



Plurilingual Literary Spaces

Tristan Leperlier

► To cite this version:

Tristan Leperlier. Plurilingual Literary Spaces. Francosphères, 2021, Traduire, la contrainte, 10 (2), pp.185-203. 10.3828/franc.2021.14 . hal-03375469

HAL Id: hal-03375469

<https://hal.science/hal-03375469>

Submitted on 6 Jan 2022

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Plurilingual literary spaces

Tristan Leperlier

*Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) and
Columbia University*

In this article, I define the notion of a plurilingual literary space. While drawing from Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, I adopt a critical stance towards the highly autonomous, territorialized, and monolingual French case that he studied. Even though language is the material that the writers work with, the legitimate representation of the nation remains the major issue for non-central literary spaces, among which are plurilingual spaces. I elaborate on a typology of plurilingual literary spaces, which are heavily related to the political structure and language policies of the state. Then I concentrate on one of the types, that of plurilingual literary fields, where the language issue is the most significant. I argue that tensions or collaborations between the different linguistic groups depend on the symbolic balance of power between them as well as on official language policies. The most autonomous writers do not always desire to build bridges across language barriers, and they would sometimes rather create identity walls. I distinguish between unitarian policies that lead some linguistically dominated writers to reject collaborations and monolingual policies which lead the autonomous writers to reject the linguistic divisions.

Keywords: plurilingualism, language policies, literary fields, Bourdieu, sociology of literature, writers' strategies

Je développe dans cet article la notion d'espace littéraire plurilingue. Tout en s'inspirant de la théorie des champs de Pierre Bourdieu, l'article prend ses distances avec le cas français qu'il a développé, à la fois très autonome, territorialisé et monolingue. Par ailleurs, même si la langue est le matériau avec lequel les écrivains travaillent, la représentation légitime de la nation reste la question majeure pour les espaces littéraires non centraux, parmi lesquels se trouvent les espaces plurilingues. Cette analyse aboutit à une typologie des espaces littéraires plurilingues, qui sont fortement liés à la structure politique et aux politiques linguistiques de l'État. L'article se concentre ensuite sur l'un des types dégagés, les champs littéraires plurilingues, pour lesquels la question de la langue est la plus importante. Je montre que les tensions ou les collaborations entre les différents groupes linguistiques dépendent à la fois du rapport de force symbolique entre eux et des politiques linguistiques officielles. Les écrivains les plus autonomes ne souhaitent pas toujours construire des ponts de part et d'autre de la frontière linguistique, et peuvent vouloir plutôt ériger des murs identitaires. Je distingue entre les politiques unitaristes, qui amènent certains écrivains dominés linguistiquement à rejeter les collaborations, et

les politiques monolingues, qui amènent les écrivains autonomes à rejeter les divisions linguistiques.

Mots clefs: plurilinguisme, politiques linguistiques, champs littéraires, Bourdieu, sociologie de la littérature, stratégies d'écrivains

Introduction

Many national and regional spaces are located at the crossroads of linguistic areas and harbour several literary languages: they are 'plurilingual literary spaces'.¹ The study of these spaces has been neglected until now, due to what I have called *methodological monolingualism*,² itself a consequence of what Yasemin Yildiz has named the 'monolingual paradigm',³ which has emerged since the nineteenth century. Most studies that do take account of these spaces focus on specific writers who deal with a kind of 'language anxiety'⁴ brought about by the 'contact zone'⁵ they inhabit, and observe how they work within their writing language through their mother tongue – 'interlanguage', 'irregularity', 'heterolingualism', and 'indigenization' are frequently used critical terms in this regard.⁶ This focus has prevented researchers from analysing these spaces in a more structural, or at least collective, way, in the manner that sociolinguists study everyday language exchanges. Nevertheless, when a socio-historical perspective has been used, such as in translation studies,⁷

1 For further developments on language issues in field theory, please read Tristan Leperlier, 'La langue des champs: Aires linguistiques transnationales et espaces littéraires plurilingues', *CONTEXTES*, 28 (2020) <<https://doi.org/10.4000/contextes.9297>>.

2 See Tristan Leperlier, *Algérie, les écrivains dans la décennie noire* (Paris: CNRS, 2018).

3 See Yasemin Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

4 See Robert Young, 'World Literature and Language Anxiety', in *BAND 1 Approaches to World Literature*, ed. by Joachim Küpper (Munich: Akademie Verlag, 2013), pp. 27–38. See also, *L'Insécurité linguistique dans les communautés francophones périphériques*, ed. by Michel Francard, Geneviève Géron, and Régine Wilmet (Louvain: Peeters / Institut de linguistiques de Louvain, 1994).

5 See Mary Louise Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Profession* (1991), 33–40.

6 See, for instance, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989) p. 67; *Un Pays d'irréguliers*, ed. by Marc Quaghebeur, Jean-Pierre Verheggen, and Véronique Jago-Antoine (Brussels: Labor, 1990); Jérôme Meizoz, *Le Droit de « mal écrire »: quand les auteurs romands déjouent le « français de Paris »* (Geneva: Zoé, 1998); Rainier Grutman, *Des langues qui résonnent: Hétérolinguisme et lettres québécoises* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1997, repr. 2019); Chantal J. Zabus, *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel* (Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi, 1991, repr. 2007).

7 Johan Heilbron, 'Towards a Sociology of Translation: Book Translations as a Cultural World-System', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2 (1997), 429–44; Pascale Casanova, 'Consécration et accumulation de capital littéraire: La traduction comme échange inégal', *Actes de la recherche*

sometimes on a geographically bordered space,⁸ as well as in studies of cultural mediators,⁹ this has contributed to profoundly renewing approaches to analysing plurilingual spaces. A strong tradition of such studies has developed in countries concerned by this plurilingualism (Belgium and Canada in particular), even though it has for a long time consisted of a juxtaposition of chapters written by different specialists.¹⁰ There is a new tendency in comparative literature of ‘reading together’¹¹ the literatures of different languages within a ‘multilingual local’,¹² in particular regarding Indian literature. However, this research tends sometimes to promote writers who have tried to thwart their countries’ linguistic nationalism and has thus prevented us from considering how many writers have sought to build walls rather than bridges between identities. For this reason, I prefer the notion of ‘plurilingualism’, as it invites us to observe current relations between a limited number of languages, that is to say, to consider reciprocal definitions, power relations, and transfers, rather than that of ‘multilingualism’, which postulates an equality between an infinite number of languages.

