

# TRANSLATING RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

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# Introduction: “The Greatest Gift”?

*Muireann Maguire and Cathy McAteer*

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In a 2015 interview with an American professor of literature, conducted in the peaceful surroundings of a villa near Cumae in Italy, the writer Boris Akunin remarked: “Russian literature is the best thing to happen to my country; it is also the greatest gift Russia gave to mankind”.<sup>1</sup> For well over a century, this attitude to Russian literature (or, more precisely, Russophone writing, incorporating all the regions of post-Soviet space) has been a truism in Western humanitarian circles: to read Russian literature was to acquire wisdom, unsparing psychological insight. Russian prose was also a powerful critique of totalitarianism and injustice—and a summons to the realisation of spiritual responsibility, whether you were reading Pasternak or Tolstoy. In April 2022, two months after the second Russian invasion of Ukraine, an essay by the celebrated Ukrainian novelist Oksana Zabuzhko targeted this complacent Western vision of the invader’s literary field. Russian literature, she argued, was “one flesh” with Russian society (and its crimes); the mistake the West has made was to assume a separation between literature and state. “[T]he road for bombs and tanks has always been paved by books [...]. It is time to take a long, hard look at our bookshelves”, she wrote in a blistering and widely cited *TLS* opinion piece.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1 Boris Akunin in conversation with Stephen M. Norris, ‘Interview with Grigorii Chkartashishvili (Boris Akunin)’, in *The Akunin Project: The Mysteries and Histories of Russia’s Bestselling Author*, ed. by Elena V. Baraban and Stephen M. Norris (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), pp. 30–41 (p. 36). Akunin (which means ‘villain’ in Japanese, a language from which he translates) is the pen name of Grigorii Chkartashishvili, an ethnic Georgian who is probably the world’s most successful post-Soviet Russophone author; with the initial ‘B’ of ‘Boris’, the moniker refers playfully to the famous nineteenth-century Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin. Akunin openly rejects Vladimir Putin’s regime; he left Russia in 2013.
  - 2 Oksana Zabuzhko, ‘No Guilty People In The World? Reading Russian Literature After Bucha’, trans. by Uilleam Blacker, *Times Literary Supplement*, 22 April 2022,

The ability of Russian literature to inspire, or to acquire, hearts and minds has long been exercised through a wide range of ‘soft power’ strategies, as well as through coercive educational policies of Russification. This process has never been studied on a global scale or even on a comparative, multilingual basis. Its results have, however, been critiqued, not only by scholars from directly affected nations but by Western critics newly aware of the negative potential of Russian influence. Literature, traditionally seen as a critic of the Russian state, is now often regarded as its ally. Whether the great authors associated with the Russian canon, such as Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy, can genuinely be considered complicit with their nation’s imperialist and militarist policy is arguably an anachronistic question. While some continue to debate the morality of funding the translation of contemporary Russian writers, the influence of the nineteenth-century ‘classics’—and, especially in the Global South, of Soviet Socialist Realist prose—is already established and enduring. Their pre-eminence as models for emulation, whether creative or personal, and as vectors of philosophical and ethical enquiry, is a fact of global culture. The major questions explored by the essays in this volume include how this pre-eminence was achieved, and how Russian literary influence has evolved abroad during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: as our contributors show, it has developed spontaneously, trans-creatively, and often (from the perspective of Russian or Soviet statecraft) counterproductively.<sup>3</sup>

From 1938 until its demise, the Soviet state funded the translation of Russophone literature into both globally prevalent and geographically peripheral languages, through several heavily subsidised publishing firms under the umbrella of the Foreign Languages Publishing House. This task, which employed hundreds of translators and censors (including many foreign nationals), was sustained over so many decades partly to honour a Leninist ideological commitment to the internationalisation of culture, but primarily as an exercise in soft power. (The mission of its literary-fiction-focused subsidiaries Progress and Raduga (Rainbow) has since been assumed by new Russian state-appointed organisations such as the

