associate researcher with the Multilingualism, Translation, Creation research group at ITEM. She is the author of the book *Le Clair-Obscur extrême-contemporain: Pierre Bergounioux, Pierre Michon, Patrick Modiano and Pascal Quignard* (Brill, 2017), as well as of articles devoted to modern and contemporary translators and writers. With Jean-Claude Pinson, she co-translated the contemporary Russian poets Anna Glazova and Vladimir Aristov, and is currently translating *Aesthetic Fragments* by Gustav Shpet (1879-1937), a Russian philosopher and linguist.



Dirk Van Hulle, University of Oxford


Invisible intertextuality: veiling erudition through bilingual epigenesis

ABSTRACT

Whereas ‘exogenesis’ focuses on a writer’s interaction with external source texts, ‘intertextuality’ (in the 1960s spirit of the term’s coinage) emphasizes the experience of the reader: the *reader’s* perception of a link between a text and other texts. This makes ‘intertextuality’ rather impractical as an instrument for literary studies, since ‘the’ reader does not exist. Any reader can read anything as an allusion to another text. To many theorists of intertextuality in the final decades of the twentieth century, the idea of bringing the writer’s exogenesis into play, may have seemed – at first sight – a return to what Kristeva called a banal form of ‘critique des sources’, or a form of intentional fallacy or ‘consulting the oracle’, as Wimsatt and Beardsley would have called it. But even if one knows which external source texts played a role in the genesis, the question remains how ‘intertextual’ the resulting text actually is, because exogenesis is not only about inserting intertextual reference into a draft, but also about undoing or withdrawing them. This paper examines the role of self-translation in the process of veiling (showing and hiding) allusions in bilingual writings, resulting sometimes in ‘invisible intertextuality’.

BIO NOTE

Dirk Van Hulle is Research Professor of English Literature at the University of Antwerp and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford. He is director of the Oxford Centre for Textual Editing and Theory (OCTET), director of the Centre for Manuscript Genetics at the University of Antwerp, co-director of the MLA award-winning *Beckett Digital Manuscript Project* (www.beckettarchive.org), and PI of the ERC project ‘MARGINAL: Modern Authors Reading: Genesis in Authors’ Libraries’ (2026-2030). His book publications include the monographs *Textual Awareness* (Michigan UP, 2004); *Modern Manuscripts* (Bloomsbury, 2014) and *Genetic Criticism: Tracing Creativity in Literature* (Oxford UP, 2022), *Write Cut Rewrite* (Bodleian Library Publishing, 2024, with Mark Nixon), and *The Making of Samuel Beckett's Murphy* (Brill De Gruyter, 2026 forthcoming).



Wojciech Kruszewski, Catholic University of Lublin
*Literary Genesis and the Problem of Self-Translation in
Maria Bechczyc-Rudnicka*

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the creative documentation of Maria Bechczyc-Rudnicka's short story *Ku nowym brzegom* (Toward New Shores) as a case study in bilingual literary genesis and its relationship to self-translation. Bechczyc-Rudnicka, born in Warsaw in 1888 into a Russian-speaking family and later received as a Polish writer, worked independently in both languages across three decades, producing one Russian manuscript, three Russian typescripts, and six Polish typescripts, along with an abridged version. The paper argues that this genesis proceeds not in two but in three currents, each with its own distinct creative logic, and that the differences between them cannot be accounted for by any model of self-translation that treats the process as essentially reproductive.

Drawing on the material evidence of the archive, the paper examines two kinds of divergence between the three currents. The first concerns a pattern of lexical withdrawal visible in both the Russian and Polish witnesses, shaped by the pressures of ideological context and anticipated readership. The second concerns a fundamental reorientation of thematic movement: where the Russian current enacts one kind of transformation through music, the Polish current redirects the same material toward a different one. Taken together, these divergences suggest that the process of self-translation was not a secondary, reproductive act but an independent current of literary genesis – one that generated its own creative logic from the outset. The paper concludes by situating this finding within recent scholarship on multilingual writers, arguing that self-translation is most productively understood not as the transfer of a finished text into another language, but as a generative creative practice in its own right – one whose true character becomes visible only through the evidence of the archive.

BIO NOTE

Wojciech Kruszewski is Associate Professor at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, literary scholar, and academic editor. Affiliated with the Institute of Literary Studies at KUL, where he has served as the head of the Department of Textual Studies and Scholarly Editing since 2015. He has also been a visiting professor at institutions such as the University of Ottawa (Canada) and Xi'an International Studies University (China). His research focuses primarily on 19th- and 20th-century Polish literature. He is the author of three monographs. He has also prepared critical editions of literary works, especially those of Anna Kamieńska, including her collected poems and notebooks, and Adam Mickiewicz's "Dziady" (The Forefathers).