Pierre Bourdieu’s structural approach of field theory provides a conceptual tool within which to consider these linguistic power relations. However, neither in his studies on language and speech,¹³ nor in his article on Belgian literature,¹⁴ did Bourdieu elaborate on what a plurilingual

en sciences sociales, 144 (2002), 7–20; Translatio: *Le marché de la traduction en France à l’heure de la mondialisation*, ed. by Gisèle Sapiro (Paris: CNRS, 2008).

- 8 Sherry Simon, *Cities in Translation: Intersections of Language and Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2011); *La Traduction dans les cultures plurilingues*, ed. by Francis Mus and Karen Vandemeulebroucke (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 2011).
- 9 Michel Espagne, *Les Transferts culturels franco-allemands* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1999); Blaise Wilfert, ‘Cosmopolis et l’Homme invisible. Les importateurs de littérature étrangère en France, 1885–1914’, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 144 (2002), 33–46; Lieven D’hulst et al., ‘Towards a Multipolar Model of Cultural Mediators Within Multicultural Spaces: Cultural Mediators in Belgium, 1830–1945’, *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire*, 92.4 (2014), 1255–75; Jan Walsh Hokenson and Marcella Munson, *The Bilingual Text: History and Theory of Literary Self-Translation* (Manchester & Kinderhook: Saint Jerome Publishing, 2007); *Literary Translation and Cultural Mediators in « Peripheral » Cultures: Customs Officers or Smugglers?*, ed. by Diana Roig-Sanz and Reine Meylaerts (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
- 10 *Échanges culturels entre les deux solitudes*, ed. by Marie-Andrée Beaudet (Laval: Presses de l’Université Laval, 1999); *Littératures en Belgique/ Literaturen in België*, ed. by Dirk De Geest and Reine Meylaerts (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2004).
- 11 Karima Laachir, ‘The Aesthetics and Politics of “Reading Together” Moroccan Novels in Arabic and French’, *The Journal of North African Studies*, 21.1 (2016), 22–36.
- 12 Francesca Orsini, ‘The Multilingual Local in World Literature’, *Comparative Literature*, 67.4 (2015), 345–74.
- 13 Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. by John Thompson, trans. by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).
- 14 Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Existe-t-il une littérature belge ? Limites d’un champ et frontières politiques’, *Études de lettres*, 4 (1985), 3–6.

literary field might be. Neither did Pascale Casanova, even though her study of early twentieth-century Prague in *Kafka, Angry Poet* provides a masterful example of such a field.¹⁵

Officially plurilingual countries present a tension between two ideal-typical conceptions of what constitutes a nation.¹⁶ The cultural conception, which is based on Herder's ideology, promotes a sense of cultural belonging to the nation, and seeks the political means of a unification between a single language and the nation. In contrast, the federative perspective merely promotes a sense of political belonging to the nation: it accepts plurilingualism and seeks equality between languages. Similarly, in the plurilingual literary space, linguistic and political definitions of the limits of national literature vie for supremacy. A case in point, according to Peter von Matt, writers in the Swiss nation belong to 'two different spaces of existence, one national and political, the other linguistic and literary'.¹⁷ This situation makes it difficult for writers to be completely autonomous from the political implications of their language use as their raw material is never completely neutral for them.

In this article, I will propose a typology of plurilingual literary spaces within field theory, then examine how in plurilingual literary fields, despite the hierarchies between languages, transfers are possible. I will elaborate mainly on situations where French is one of the languages at stake.

A typology of plurilingual literary spaces within field theory

Autonomy, nation and language in field theory

Pierre Bourdieu's study of the French literary field of the nineteenth century is not typical, but exceptional, in three regards.¹⁸ First, as Alain Viala and Denis Saint-Jacques have argued, the large autonomy of this field is rarely to be found elsewhere and in other periods.¹⁹ Yet, this does not prevent us from talking about a field if a minimal level of *autonomy* from political,

15 Pascale Casanova, *Kafka, Angry Poet*, trans. by Chris Turner (London: Seagull Books, 2015).

16 Regarding nationalism and language, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York: Verso, 1983) and Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La Création des identités nationales. Europe, 18e-20e siècle* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1999).

17 Peter von Matt, *Sang d'encre: Voyage dans la Suisse littéraire et politique*, trans. by Colette Kowalski (Geneva: Zoé, 2005), p. 154.

18 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. by Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

19 Alain Viala and Denis Saint-Jacques, 'À propos du champ littéraire. Histoire, géographie, histoire littéraire', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 49.2 (1994), 395–406.

religious, and economic powers is reached. I might add that what is also required is a minimal degree of *specialization* concerning other domains (such as the historical departure of ‘literature’ from ‘Belles Lettres’),²⁰ and minimal *independence* from other fields.²¹ Independence ranges from the more symbolic, that is the identification or naming of a literary space, be it national (the most important), but also regional, linguistic, racial or else social,²² to the more institutionalized, that is the ability for a field to emancipate from another when it comes to publishing, literary recognition etc. Second, the French case is very territorialized. Working against ‘methodological nationalism’,²³ sociologists of literature have shown that a field is not necessarily restricted by national borders.²⁴ I have shown that peripheral fields in the ‘world republic of letters’²⁵ are mostly ‘transnational literary fields’²⁶ structured by the opposition between a national and an international pole. Nevertheless, the national framework, though not unique, has remained symbolically predominant at the international level since the nineteenth century.²⁷ Only central literary fields like the French one can be partly denationalized, with the definition of the national literature being of secondary importance compared to the issue of the relative autonomy of the field. Paradoxically, the more a field is transnational, the more its writers are prone to either identifying or being identified as representing or belonging to a specific national literature. The national framework is thus still a major feature of writers’ ‘illutio’, in other words, of their investment in a field, which is framed by institutions.