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pp. 7–8 (pp. 7–8). <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/russian-literature-bucha-massacre-essay-oksana-zabuzhko/>. For a more nuanced, but still cumulatively damning, treatment of the theme of imperialism in nineteenth-century Russian literature, see Ewa M. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism* (London and Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000). See also Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

3 An intriguing example of transcreation is the 2011 novel *Maudit soit Dostoïevski* by French-Afghan writer and director Atiq Rahimi, translated by Polly MacLean in 2013 as *A Curse on Dostoevsky*. The book recreates the events and characters of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* with a cast of young Muslims contending with corrupt and brutal police on the streets of Kabul in the recent past. Among other possible readings, the novel offers a satirical commentary on Russian interference in Afghan politics.



Russkii Mir Foundation, founded in 2007, and the Institute of Translation (Institut Perevoda, or IP), a non-profit organisation established in 2011.) Despite the scale of Progress's achievement, it has never been the subject of a full-length scholarly monograph in English (several essays in this volume offer windows on its activity in specific language areas).<sup>4</sup>

While the political impact of Progress proved negligible (and recent Russian soft power has proved similarly ineffective in terms of securing economic or political allegiance), the cultural penetration achieved by Russian literature in the twentieth century is incalculable, particularly in countries of the Global South where Soviet Communist classics were widely and almost freely distributed, and where Russian political influence was regarded sympathetically (although only in a few nations, like Cuba, was this opinion consistently held by the political mainstream).<sup>5</sup> Sometimes Russian literature failed to take root in the target culture (as in the case of Colombia: see the chapter by Anastasia Belousova and Santiago Méndez). Elsewhere, it thrived despite political suspicion (as in Greece or Brazil); the underfunding of translation and persecution of individual translators (as in Turkey); or ideological dissimilarities, as seen in the history of translating Dostoevsky in Buddhist Mongolia and Communist China respectively, in chapters by Zaya Vandan and Yu Hang. China's President since 2012, Xi Jinping, is a self-professed ardent reader of Russian literature; while he values Tolstoy (and *War and Peace*) highest of all, he has claimed that the Soviet-era writer Mikhail Sholokhov and particularly the nineteenth-century radical Nikolai Chernyshevsky provided important models for his own experience of privation and exile. Great Russian literature, translated via Soviet propaganda, is thus reinscribed as cultural capital in the public biography of China's leading politician: truly transcreation in action.<sup>6</sup>

This unpredictability of literary influence has led to an imbalance in academia: Western overemphasis on the reception of nineteenth-century Russian literature in Anglophone countries, and neglect—now beginning to

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4 For an overview of Progress's achievements, see Rossen Djagalov, 'Progress Publishers: A Short History', in *The East Was Read: Socialist Culture in the Third World*, ed. by Vijay Prashad (New Delhi: LeftWord Books, 2019), pp. 83–93 (which in turn draws on Petr Petrov's Russian-language monograph, *K istorii izdatel'stva 'Progress'* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1987). Articles in our current volume which throw light on Progress include Nikolay Steblin-Kamensky's study of translation into Amharic and Anna Ponomareva's experience as a translator for Progress's Telugu section.

5 On the ineffectiveness of Russian cultural soft power, see Sergei Medvedev, 'In Search of Past Glory: Russia's Cultural Statecraft in the Age of Decline', in *Russia's Cultural Statecraft*, ed. by Tuomas Forsberg and Sirke Mäkinen (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), pp. 226–38.

