

journey across Lusophone cultures and will meet a constellation of new authors some of whom have “migrated” into Bulgarian cultural space for the first time.

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Yarmila Daskalova. *Literary Pairs in Comparative Readings Across National and Cultural Divides*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018. 193. ISBN: 978-1-5275-1380-8.

From the very beginning of children’s introduction to the system of socialization they are subjected to intensive educational activities aimed at developing their discriminative skills. In kindergarten teachers would ask children to point the odd one out in a group of similar objects. They will repeatedly make boys and girls tell the solitary circle in a set of triangles, the blue star in the red constellation, or the lonely fruit out of a group of vegetables. Upon graduation (whatever the level of the educational system that has been completed), the ability to differentiate, though a valuable asset, is a skill perfected to automatism in each one of us. This automatism may occasionally prevent us from venturing into the realm of identifying parallels, likenesses and semblances and lead us to focus on differences and dissimilarities in objects, phenomena, and personalities. Even in the field of contemporary comparative literary studies, with its self-proclaimed interest in crossing cultural and linguistic borders and its adherence to a multi-faceted interdisciplinary approach to the literary text, seldom does a critical study appear that attempts to distort the balance of a comparative-contrastive dichotomy (in its analysis of texts and authors) in favour of the former rather than the latter. One such book is Yarmila Daskalova’s *Literary Pairs in Comparative Readings Across National and Cultural Divides*.

The book is a kaleidoscopic collection of essays, covering a time period of two centuries, encompassing literary samples from Romanticism to postmodernism, dealing with the works of ten authors, writing in four different languages, coupled in eight “pairs.” As the title suggests, it offers comparative readings of selected texts by authors from diverse literary, national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Rather than matching peers (in the sense of writers belonging to a common national tradition or sharing the common aesthetics of a single literary movement or cultural period), Daskalova undertakes the arduous project of “pairing” seemingly diverse constellations of prominent literary figures (British, Irish, American, French, Russian and Bulgarian) on the basis of the “similar typological schemes, perceptions and literary strategies” utilized in their works (3).

Under the seemingly random structure of the book, lurks a discernible hypertextual pattern, linking names of authors and intertwining cultural and mythological references into a complex postmodern poetic network. Thus, in the first essay William Butler Yeats is “paired” with his predecessor - the English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.

The second essay compares the “one-man modernist” Edgar Allan Poe and his self-proclaimed French counterpart, the poet of *modernité*, Charles Baudelaire, on the basis of their “acute perceptibility of the weird and bizarre” and their shared predisposition to the “supernatural and melancholy aspects of life,” “the sinister and the macabre” (24).

The third essay offers a comparative critical reading of works by the nineteenth-century American *minuscule lyrique* Emily Dickinson and the twentieth-century Russian avant-gardist poet Marina Tsvetaeva. In it Daskalova traces “overlapping recurrent themes, visions, imagery and messages” in their verse, as well as “similar devices and approaches” employed by both authors for expressing their unique individualities.

In the fourth essay, the “pair” of voyagers, W. B. Yeats and Charles Baudelaire, undertakes an “inner exilic,” “dislocating” journey through the “menacing vastness of the sea” (99). Whether lacking a particular

destination in time and space (as in Baudelaire's case) or directed to a particular location as "home," masked as a nostalgic longing for some "other world" (Yeats's "News for the Delphic Oracle") both trips lead their travellers to a modern existential "elsewhere" (99).

In the fifth essay, Daskalova's "comparison and parallelism" strategy draws on the "haunting gothicisms" and "obsessive dark imagery and somnambulist daydreaming" that pervade the works of Edgar Allan Poe and the Bulgarian poet Peyo Yavorov and "mark their destinies of *poètes maudits* (115).

In the sixth essay, through an intertextual reading of texts by W. B. Yeats and Peyo Yavorov, Daskalova analyses their attempts to create a "sacred mythopoeic image of the motherland" (4). The former mythologizes his native Ireland, inspired by ancient Greek and Celtic mythology, while the latter draws on Bulgarian folk traditions to do the same.

The seventh essay contrasts the "intranational" perspective on the "concept of Irishness" of W. B. Yeats as exhibited in his works to the "transnational" one of the American-Palestinian critic Edward Said, developed in his essay "Yeats and Decolonization."

The last essay "com-pairs" two postmodern novels by contemporary Bulgarian writers: Svetlozar Igov's *Elenite* and Emil Andreev's *The Glass River*. It focuses on the representation of "otherness" and "the foreign" within a specific Bulgarian cultural context.

Insightful, illuminating and poetic itself, this book is a valuable contribution to the field of comparative literary studies. A pleasure to read, it will appeal to scholars and the general public alike.

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Vitana Kostadinova. *Jane Austen Translated: Cultural Transformations Across Space and Time*. Plovdiv University Press, 2018. 288. ISBN 978-619-202-383-6

Translation studies, now a largely interdisciplinary field, embraces the growing awareness (and the past two centuries have raised it to the utmost extent) that the "cultural transformations across space and time" are the "breath and life" of cultures, the dynamic principle that follows naturally from their necessity to develop. Vitana Kostadinova's book *Jane Austen Translated: Cultural Transformations Across Space and Time* anchors this academic expanse to a literary voice whose far-reaching pronouncements testify to the above-mentioned cross-cultural dynamics. Kostadinova's choice of Jane Austen's fiction and its cross-cultural migrations, and, more importantly, the ways in which it has reached Bulgarian readership and scholarship as a "latecomer," is timely and needed. As Ludmilla Kostova makes it evident in her introductory appraisal of the book, it "fills up a gap in Bulgarian and European reception studies" (12), a gap that exists on account of the uneven pace of the reception of Austen's works in some European cultures.

Kostadinova's own Introduction collects selectively a set of theoretical tools from the enormous repertoire of cultural studies and translation theory, genre criticism, narratology, imagology and history, and employs them to pave the author's critical path within reception studies. Overall, the book is an eloquent and multifocal account of the potential and challenges of translation, following the changing attitudes to this practice and discipline from the eighteenth century to the present. This historical overview, which pays tribute to Samuel Johnson and Roman Jakobson, among other prominent scholars, is also concerned with the evolving understanding of the concept of cultural translation. Some of its more recent formulations, like those discussed in Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere's theoretical works, introduce the methodological instruments of *cultural capital* and *textual grid* and insist on "the study of translation as the means to study cultural interaction" (29).