The methodological ‘autonomization’²⁸ of a field is not only based on its relative specialization, autonomy, and independence, but also on writers’ ‘illutio’, since the field is also a space of competition. In the following, I

20 See Alain Viala, *Naissance de l'écrivain: sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique* (Paris: Minuit, 1985).

21 Paul Aron, ‘Sur le concept d'autonomie’, *Discours social*, 7.3–4 (1995), p. 68.

22 Hervé Serry, ‘La littérature pour faire et défaire les groupes’, *Sociétés contemporaines*, 44.4 (2001), 5–14 <<https://doi.org/10.3917/soco.044.0005>>.

23 Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, ‘Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences’, *Global Networks*, 2.4 (2002), 301–34 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0374.00043>>.

24 Gisèle Sapiro, ‘Le champ est-il national?’, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 200 (2013), 70–85 <<https://doi.org/10.3917/arss.200.007>>.

25 Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. by Malcolm DeBevoise (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

26 Tristan Leperlier, ‘Un champ littéraire transnational? Le cas des écrivains algériens’, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 224.4 (2018), 12–33.

27 Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La Fabrique de l'écrivain national: Entre littérature et politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2019).

28 Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Champ intellectuel et projet créateur’, *Les Temps modernes*, 246 (1966), 865–906.

will distinguish between the notions of field, subfield, and space. A ‘field’ is unified by the same ‘illusio’, the same main stake of competition which is strongly objectified by institutions. It is very often the defence and illustration of a sense of national ‘identity’, which is sometimes confused with a linguistic stake. A ‘subfield’ is not totally autonomous from the field which subsumes it (as the subfield is still governed by the same principles of opposition, though they are refracted differently),²⁹ defining an issue of secondary investment, while nevertheless being strongly institutionalized. A ‘space’ defines a secondary, occasional, and more weakly institutionalized issue of investment.³⁰ For this reason, we can also use ‘space’ as an encompassing category.

The third point in relation to the French case as studied by Bourdieu is that it is monolingual, while most literary fields are plurilingual. Theoretically, any territory can be considered plurilingual from the perspective of its literature. However, not all agents in these literary spaces consider language an important issue. This is due to the diversity of political organizations and linguistic policies implemented in the countries.

A typology of plurilingual literary spaces

It is possible to speak of a *monolingual literary field* when linguistic considerations only arise at set points. As a result of methodological monolingualism, their description as ‘monolingual’ is most often left unsaid. In contrast, a *monolingual literary space* revolves around the linguistic issue, but is of secondary investment for the writers: they are often transnational, and can be called *linguistic areas* as I developed elsewhere.³¹ Typically, the monolingual literary fields exist in countries that have achieved a strong degree of linguistic unification. Nevertheless, language can occasionally become an issue of the field. This was the case, in the French monolingual literary field, with the Parisian recognition of Frédéric Mistral. Despite the latter’s concern to present Occitan as a regional language that did not compete with French at the national level, his Parisian success provides a stark reminder of an implicit feature of the French literary field, namely, that French literature must be written

29 See Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociologie Générale*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 2016) p. 24, and pp. 165–68.

30 See also the notion of a ‘weak field’ developed in Antoine Vauchez, ‘The Force of a Weak Field. Law and Lawyers in the Government of Europe’, *International Political Sociology*, 5 (2008), 128–44. For a definition of ‘space’ with regards to the notion of autonomy instead as with regards to the notion of ‘illusio’, see Jérôme Meizoz, ‘Avant-propos’, *Études de lettres*, 273.1–2 (2006), 5–8.

31 Tristan Leperlier, ‘La langue des champs: Aires linguistiques transnationales et espaces littéraires plurilingues’, *CONTEXTES*, 28 (2020) <<https://doi.org/10.4000/contextes.9297>>.

in French.³² In Egypt,³³ which was the spearhead of pan-Arabism under Nasser, literature was rendered monolingual to the point that French-speaking writers such as Edmond Jabès and Georges Henein were excluded from its literary history. Although the poetic avant-garde, in its desire to be autonomous from state ideologies, reintroduced these figures in the 1980s by translating them, few literary histories cite them. But recently one could observe the more or less consensual integration of the English-speaking writer Ahdaf Soueif as part of Egyptian literature. Similarly in Austria, a ‘multicultural paradigm’, in opposition to the ‘monolingual paradigm’ dominant in the 1970s–1980s, has emerged, though not without controversy.³⁴ In 2018, the Größer Österreichischer Staatspreis (Great Austrian State Prize) was awarded to Florjan Lipuš, who writes in Slovenian, a regional language of Austria, and the Peter-Rosegger-Literaturpreis was awarded to the Congolese writer Fiston Mwanza Mujila, who lives in Graz but continues to write in French.

It is possible to speak of a *plurilingual literary field* when the language issue is of structural and symbolic importance in the field. There is debate about which language can legitimately be used to express the nation. This is particularly the case in postcolonial countries where the language of the former colonizer has retained social or even political importance. Such a literary field subsumes a set of *monolingual subfields* that are relatively independent from each other. This relative independence of the subfields from one another allows writers to sometimes ignore the political dimension of the language they write in. However, the language issue never completely goes away, even if it is below the surface, and is in part the refraction of the linguistic stakes at the level of the political field. This situation may remain relatively stable in certain literary fields. In others, it is resolved by two types of political action. The first is the linguistic unification of the territory. The nationalisms in Central Europe made it possible to constitute monolingual literary fields, as countries gained independence following the two World Wars, and thus rid themselves of their German-speaking minorities, as the latter were generally integrated into ‘German literature’. The second is the territorial segregation of languages.

32 Jean-Yves Casanova, ‘Frédéric Mistral et les écrivains français: de Lamartine à Maurice Barrès Press. Incompréhension, fascination et admiration’, in *Des littératures périphériques*, ed. by Nelly Blanchard and Mannaig Thomas (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014), p. 249.

33 Richard Jacquemond, *Conscience of the Nation: Writers, State, and Society in Modern Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008).

34 Wiebke Sievers, ‘From Monolingualism to Multilingualism? The Pre- and Post-monolingual Condition in the Austrian Literary Field’, *Austrian Studies*, 26 (2018), 40–56.