6 See, for example, 'A Look at What's on President Xi Jinping's Shelves', *China Daily*, 18 October 2016, [https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-10/18/content\\_27093635.htm](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-10/18/content_27093635.htm)

be rectified by recent scholarship—of Russia's profound cultural influence on the rapidly evolving societies and politics of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. As one senior Latin American Slavic Studies scholar said, when the editors of the present volume mentioned their plans to produce the first global history of the translation and reception of Russian literature, "I have been waiting a long time for this book". *Translating Russian Literature in the Global Context* is the first scholarly anthology to describe not only the history of literary translation and translators from the Russian language since approximately 1900 (and in several cases, even earlier) in more than fifty countries across the world; it is also the first extended study to examine how translated Russian literature has influenced creative production in those nations, over the same timescale, up to the present day. By implication, these essays are also a map of Russian and especially Soviet soft power: our contributors on Scandinavia, Latin America, Africa, India, East Asia, and the formerly Communist nations of Eastern Europe demonstrate how funding for the transmission of Russian books (in terms of both physical export and intralingual transfer) has waxed and waned in harmony with both Soviet influence and internal political trends in the nations affected.

Despite its ultimate failure as a political entity, the Soviet Union achieved enduring moral authority over much of our planet's land surface, thanks in large part to the production and distribution of Russian literature in multiple languages through Moscow's Foreign Languages Publishing House and its worldwide network of translators. Our contributors on Finland liken this variable influence to the action of a pendulum.<sup>7</sup> By revealing the mechanisms of soft power and its extraordinary transnational reach, our volume is a useful model for future studies of how any nation can achieve political ascendancy through cultural appeal. At a time when Russia's geopolitical approach is changing again from soft power to hard conflict (currently in Ukraine, a country whose complicated cultural relationship with Russian literature is analysed in this volume), it is politically useful to be aware of the extensive groundwork laid by the former.

A further achievement of this volume is to demonstrate, yet again, how Translation Studies is "intimately linked" to Comparative Literature.<sup>8</sup> As this overlap has become increasingly obvious to academics and students in both

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7 See Tomi Huttunen, Marja Jänis, and Pekka Pesonen, 'The Pendulum of Translating Russian Literature in Finland', in the present volume.

8 Susan Bassnett, 'Preface', in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 1998), pp. vii-viii (p. viii). Although more than two decades have elapsed since Bassnett and Lefevere made this argument (Bassnett even suggesting "that Translation Studies should be seen as the discipline within which comparative literature might be located, rather than the other way round" (*ibid.*)), there is still considerable reluctance to admit the resonances between these two disciplines, perhaps especially in Slavic Studies.

disciplines, it has become almost impossible to study one effectively without some awareness of the methodology of the other. Some of our contributors (especially those writing about Western Europe, where Russian literature has been available in translation for at least two centuries and has therefore substantially influenced cultural imaginaries) have leaned towards comparative methodology, arguing for the influence of particular Russian writers on national literature at a specific moment. Hence, we have included essays about, for example, the influence of Tolstoy in translation on Turkish, Telugu, and Tamil literature; and about Dostoevsky's reception in Germany by Thomas Mann. Other contributors have opted for a historical approach, outlining the lives and cultural impact of specific translators of or advocates for Russian literature, such as Japan's Futabatei (from the first category), Spain's Emilia Pardo Bazán and France's Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé (from the second).

Each case study reinforces the message that the translator's importance transcends the sum of their word count. Microhistorical details such as translators' motivation, pay, and individual social contexts are clearly crucial, especially for sociologists and cultural historians; however, the enduring significance of the translator's function lies in their role as gatekeepers for the receiving cultures.<sup>9</sup> By translating (and in many cases adapting) Russian literature into their target languages, they opened up new literary subjects, techniques, and styles for other writers, introducing Dostoevsky's psychological realism (often with shocking effect in the target culture's critical ecosystem), but also the technophilic, self-annihilating aesthetic of interwar Socialist Realist production novels. As we unite in this volume multiple national histories of Russian literature in translation, we discover how integral translated Russian literature was for the great pre-modernist and early twentieth-century publishing houses offering cheap, mass-market literary fiction: Selzoff's Russian Authors Library in Brazil, Allen Lane's Penguin in Britain, Albatross and Tauchnitz in Germany, Govostēs Editions in Greece, the Shinchō paperback series in Japan, and Johan Sørensen's Norwegian 'Library for a Thousand Homes', to name some of those discussed by our contributors. Several publishers dedicated book series exclusively to Russian authors. All changed the cultural direction of popular reading in their home nations.