Kostis Pavlou, Open University of Cyprus

*Multiplying Genetic Creativity: Traces and Uses of Solomos's
Multilingual Virtual Library*

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the work of the major Greek poet Dionysios Solomos (1798-1857), with particular attention to his multilingual practice as both reader and writer. An initial introductory section outlines the historical, cultural, and social context of Solomos's bilingualism and provides a concise overview of his multilingual oeuvre. It also offers a succinct analysis of the poet's interlingual method of composition during his mature Greek period (c. 1824–1849) – a phase in which, broadly speaking, Italian primarily functions as a planning tool and Greek as the medium of textualisation – along with the main strategies evident in his manuscripts, such as the functional separation of languages (involving processes of translation and adaptation) and code-switching.

A second, more analytical section considers Solomos as a reader, reconstructing elements of his multilingual virtual library and highlighting his interlingual note-taking techniques. In conclusion, the paper traces the interplay between reading and writing, particularly the interaction between exogenetic and endogenetic processes, thereby shedding light on the persistent, multifaceted, and highly dynamic creative processes underlying the genesis of his mature works.

BIO NOTE

Kostis Pavlou, PhD in Modern Greek Language and Literature (Sorbonne Paris IV), is Adjunct Professor of Modern Greek Literature at the Open University of Cyprus and Director of the Centre for Literary and Cultural Studies (KELOPOS). He is also affiliated as external associate with the Institute of Modern Texts and Manuscripts (ITEM, CNRS/ENS, Paris). His research interests include Modern Greek and comparative literature, genetic criticism (*critique génétique*), literary multilingualism, narratology and Modern Greek and comparative metrics. He has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and has edited volumes, including *Autografi letterari romanzi e neogreci* (SARGON, Padova, 2015).



Karolina Górniak-Prasnal, Jagiellonian University of Krakow

Becoming a Poet in Exile: The Case of Tymoteusz Karpowicz – Archive, Multilingualism, Translation

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the work of Tymoteusz Karpowicz (1921–2005) through the lenses of exile and multilingualism. It focuses on the poet's archive, housed at the National Ossoliński Institute, as a space that shaped his poetics and functioned as a multilingual workshop. The study explores how his emigration to the USA in 1973 and his immersion in a foreign linguistic and cultural environment influenced his writing, and whether multilingualism can serve as a productive interpretative framework.

The methodology combines biographical and geopoetic approaches with elements of genetic criticism and archival studies. Particular attention is given to Karpowicz's use of index cards (fiches) as tools for academic work, English language learning, and poetic inspiration. The analysis also examines the presence of English in the archive and its intertextual links with English literature.

Karpowicz's archive is treated as an integral part of his poetic project. Multilingualism—evident in English quotations, notes, and learning materials—played a key role in shaping his creative process and theoretical reflection on language. He also engaged in translation, including co-translating a volume by Władysław Jan Burzawa, and collaborated with translators such as Frank Kujawinski and Tomasz Tabako. His work reflects multiple, often overlapping roles: poet, academic, language learner, translator, essayist, and critic. The archive further reveals a characteristic openness and incompleteness, reflecting his view of each text as a “work in progress”.

The conclusions emphasise the importance of the archive in literary creation and call for further research into the relationship between multilingualism, exile, and the poetics of the Polish neo-avant-garde. A key interpretative concept is movement—understood as a form of ongoing transgression or remaining in motion. This is evident both in Karpowicz's biography, marked by migration and multilingualism, and in his writing, which intersects multiple literary forms and languages, particularly Polish and English.

BIO NOTE

Karolina Górniak-Prasnal, Ph.D. in Humanities, literature scholar, comparatist, and editor. She is a lecturer in the Department of Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Polish Studies at Jagiellonian University. Member of the editorial board of the 'Wielogłos' [Polylogue] journal. Author of two monographs: „Otwieranie wszechświata”. Polska powojenna awangarda poetycka: Tymoteusz Karpowicz i Krystyna Miłobędzka [“Opening the world”. Polish postwar avant-garde poetry: Tymoteusz Karpowicz and Krystyna Miłobędzka] (2022) and Dwudziestowieczna poezja polska w kontekście anglo-amerykańskiego modernizmu. Słaje zadrzewne Tymoteusza Karpowicza i The Pisan Cantos Ezry Pounda [Twentieth-century Polish poetry in the context of Anglo-American modernism. Słaje zadrzewne by Tymoteusz Karpowicz and The Pisan Cantos by Ezra Pound] (2016). Her academic interests include: contemporary Polish and Anglo-American poetry, comparative literature, the history of modernism, the avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde, as well as intermedia studies on literature and the visual arts.