Plurilingual literary spaces, where language remains a structural but secondary issue, are typically the product of this second political solution. Their model is the (con)federation, a territorial organization that grants a very large degree of cultural independence to its ‘regions’, ‘provinces’, or ‘communities’. This is the case today in several European countries, such as Belgium, Spain, and Switzerland, as well as in Canada. The plurilingual literary space subsumes a plurality of relatively independent fields, which can be mostly monolingual but sometimes also plurilingual. The Spanish literary space is thus plurilingual. It is composed of a dominant Castilian monolingual literary field – that is also part of the transnational Castilian literary area – and of plurilingual literary fields, like the Catalan literary field. It is only occasionally that Catalan writers invest their *illuso* in the Spanish literary space. Conversely, the Catalan literary field remains plurilingual, and all the more so since Barcelona has long been the main publishing capital of Castilian literature. Indeed, three quarters of Barcelona’s publishing output is now in Castilian. Language is therefore a major issue for writers in the Catalan literary field, even though for many Castilian-speaking Catalan writers, this field is the object of a secondary investment compared to their involvement in the Castilian literary field.

It should be noted that for political entities which are not fully independent, and therefore subject to a potential conflict between national loyalty and literary *illuso*, it is possible to speak of a plurilingual literary field *or* plurilingual literary space. The Breton-speaking Bretons do not participate in the monolingual French literary field but are invested in a Breton literary field.³⁵ The latter is bilingual insofar as one of the major issues of these writers is to deny French-speaking Bretons their legitimacy to represent ‘Breton literature’. This is all the more paradoxical since few French-speaking Bretons invest their *illuso* in this Breton literary field. Most of them participate in the French literary field, and only occasionally become involved in what is for them a Breton literary space, which is marked by cultural policies and subsidies from the Conseil Régional de Bretagne or certain festivals.³⁶

35 For an equivalent tension between linguistic and territorial identification, see the Basque case as described by Jean Casenave in ‘Écritures et réécritures de l’histoire d’un domaine littéraire minoritaire. Approche historiographique de la littérature basque contemporaine’, in *Des littératures périphériques*, pp. 119–32.

36 On the Carhaix Book Festival as an anti-festival Étonnants Voyageurs, and the relations in situ between Breton and French-speaking Breton writers, see Mannaig Thomas, ‘Le Festival du livre en Bretagne ou comment un lieu de sociabilité sert à entretenir l’*illuso*’, *COntEXTES. Revue de sociologie de la littérature*, 19 (2017) <<https://doi.org/10.4000/contextes.6338>>.

Hierarchies of languages within plurilingual literary fields

As in the rest of their societies, linguistic conflicts remain particularly strong in plurilingual literary fields. Language is a very political issue in the literary field, whether or not the recognition of a particular language is an issue in itself.

Language wars

The inequalities between literary languages are partly the refraction of symbolic, social, and political inequalities.³⁷ It is possible to speak of linguistic discrimination³⁸ when access to certain social positions depends on the mastery of a language. The language acts of the Bardeni government in 1897 led to violent conflict because the German-speaking minority, economically and politically dominant until that point, felt discriminated against by the imposition of bilingualism in the Czech administration.³⁹ These inequalities have consequences for literary production. In a different language context, the gradual drying up of literature written in Breton until the twentieth century was the result of the francization of the Breton elites. The social status of the language users had implications for the hierarchies between the literary languages.

These hierarchies are also based on specific issues. Inspired by Abram de Swaan's 'global system of languages',⁴⁰ Pascale Casanova has argued that the literary centrality of a language can be measured not by the number of speakers, but by the number of polyglots (translators, editors, etc.) who read or even practise it.⁴¹ The collective plurilingualism of a literary field or even of a linguistic area (there has never been a monolingual Breton writer)⁴² is a sign of its dominated condition, and can lead to the loss of its literary language. Casanova draws attention to the status rather than the quantity of translators, and to the strategy which underlies the export or the importation of texts.⁴³

37 See Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.

38 Douglas A. Kibbee, *Language and the Law: Linguistic Inequality in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

39 Casanova, *Kafka, Angry Poet*, p. 31.

40 Abram de Swaan, *Words of the World: the Global Language System* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001). See also Louis-Jean Calvet, *Pour une écologie des langues du monde* (Paris: Plon, 1999).

41 Pascale Casanova, 'Consécration et accumulation de capital littéraire: La traduction comme échange inégal', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 144 (2002), 7–20.

42 Nelly Blanchard et Mannaig Thomas, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une périphérie littéraire?', in *Des littératures périphériques*, p. 15.

43 As defined by Gisèle Sapiro, 'L'importation de la littérature hébraïque en France', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 44.1 (2002), 80–98.

This enables analysis of the hierarchical relations between languages. Thus, in Algeria, the vast majority of translations from French into Arabic have been made by writers who are often recognized in the Arabic language subfield of the Algerian literary field, while the majority of translations from Arabic into French since independence has long been the work of a naturalized Algerian priest, Marcel Bois, who highlights above all his own pleasure in translating.⁴⁴

In a plurilingual literary field, activists and/or public institutions can try to rebalance, and even reverse this balance of power between the languages in which literature is written.⁴⁵ As a result, the literary subfields oppose one another. There is on the one hand a nationalized pole, which can remain prestigious in the first phase of national independence of the field, and a pole more autonomous from political power. The political heteronomy of the dominated literary language often takes over from religious heteronomy. The linguistic independence of speakers of Breton in France⁴⁶ and of Arabic in colonial Algeria, was the counterpart to their submission to religious powers.