Compiling an edited volume of genuinely global scope is not without its challenges. Our global remit implied the need to recruit global scholars, for many of whom English is a second or third language; as editors, we worked

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9 On microhistories, see Anthony Pym, *Method in Translation History* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); on translatorial social contexts and personal histories (habitus and hexis), see Daniel Simeoni, 'The Pivotal Status of the Translator's Habitus' (*Target*, 10:1, 1998, pp. 1–39) and David Charlston, 'Textual Embodiments of Bourdieusian Hexis', *The Translator*, 19:1, 2013, pp. 51–80. On gatekeeping, see William Marling, *Gatekeepers: The Emergence of World Literature and the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

especially closely with these authors to reconcile them with unfamiliar academic style. We selected our contributors through a combination of direct invitation and advertisement, seeking out acknowledged subject experts in every field, not necessarily professional academics (and occasionally accepting more than one contributor to cover different aspects of the reception of Russian literature within a single language). Another challenge has been the regrettable gaps in our range: we were not able to commission essays offering a historical overview of the translation and reception of Russian literature in the US, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, much of the African continent including South Africa, Australia, or New Zealand (in the case of the last two nations, our chosen contributor was prevented from completing their essay by illness and overwork; most of the writing and editing for this volume was undertaken under the exceptional circumstances of a global pandemic).<sup>10</sup> At least four major world languages, each essential for the translation and mediation of Russian literature, are under-represented in this volume. On reflection, we find this omission less grave than it may seem. As explained below, our volume's contributions are organised geographically, with each 'continent' prefaced by a short essay prepared by the editors providing an overview of the reception of Russian literature since 1900 throughout that region. This allows us to briefly summarise the significance of omitted nations or translators and signpost to further and more specific research, as our extensive Bibliography already does and as we have encouraged all of our contributors to do.

In its current form, this volume includes essays on the French, German, and North American reception of Russian literature, dealing with individual critics (de Vogüé), authors (Fedor Dostoevsky and Thomas Mann; Andrey Kurkov and Alexey Nikitin), and specific historical moments (the evolving reception of Russophone Ukrainian authors in the West, for example). We also note two key points in defence of our omissions: first, that new studies of Russian literary transmission within the cultures we left out, including academic monographs, are already available or in preparation.<sup>11</sup> In some cases, such as French, these

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10 Similarly, we lost our Israel contributor to academic precarity, while our Poland author, who works for a Polish university, withdrew almost immediately after the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine: apparently Polish University faculties would not tolerate any new research on a Russian theme, even the historical reception of Russian literature in Poland.

11 On France, see, for example, the following monographs and dissertation: Leonid Livak, *How It Was Done in Paris: Russian Emigré Literature and French Modernism* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); F. W. J. Hemmings, *The Russian Novel in France: 1884–1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950); and A. McCabe, 'Dostoevsky's French Reception: from Vogüé, Gide, Shestov and Berdyaev to Marcel, Camus and Sartre (1880–1959)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2013). On Spain, see Lynn C. Purkey, *Spanish Reception of Russian Narratives, 1905–1939: Transcultural Dialogics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). See also our Bibliography.



have been available for years (Hemmings's authoritative monograph was published in 1950). Second, the history of Russian influence on Anglophone literary culture has already been largely told, albeit piecemeal, through various articles and monographs published in recent decades; indeed, research on the Anglophone countries tends to monopolise study of the translation and reception of Russian literature. We therefore find it appropriate and perhaps even necessary that the history of the transmission of Russian literature into the Anglophone world, which has for so long been over-represented in academia, should be under-represented in our volume.<sup>12</sup> (On the other hand, the essays from the Global South which we have curated here do constitute—in some cases for the first time in English—their nations' history of cultural contact with Russia). Our overview of the absorption of Russian literature into the Anglophone intellectual everyday follows our section on the Americas, forming a coda to our volume.