At the time of Algeria's independence, French-language writers were in greater number; the Arabization of the literary field was thus achieved through various political measures, in the short term by giving preference to Arabic speakers in the nationalized literary institutions. In the long term, it was achieved by democratizing teaching in Arabic and progressively restricting teaching in French to the elite. In the medium term, however, the Arabization of writers, which took root in discourse about the 'alienation' of French speakers, was a failure.⁴⁷ No French-language writer switched to writing in standard Arabic if they had not been educated in Arabic. Just like Kafka, they had no choice.⁴⁸ However, in the context of the political instrumentalization of language in the early 1980s – by fundamentalists (religious officials in power) on the one hand and Berberist activists on the other – a new generation of French-speaking writers, also educated in Arabic and politicized on the left (who thus rejected the fundamentalists and were sensitive to the arguments of the Berberists), extracted

44 Personal interview with Marcel Bois, Algiers, 23 May 2012.

45 For the Breton case, compare: Mathilde Sempé, 'La revue bretonne Ar Falz: "l'art social" en conjoncture de crise politique et littéraire (1945–1946)', *CONTEXTES. Revue de sociologie de la littérature*, 16 (2015) and Mannaig Thomas, 'Une littérature en dépendances. La littérature de langue bretonne 2000–2010', in *La Bretagne linguistique* (Brest: CRBC, 2014), 177–203.

46 Ronan Calvez, 'Rome, Capitale de la Bretagne', in *Des littératures périphériques*, pp. 267–80.

47 Tristan Leperlier, 'Entre Alger et Paris: des écrivains aliénés?', *Littérature*, 189 (2018), 30–48.

48 Casanova, *Kafka, Angry Poet*, p. 190 sqq. Ann-Mari Gunnesson shows that for Flemish writers 'choice' of the language of writing varies in significance according to periods: from neutral, it becomes problematic. See *Les Écrivains flamands et le champ littéraire en Belgique francophone* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 2001).

themselves from this nationalist discourse of alienation, and claimed to use French without guilt. Thus, at the end of the 1980s, the francophone subfield gained more autonomy from the state not only by publishing abroad in France, but also by starting to publish in newly privatized Algerian publishing houses such as Bouchène and Laphomic, while the arabophone pole continued to publish in the national publishing houses (ENAL). The linguistic status quo of the previous period, which had been based on a shared belief in the legitimacy of Arabic, and a feeling of guilt on the part of French speakers, was thus undone. The ‘language war’ in the literary field, which would take on greater significance during the civil war of the following decade, was not a ‘clash of civilizations’ but the result, in part at least, of a different autonomous relationship of the two subfields to state nationalism.⁴⁹

Literary diglossia

The social and literary differences and inequalities mentioned so far have been related to recognized languages. Sociolinguistics has established that the difference between a ‘dialect’ and a ‘language’ is not only based on the linguistic criterion of inter-comprehension,⁵⁰ or the result of morphological written standardization, but is also built on political foundations. The identification of a language, such as the King’s ‘French’ in opposition to Latin, or ‘Occitan’ as opposed to French, is an ‘act of social magic’,⁵¹ aimed at recategorizing the social world. This is why Philippe Gardy and Robert Lafont⁵² have criticized Ferguson’s concept of ‘diglossia’,⁵³ because his synchronic understanding of the functional distribution between the oral and written varieties of a same language ignores the historical, social, and political struggles of language. Moreover, the issue of recognizing a language is related to recognizing its capacity to produce literature. Historians⁵⁴ and anthropologists⁵⁵ of literature have shown that there is no

49 For more details, see Leperlier, *Algérie, Les écrivains dans la décennie noire*.

50 Jean-Baptiste Marcellesi, *Sociolinguistique : épistémologie, langues régionales, polynomie* (Paris, Budapest & Turin: L’Harmattan, 2003).

51 Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique*, p. 234.

52 Philippe Gardy and Robert Lafont, ‘La diglossie comme conflit: l’exemple occitan’, *Langages*, 15.61 (1981), 75–91.

53 Charles Ferguson, ‘Diglossia’, *Word. Journal of the Linguistic Circle of New York*, 15 (1959), 325–40.

54 Walter Jackson Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 1982); Paul Zumthor, *Introduction à la poésie orale* (Paris: Seuil, 1983); Philippe Gardy, ‘Tradition occitane et passage à l’écriture: l’obsession de l’oralité’, in *Kalevala et traditions orales du monde*, ed. by Jocelyne Fernandez-Vest (Paris: CNRS, 1987), pp. 511–22.

55 Sory Camara, *Gens de la parole : Essai sur la condition et le rôle des griots dans la société malinké* (Paris & The Hague: Mouton, 1976); Jean Derive, ‘Champ littéraire et oralité

reason to deny a possible literary quality to oral practices, even going so far as to dissolve the boundary between spoken and written forms of language by referring to ‘oraliture’ and ‘oral literature’.⁵⁶ But here again, the formal criterion is insufficient if a social or even political criterion is not added. The dynamic study of a plurilingual literary space must therefore include analysis of the conflicting definitions of ‘literature’ as a specialized domain, between predominantly written and predominantly oral languages.

The development of Muslim reformism and the European (and post-Nahda Arab)⁵⁷ importation of writing as the primary criterion of literariness in Algeria during the first half of the twentieth century contributed to the promotion of standard Arabic – often referred to as ‘literary Arabic’ – as a language of literary expression, and downgraded dialectal Arabic (*dardja*), mainly an oral literary language, despite its long Andalusian tradition (*chi’r al-malhūn*). Replacing a continuum of practices, the late establishment of this literary diglossia, with dialectal Arabic remaining infrequently written but often performed, went hand in hand with a social bipartition of authors. Poets in dialectal Arabic, far from the large coastal cities, are often poorly or not educated at all, and depend on university professors in the north of the country, who are themselves poets in standard Arabic, for the organization of festivals and competitions. As the ‘popular poet’⁵⁸ (*chā’ir cha’bī*) Ahmed Oumhani explained, the awarding of prizes depends in part on the quality of the local ‘traditional costume’, a blatant sign of the folklorization of this literature. While this diglossia is generally accepted by most of the poets concerned, it is denounced by poets who are more socially endowed and who began their careers as poets in standard Arabic.⁵⁹ One linguist even goes so far as to re-categorize dialectal Arabic as ‘Maghrebi’⁶⁰ in order to remove it from its diglossic relationship with standard Arabic.

Due to different conceptions of literature, the Kabyle Mouloud Azzoug (born in the 1950s), whose poems are always accompanied by music, was surprised to find, when he filed his first cassette with the Office National des Droits d’Auteur in Algiers in the early 1990s, that he was classified as an

africaine’, in *Les Champs littéraires africains*, ed. by Romuald Fonkoua and Pierre Halen, pp. 87–111.

56 Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

57 The ‘Nahda’ is considered as the Arab renaissance at the end of the nineteenth century.

58 Personal interview with Ahmed Oumhani, by telephone, 27 May 2015.

59 Personal interview with Zineb Laouedj, Paris, 25 February 2014.

60 Abdou Elimam, *Le Maghribi, langue trois fois millénaire: explorations en linguistique maghrébine* (Algiers: ANEP, 1997).

‘author-composer-performer’, and not as a ‘poet’.⁶¹ The boundaries between poetry and music are not always clear-cut. The definitional limits between poetry and song can also have political implications, such as when recognizing the literary quality of a language allows it to stake a national claim. In Algeria, which claims itself to be Arab, the Berber Cultural Movement has instrumentalized the literary issue since the late 1970s in order to make Berber, renamed ‘Tamazight’ (especially in its Kabyle variants), a national language.⁶² In this context, because there was no written literary heritage – it was only just beginning to emerge with Amar Mezdad, for instance – Kabyle singers such as Lounis Aït Menguellet, who were often involved in this struggle, were regularly identified as ‘poets’. The Tamazight language was then rendered even more literary when it was written. Aït Menguellet was translated into French and published in France by the anthropologist Tassadit Yacine.⁶³ In 2008, his songs were also translated and published in Arabic by Belkacem Sadouni, which follows the official recognition of this language as a component of national identity. In the mid-1990s, the Haut Commissariat à l’Amazighité was founded by the state to promote the Tamazight language. It has since become one of the major Algerian publishing houses for Tamazight.

Love of solitudes: Conditions of exchange between literary languages

To what extent are exchanges between literary languages, or ‘Love in Two Languages’,⁶⁴ to quote the Moroccan writer Abdelkebir Khatibi, possible in plurilingual literary fields? In contrast, in 1945, *Two Solitudes* by the English-speaking Canadian Hugh MacLennan was published.⁶⁵ This title has been used ever since to summarize the relationship between English and French speakers in Canada, but can be extended to other contexts. In fact, literatures of a same literary field, a fortiori of the same literary space, are very largely independent from each other, which justifies in large part the methodological monolingualism of literary histories. As Casanova notes, ‘the Prague literary space was made up of three sub-universes: The German, the Czech, and the Jewish. Though apparently close, they were in fact far removed

61 Personal interview with Mouloud Azzoug, Béjaia, 4 November 2016.

62 Mohand-Akli Salhi, *Etudes de littérature kabyle* (Algiers: ENAG, 2011); Amar Ameziane, *Tradition et renouvellement dans la littérature kabyle* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2013).

63 Tassadit Yacine, *Aït Menguellet chante* (Paris: La Découverte, 1989).

64 Abdelkebir Khatibi, *Love in Two Languages (L’Amour bilingue)*, 1983), trans. by Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

65 Hugh MacLennan, *Two Solitudes* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1945).

from one another'.⁶⁶ In reality, proximity reinforces the desire for differentiation as much as it does the desire for exchange. In addition, this proximity is variously ensured. The hypercentralism of Paris (particularly the Quartier Latin-Saint Germain) or Algiers (Didouche Mourad-Larbi Ben Mehdi) in the 1960s and 1970s contrasts with less centralized cities (Montreal) or even segregated cities (Beirut after the civil war). The common living conditions, and especially common struggles, such as nationalism, socialism, and feminism, lead to encounters beyond languages.⁶⁷ Even here, the more plurilingual groups are the linguistically dominated ones. To escape this situation, writers may use a third language, such as dialectal Arabic in Algeria or English in Belgium, or they may use translation. Journalistic or academic presentations of literary work, joint editions, or the organization of joint events provide other types of cultural mediation between solitudes, by those whom Ann-Mari Gunnesson aptly calls 'fields crossers'.⁶⁸

The national framework has a strong unifying impact on literary works written in different languages, as in the case of the state's incentive to produce a nationalist literature during the emergence of the national literary field.⁶⁹ Plurilingual states often put in place measures to encourage the publication of translations. This is the case in Switzerland since 1974 with the "Collection CH Reihe". Some texts or authors, lacking recognition in their own linguistic area, can thrive at the national level through translations. This is the case with Ticino (Swiss Italian) literature which, when it is not published in Milan, can emerge first through its translation into German in Zurich.⁷⁰ For publishing houses in peripheral countries of the book market, translations of national literature appear as a commercial niche. The small publishing house Zoé based in Geneva, created in 1974, has thus specialized in francophone Swiss authors, francophone African authors, and translations of Swiss German authors. In the 2000s, they translated and published most of the books of

66 Casanova, *Kafka, Angry Poet*, p. 65.

67 Gail Scott, 'Mon Montréal: Notes d'un écrivain anglophone', *Échanges culturels entre les deux solitudes, Échanges culturels entre deux solitudes*, ed. by Marie-Andrée Beaudet (Laval: Presses Universitaires de Laval), pp. 93–101.

68 Ann-Mari Gunnesson, 'Veldoverschrijders', in *Les Écrivains flamands et le champ littéraire en Belgique francophone*, p. 172.

69 For Arabic-language literature, see Marcel Bois, 'Arabic-Language Algerian Literature', *Research in African Literatures*, 23.2 (1992), 103–11. For French language literature, see Charles Bonn, 'Le Roman algérien' in *Littérature francophone. Tome 1: Le Roman* (Paris: Hatier, 1997), 185–210. Writers can be urged to produce a regionalist literature, such as French- and English-Canadian writers by the Canadian Authors Association, founded in 1921: See *History of Literature in Canada: English-Canadian and French-Canadian*, ed. by Reingard M. Nischik (New York: Camden House, 2008), pp. 154–55.

70 Matteo Pedroni, 'Périphéries littéraires au coeur de l'Europe. Quelques réflexions sur le cas suisse' in *Des littératures périphériques*, pp. 59–78.

the major Swiss German writer Robert Walser that had not been previously published by Gallimard during Walser's life or in the 1990s.