## Methodology

The chapters in *Translating Russian Literature* are both geographically diverse and chronologically broad, covering an eventful century of socio-political change: two world wars, the Russian Revolution and subsequent Cold War and mass migration, both of individuals and their literary influences. To instil theoretical and epistemological coherence we asked all our contributors to follow a clear methodological framework, derived primarily from Translation Studies (with some input from Comparative Literature). This interdisciplinary framework offers a useful set of theories to unite the many case studies of translators and translated literature in our volume. It conveniently accommodates strands of research that share space with (and often overlap) book history, comparative literature, sociology, microhistory, publishing, linguistics, diplomacy, and soft-power politics.

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12 On the reception and translation of Russian literature in the UK, please see Rebecca Beasley's work (mentioned elsewhere here and also listed in our Bibliography). While the present volume does not cover the history of Russian translation in the US in detail, under the auspices of the same research project we plan to publish two monographs on this subject, both currently in preparation. Muireann Maguire's monograph, working title *Russian Silhouettes*, will provide an outline history of US-based literary translators active from the late nineteenth century to the present day, with particular focus on those translators who were also active as editors or publishers. Cathy McAteer's monograph *Cold War Women: Female Translators and Cultural Mediators of Russian and Soviet Literature in the Twentieth Century* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024), will examine the careers of twentieth-century female translators who were also advocates for Russian culture and for Russophone writers.

The theorists whose key works we identify as particularly apposite here—Pascale Casanova and David Damrosch—have been credited with taking the field of Translation Studies in all these directions. Casanova's *World Republic of Letters* (1999, reprinted 2007) and both of Damrosch's texts *What Is World Literature?* (2003) and *Comparing the Literatures: Literary Studies in a Global Age* (2020) have equipped translation scholars with paradigms with which to investigate both broad and nuanced factors determining target/source culture relationships and underscoring the transnational circulation of texts.<sup>13</sup> Such research now commonly encompasses global perspectives, particularly the Global South, producing compelling case studies that define the cultural connection between national dominance and domination, the role of power in driving literary trends and carving epicentres of book production (and hence, of translation). Socio-political developments drive the movement of people and texts, unexpectedly propelling writers and translators into a new public domain, shaping literary canons, and forming new or cementing old (often lasting) impressions, alliances, and sometimes, resentments between nations.

Casanova's and Damrosch's discourses on European literatures extend as far east as Bulgaria, Romania, and the Czech Republic, to Marx, Kafka, Kundera, and Kiš; they travel beyond to China, Japan, Africa, Latin America, and India. They evidence political, literary, linguistic, and social conditions behind the circulation of texts and their trajectories from obscurity to the world stage. There is, however, one creation story (with the exception of a few fleeting references) that eludes their full attention and yet merits scrutiny: the Russian/Soviet paradigm. Casanova offers passing commentary in the course of the *World Republic* on the Russian/Soviet context, and Damrosch refers to Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Nabokov and Russian formalists as part of a global tapestry of literary contributors, bit parts in a bigger, more complex picture. In each case, however, they resist the temptation to linger on and explore more fully the potential of what is a rich and fascinating case study, emerging from the Soviet desire to disseminate its literature (and political presence) around the world. Our edited volume, the first of its kind to address Russian literature in a global translatorial context, tracks the migration of the Russian literary canon across all continents, and its translation into local languages over the span of one century. It identifies the networks of agents who facilitated such literary migration, while evaluating the cultural impact of the Russian (and Soviet) canon on each receiving nation. We have therefore applied a number of versatile methodological strands to construct a macroscopic case study of each discrete literature, allowing us to find out exactly what drives the transmission of Russian book culture abroad.