Far from always being the work of the most autonomous pole of the literary field, an aspect on which Casanova focuses in her study of translations at the world level,⁷¹ these transfers between solitudes are often linked to political considerations.⁷² Depending on whether the official nation building policy is based on political belonging and denial of linguistic inequalities, as in Unitarian Belgium or Canada before the Quiet Revolution, thus on what I will call here unitarian policy, or, on the contrary, on cultural belonging and monolingual policy, as in Algeria up until the 1990s, the attitude of the writers of the most autonomous pole of the different (sub)fields will not be equivalent. In the first case, they would tend to split for political reasons, and in the second case they would tend to come closer to each other for more literary reasons.

Canada and Belgium: Political bridges and literary borders

In the first half of the twentieth century, Montreal was the literary capital of both French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians. Although the way literary production was positioned in relation to their respective linguistic centres in London and Paris was very comparable, English- and French-language literature functioned quite independently. In the 1920s, poets sought to catch up with major works published in the English-language McGill *Fortnightly Review* and the French-language *Nigog*, and in the 1940s they sought to set themselves apart by referring to American literature and promoting modernism (see John Sutherland and *First Statement*, Saint-Denys Garneau and *La Nouvelle Relève*).⁷³

There have been, however, occasional initiatives to create bilingual spaces, with or without translation, sometimes under the impetus of (French) foreigners. Examples include Louis Carrier's *Mercur*/Mercury Press at the end of the 1920s, or the 'Deux Solitudes' collection founded by the Frenchman Pierre Tisseyre at the Cercle du livre de France in the 1970s and 1980s. It was through the intermediary of the French poet Pierre Emmanuel that the English-speaking poet Franck Scott organized meetings between Montreal poets of both languages at his home in the mid-1950s. But as the anglophone Louis Dudek explains, 'We were glad to meet them.

71 Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*.

72 See, for example, Ioana Popa, *Traduire sous contraintes : littérature et communisme, 1947–1989* (Paris: CNRS, 2010).

73 Richard Giguère, 'Poètes, revues et édition littéraires de langue anglaise et de langue française à Montréal, 1925–1955', *Échanges culturels entre deux solitudes*, pp. 65–80.

They were glad to meet us. That was about it'.⁷⁴ In 1956, the journalist and then academic Jean-Charles Bonenfant (a francophone specialist in English-Canadian literature) considered that, for French-Canadians, 'English-Canadian literature is a foreign literature'.⁷⁵

The origin of this widely shared ignorance is different. It was the expression of a distracted disinterest on the part of the dominant anglophones, but also increasingly the result of a choice on the part of the dominated francophones. In the 1950s, there was indeed a gap between the efforts of a minority of anglophone poets to translate their francophone counterparts into English, and the absence of reciprocity on the part of francophones, that could not be explained solely by their better knowledge of English. This was because, unlike anglophones, francophones were more concerned with defining borders than building bridges. As Kathy Mezey explains, translation was linked as much, if not more, to a political interest in contributing to the Union within Canada, than to literary interest.⁷⁶ The ambiguities of this love of solitudes, both solitudes that seek each other out and look for isolation,⁷⁷ is very much in evidence among certain Quebec sovereignists of the Quiet Revolution. Jacques Ferron, who proclaimed both his monolingualism and his taste for British authors, presented his novel *Les Confitures de coings* in 1972 as an anti-*Two Solitudes*, and at the same time used heterolingualism to make the domination of the English language noticeable.⁷⁸ Michel Garneau, by re-translating Shakespeare not 'from English' but 'into Quebecois',⁷⁹ turned translation into a 'conquest',⁸⁰ putting the emblem of the English language at the service of the emancipation of the Quebecois language and literature from both Canadian

74 Patricia Godbout, "Des livres à la fois si proches et si lointains": les échanges littéraires à Montréal durant les années 1950", in *Échanges culturels entre deux solitudes*, pp. 81–91 (p. 85). See also Patricia Godbout, *Traduction littéraire et sociabilité interculturelle au Canada, 1950–1960* (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2004).

75 Godbout, "Des livres à la fois si proches et si lointains", p. 81. See also Godbout, *Traduction littéraire et sociabilité interculturelle au Canada, 1950–1960*.

76 Kathy Mezey, 'Translation as Metonymy: Bridges and Bilingualism', *Ellipse*, 51 (1994), 88–89.

77 The political scientist Jean Lapointe has determined a law of 'love that kills' (*L'Amour qui tue*) in plurilingual spaces: rapprochement threatens the dominated languages, and symbolic or political independence protects them. Jean Lapointe, *Loi de Babel et autres régularités des rapports entre langue et politique* (Sainte-Foy [Québec]: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2006).

78 See Betty Bednarski, *Autour de Ferron: littérature, traduction, altérité* (Toronto: GREF, 1989).

79 Annie Brisset, *Sociocritique de la traduction: théâtre et altérité au Québec* (Longueuil: Le Préambule, 1990).

80 Pascale Casanova, *La Langue mondiale, Traduction et domination* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2015), p. 61 and following.

and French literature. Language conflicts are thus still a link between the languages at stake.

In late nineteenth-century Belgium, the independence of a small journal like *La Jeune Belgique* from the state involved a distrust of Flemish letters and plurilingualism,⁸¹ all the while seeking to differentiate itself from French literature by resorting to Flemish themes.⁸² In contrast, major journals such as *La Revue de Belgique* relayed the unitarian ideology of the Belgian state and its discourse on the equality of Belgium's two cultures. However, the reality of how Flemish-language literature was considered is very ambiguous. While there are many translations of Flemish poetry in this type of journal, they are generally integrated into reviews, sometimes accompanied by ethnographic commentaries, depriving the texts of their literary value, and are thus closer in this respect to texts about Walloon culture than to translations per se.⁸³ This condescending attitude towards Flemish literature was still noticeable in the 1920s and 1930s in *La Revue belge*.⁸⁴

Algeria: Strategic alliances at the autonomous pole

Conversely, in national situations that impose a single language, the most autonomous pole of the field promotes plurilingualism. This was the case in Apartheid South Africa⁸⁵ and in post-colonial Algeria.⁸⁶ Here the issue is more clearly literary than political. By reporting since 1976 on events and publications in French, Arabic and Kabyle, the young journalist Tahar Djaout (born in 1954) was a central cultural mediator in the Algeria of the 1980s. He was also a French-language poet and novelist and celebrated the young poets of his generation who refused 'the poetry of celebration or

81 Lieven Tack, '(D)Écrire l'altérité flamande dans les pratiques discursives francophones belges (1869–1899)', in *Littératures en Belgique/Literaturen in België*, pp. 163–76.

82 Jean-Marie Klinkenberg, 'L'idéologie de la "littérature nationale" (1830–1839)', in *Studia belgica. Aufsätze zur Literatur und Kulturgeschichte Belgiens*, ed. by Hans-Joachim Lope (Frankfurt & Bern: Peter Lang, 1983), pp. 135–53.

83 Lieven D'Hulst, 'Traduire la poésie entre 1830 et 1880: quelques observations liminaires', in *Littératures en Belgique/Literaturen in België*, pp. 137–51; Karen Vandemeulebroucke, 'Entre dire et faire: la traduction poétique dans deux revues belges francophones du xix^e siècle', in *La Traduction dans les cultures plurilingues*, pp. 47–59; Lieven D'Hulst, 'Comment "construire" une littérature nationale? À propos des deux premières "Revue belge" (1830 et 1835–1843)', *CONTEXTES. Revue de sociologie de la littérature*, 4 (2008).

84 Reine Meylaerts, *L'Aventure flamande de la Revue belge: langues, littératures et cultures dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2004).

85 *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970–1995*, ed. by Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Myriam Suchet, 'Je préférerais ne pas... Traduire ou le Triomphe de la traduction polyphonique', in *La Traduction dans les cultures plurilingues*, pp. 73–85.

86 For more details, see: Tristan Leperlier, 'On Islands and Deserts: Algerian Worlds', *Journal of World Literature*, 4.1 (2019), 215–36.

ornamentation', regardless of their language.⁸⁷ This common search for autonomy from nationalist literature did not, however, lead him to treat French- and Arabic-speaking poets equally. Djaout's accounts of the latter have a paternalistic tone that expresses his disdain for what he perceives as its backwardness compared with French-language poetry.

His tone, on the other hand, is clearly positive concerning the Arabic-speaking novelist Tahar Ouettar (born in 1936). There was mutual recognition between the promising young French-language writer and the central figure of the Arabic-language subfield. This alliance was cemented by opposition to the major writer of the Algerian literary field, Rachid Boudjedra (born in 1941). Internationally recognized since his novel *La Répudiation*, published in France in 1969, which prolonged the formalist break introduced in Algeria by Kateb Yacine with *Nedjma* in 1956, this French-speaking writer had theatrically staged his move to the Arabic language in the early 1980s. By subverting the literary codes of the Arabic-language subfield through the use of techniques imported from the French nouveau roman, he relegated Ouettar to the rearguard. Indeed, the latter claimed to be from a 'socialist realist' tradition, a label to which his writing was in fact completely irreducible. Ouettar's style is paradoxically brandished by Djaout as a means of countering Boudjedra's dominance in the French-language subfield. Rather than formalism and thunderous subversiveness, Djaout values a simple, realistic yet fantastical subject matter, and a political commitment based on the absurd and discreet irony. After having published in Algiers *L'Exproprié* in 1981, a novel in the tradition of Kateb and Boudjedra, Djaout published *Les Chercheurs d'os* with Le Seuil in 1984, putting this aesthetic into practice and playing with the intertextuality of certain texts by Ouettar. He was then in phase with the 'return to reality'⁸⁸ that characterized post-nouveau roman French literature in the 1980s, although this aesthetic is not an application of French models.

Thus, despite the different literary histories of the two subfields owing for instance to the later introduction of the formalist break in the Arabic-language subfield, the joint opposition of their most autonomous poles, both to the bilingual nationalist literature and to the dominant figure of the bilingual writer Rachid Boudjedra, allows for surprising alliances and circulations, far more complex than the idea of domination of French-language

87 Tahar Djaout, 'Oran à l'heure des poètes', *Algérie-Actualité*, 918, 19–25 May 1983.

88 Or 'littérature transitive', see Dominique Viart and Bruno Vercier, *La Littérature française au présent : héritage, modernité, mutations* (Paris: Bordas, 2005), p. 14.

literature over Arabic-language literature might at first suggest.⁸⁹ In an emblematic way, however, Djaout and Ouettar, who represented in the 1980s the resistance of the most autonomous pole of the literary field to the linguistic cleavage, would exemplify during the following decade the central opposed figures of the war of languages that the civil war eventually partly became in the literary field, as I demonstrated elsewhere.⁹⁰

Conclusion

In this article, I have developed the notion of plurilingual literary space. While drawing from Bourdieu's field theory, this has meant taking a critical stance vis-à-vis the highly autonomous, territorialized, and monolingual French case that he studied. Moreover, even though language is the material that the writers work with, the legitimate representation of the nation remains the major issue for non-central literary spaces, including plurilingual spaces. I have elaborated on a typology of plurilingual literary spaces, which are heavily related to the political structure and language policies of the state. The typology includes the monolingual literary field, the monolingual literary space, the plurilingual literary field with plurilingual or monolingual literary subfields, and the plurilingual literary space.

I have concentrated on plurilingual literary fields, where the language issue is the most significant, notably Algeria or Canada. I have argued that tensions or collaborations between the different linguistic groups depend mainly on the symbolic balance of power between them, and also on official language policies. The most autonomous writers do not always desire to build bridges across the linguistic frontier, and would sometimes rather create identity walls. I have distinguished between unitarian policies, that bring some linguistically dominated writers to reject collaborations, and monolingual policies, that bring the autonomous writers to reject linguistic divisions.

89 For a Belgian case of this type of reverse situation, see Reine Meylaerts, 'Intercultural Mediators in Multilingual Cultures: Blessing or Curse?', in *La Traduction dans les cultures plurilingues*, pp. 61–72.

90 Leperlier, *Algérie, Les écrivains dans la décennie noire*.