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13 See Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. by Malcolm DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999; 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2007) and David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003) and *Comparing the Literatures: Literary Studies in a Global Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

Our volume asks the same sociological questions that have occupied major translation scholars (Casanova and Damrosch, but also Anthony Pym, Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro) over the past two decades. How has Russian literature arrived in neighbouring and not-so-near countries? Who has financed its journey (and why?)? Which social agents (publishers, editors, translators, ambassadors) have facilitated its publication, and how has it been received, by scholars, critics, and casual readers?<sup>14</sup> What were the principal pivot, or bridge, languages which carried Russian literature to nations such as Spain where few translators knew Russian, and how does the transmission of, for example, Pushkin or Gorky map onto pathways of colonial influence? Inspired by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, whose ideas similarly challenge disciplinary boundaries, we have asked about Russian literature around the world: "Who are the discoverers, and what interest do they have in discovering these things?"<sup>15</sup> In the field of Russian literary translation studies, such prior enquiry has typically been directed at language-specific configurations rather than forming a synchronous image of Russian literature's global reception.<sup>16</sup> The ambitious historiography we have collated here constitutes a step-change in Slavic literary translation scholarship.

Other emerging trends in Translation Studies have facilitated our methodological choices. In the last decade, the entire field has experienced a theoretical shift towards sociological and archival research, a key example of which is Jeremy Munday's approach. Munday's microhistorical and Bourdieusian methodology, which validates the (often unnoticed) agency of translators and seeks to make them visible, has led to new scholarship in the field of Russian Translation Studies in, for example, Cathy McAteer's *Translating Great Russian Literature: The Penguin Russian Classics* (2021), and now here in this volume.<sup>17</sup> Munday advocates use of translators' notes, drafts and manuscripts,

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14 Pym, *Method in Translation History*; Johann Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro, 'Outline for a Sociology of Translation: Current Issues and Future Prospects', in *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, ed. by Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: Benjamins Translation Library, 2007), pp. 93–107.

15 Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Social Conditions of the International Circulation of Ideas', in *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, ed. by R. Shusterman (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1999), pp. 220–28.

16 On Anglophone translation, see Rachel May, *The Translator in the Text: On Reading Russian Literature in English* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994); on Russo-Chinese translation, Mark Gamsa, *The Chinese Translation of Russian Literature: Three Studies* (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2008); and on Brazilian reception of Russian literature, see Bruno Barretto Gomide, *Da Estepe à Caatinga: O romance russo no Brasil (1887–1936)* (São Paulo, Brazil: Editora de Universidade de São Paulo, 2011).

17 Cathy McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature: The Penguin Russian Classics* (London and New York: Routledge BASEES Series, 2021), <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/oa-mono/10.4324/9781003049586/translating-great-russian-literature-cathy-mcateer>; <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003049586>.

archived correspondence, and analysis of paratexts in order to understand the wider “role of translation in concrete socio-historical contexts”.<sup>18</sup> This call for understanding reflects our own desire not only to identify the translators and their motivations for translating Russian literature around the world, but also to contextualise their activities in the wider literary community. The interconnected nature of agency in the literary field—a reliance on a complex network of facilitators—merits exploration beyond the scope of the translator alone, inviting comparable analysis of other types of facilitator. Only by surveying the spectrum of key agents and their socio-historical/socio-political contexts can Munday’s aspiration “to uncover the power relations at work in the production of the literary text” be satisfactorily fulfilled.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, we have invited our contributors to draw on primary archival and paratextual material to construct microhistories of translators, publishers, and cultural mediators who have promoted Russian literature in foreign locations over the past century. In a further advancement, we have encouraged microhistorical explorations of any specific national writer, genre, or literary group within the target culture who translated, transmitted, or adapted aspects of Russian literature in their own literary production. In this regard, we honour Casanova’s commitment to understanding world canon-formation, we extend Klaus Kaendl’s, Waltraud Kolb’s and Daniela Schlager’s innovative line of enquiry into the sub-field of literary translator studies, and we complement the intricate socio-cultural research carried out by scholars like Rebecca Beasley and Peter Kaye in the field of transnational Russian studies.<sup>20</sup>

## Outline

The thirty-seven essays in the present volume are divided into three sections, by continent, in rough chronological order of the major stages of diffusion of Russian literature abroad. Within each section, essays are arranged in alphabetical order by country name.

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- 18 Jeremy Munday, ‘The Role of Archival and Manuscript Research in the Investigation of Translator Decision-Making’, *Target*, 25:1 (2013), 125–39.
  - 19 Jeremy Munday, ‘Using Primary Sources to Produce a Microhistory of Translation and Translators: Theoretical and Methodological Concerns’, *The Translator*, 20:1 (2014), 64–80.
  - 20 *Literary Translator Studies*, ed. by K. Kaendl, W. Kalb, and D. Schlager (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: Benjamins Translation Library, 2021); Rebecca Beasley, *Russomania: Russian Culture and the Creation of British Modernism, 1881–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Peter Kaye, *Dostoevsky and English Modernism, 1900–1930* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

## Europe

We begin in France, famous for the contribution of Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé to the reception of Russian literature with his vastly influential (and popular) *Le Roman russe* (1886). Elizabeth Geballe uses the writings of Rachel May and David Damrosch, in addition to existing scholarship on the history of Russian writing in French translation, to argue that de Vogüé was a uniquely influential figure in the process of 'transculturation' of Russian prose. As she writes, this celebrated mediator "shaped the expectations of the French reading public" through the metatexts he supplied for his own and others' translations of leading Russian writers. In their essay on 'Russian Literature in Estonia Between 1918 and 1940', Anne Lange and Aile Möldre show transculturation in action in another context: the influence of Russian literature (specifically Tolstoy and Dostoevsky) on the Socialist Realism of Estonian author and translator Anton Hansen Tammsaare (1878–1940). This is a particularly interesting case study, given the hegemonic influence of Russian culture on Estonian writers before and after the two-decade window of Estonian national independence. Similarly, Finnish writers have had to cautiously negotiate a balance between establishing their own national culture and language while determining the extent of influence from the literature of their vast and sometimes overweening neighbour, Russia. Tomi Huttunen, Marja Jänis, and Pekka Pesonen frame their study of the interrelationship between Russian and Finnish literature, 'The Pendulum of Translating Russian Literature in Finland' (from the late eighteenth century to the present day), as a deliberate attempt to *reverse* the traditional trajectory of Casanovian analysis. That is to say, rather than looking at how peripheral languages are translated into major global languages (as Casanova does in *The World Republic of Letters*), they analyse the reverse process: how Russian is translated into Finnish, and with what effect. They use the metaphor of the 'pendulum' to vividly illustrate the variations in the transmission of Russian literature according to political relations and cultural fashions. The remaining essays in this section discuss the influence of Russian literature on Germany's Thomas Mann (Elizaveta Sokolova), Greece (Christina Karakepeli on the Greek reception of Dostoevsky, and Niovi Zampouka on the translation and reception of Russian literature more generally), Hungary (Zsuzsa Hetényi provides an overview of the translation and literary influence of Russian writers in Hungary since the early nineteenth century, including her own activity as a translator of Bulgakov), Spain (Margaret Tejerizo on the impact of the populariser Emilia Pardo Bazán) and also Catalonia (Miquel Cabal Guarro), Ireland (Mark Ó Fionnáin focuses on Irish-language translations of Pushkin), Italy (with a general survey by Claudia Scandura following Ilaria Sicari's study of the important translator



and advocate for Russian dissidents, Mariia Olsuf'eva), Scandinavia (Susan Reynolds documents reception in Norway and Sweden), Romania (Octavian Gabor on translation, philosophy, and political resistance), Scotland (James Rann on the Russian influence on twentieth-century Scots poetry), and finally, twentieth-century relations between Russian literature and Ukrainian culture, colourfully described by co-authors Lada Kolomiyets and Oleksandr Kalnychenko as resembling "the slow but increasingly deadly compression of a rabbit by a boa constrictor".

## Africa and Asia

As mentioned above, this section is particularly revealing about the under-researched activities of the USSR's Foreign Languages Publishing House, an important instrument of Soviet soft power. Essays by Nikolay Steblin-Kamensky (Ethiopian translations in the Amharic language), Anna Ponomareva (the Telugu section of Progress Publishers), and others vividly illustrate both the reach and the diversity of Russian literature as cultural propaganda in the developing world during the second half of the twentieth century. We have also included essays describing the reception of Dostoevsky in China (Yu Hang) and Japan (Hiroko Cockerill), while Trang Nguyen contrasts the transmission of Russian literature and the reading habits of the public in North and South Vietnam, respectively. The exceptional complexities of reception, transmission, and translation in multilingual India are outlined in essays by Ranjana Saxena (overview), Guzel' Strel'kova (Hindi), Ayesha Suhail (Tolstoy in translation), and Venkatesh Kumar (Tolstoy in Tamil). Anna Ponomareva's contribution on translations into Telugu was mentioned above. The former Soviet republics in Asia are represented by Kazakhstan (Sabina Amanbayeva) and Uzbekistan (Benjamin Quénu), while Zaya Vandan describes the complex reception policy of Mongolia. Turkish reception is discussed in two essays: a historical overview from Hülya Arslan and a Pushkin-specific study by Sabri Gürses. In an appropriate parallel to Nikolay Steblin-Kamensky's essay on Gorky's Amharic reception history, Mukile Kasongo and Georgia Nasseh have co-authored an article about the 'spectre' of Gorky in Angolan writing. This Lusophone strand resonates with Bruno Barretto Gomide's essay on Brazilian reception of Russian literature in our 'Americas' section, which includes some of the same writers, translators, and publishers. Such confluences emphasise the interrelationships created in the reception of Russian literature through multiple intermediary languages and overlapping cultures. Finally, Russian prose in the Arab world—again, primarily translations of Gorky—is introduced by Sarali Gintsburg.

## Americas

For the reasons explained above, we have included only one essay dealing directly with North American reception (although Muireann Maguire includes the US in her summary of Russian reception in the Anglophone world). Catherine O'Neil's essay focuses on Russophone Ukrainian literature in translation in the twenty-first century. However, our exploration of Russian literature in Latin America is both diverse and far-reaching. Bruno Barretto Gomide details the several stages in the transmission of Russian translations to Brazil, culminating in their consecration in university curricula, partially thanks to the work of the Russian-Jewish émigré scholar-translator, Boris Schnaiderman. Anastasia Belousova and Santiago Méndez present an interesting anomaly: the *lack* or failure of Russian literature in Colombia, which they ascribe to an absence of cultural curiosity or political stimuli. Damaris Puñales-Alpízar discovers echoes of late Soviet culture in Cuba, while Rodrigo García Bonillas traces the scholarly and cultural impact of Russian literature (including book series) in Mexico.

## Conclusion

*Translating Russian Literature in the Global Context* aims to provoke new debate about the continued currency of Russian literature as symbolic capital for international readers, in particular for nations seeking to create or consolidate cultural and political leverage in the so-called 'World Republic of Letters'. These essays also benefit researchers aiming to examine and contrast the mechanisms of the translation and reception of Russian literature across the globe. We hope our contribution will inform and inspire students and scholars in the fields of both Slavic and Translation Studies, as well as book historians, and practitioners and researchers across the translation and publishing communities.

