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### From national allegory to cosmopolitanism: Transformations in contemporary Anglo-Indian and Turkish novels

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## Epilogue

Examining novels staging the movement from national allegory to a new cosmopolitanism, my aim throughout this study has been threefold: to situate a selection of contemporary Turkish and Anglo-Indian novels within the world-system; to examine the explanatory and representative potential of these texts with regards to their specific semi-peripheral position; and to show that the semi-periphery is not a monolith: that there are vital differences amongst these texts that need to be addressed. Using various grounds of comparison – such as theatricality, subalternity, hybridity and cosmopolitanism – I have tried to expose the interconnectedness as well as distinctiveness of the selected works of literature. Rather than revisit my chapters, in this epilogue I want to reflect briefly on what my analyses have taught me about the literary potential of this semi-periphery of world literature.

I hope to have demonstrated that the scope of the selected texts is not solely the nation but also the world at large. I identify three main observations in support of this claim. To begin, these books all provide ample proof that the world-system is indeed active. They acquire their particular relevance within the context of world literature. The national-allegorical contexts of *Snow*, *Lying down to Die* and *Midnight's Children* shift to performative sites of resistance that enable an identity politics beyond the nation. Claiming their individualities, the characters in these novels both enact and challenge readings informed by Western or Eurocentric assumptions. These novels thus acquire a different status: they refuse as well as exceed their categorisation as representatives of the third-world novel. In this sense, they embody a new consciousness in the literatures of the semi-periphery. Doing so, they also point towards new directions that the literatures of the semi-periphery may take in the 21st century.

Furthermore, my cases have revealed that the literary world-system is also fundamentally unequal. As globalisation continues to permeate all borders and encompass all heterogeneities, it also further marginalises disenfranchised people. Strikingly, it simultaneously facilitates a new class mobility among the subaltern. *Small Things*, *The White Tiger* and *Berji Kristin* all attest to this simultaneous occurrence. They not only rework traditional inequalities within their respective localities, they also expose and challenge the logic of global capitalism, resituating their small stories in connection to the larger forces of History. Thus they give voice to the subaltern and carry a subversive potential.

It is crucial to examine the connection between these texts and the world by using a comparative and critical approach. Particularly in the last two chapters, I have tried to analyse globalisation critically. In *The Forty Rules of Love* and *The Inheritance of Loss*, the theme of love emphasises that there are different, opposing forms of hybridity, only one which can be strategically used to contest global capitalism. Equally important is to foreground historical specificities in the face of the flattening aspect of globalisation. Situating those dissimilarities non-hierarchically as constellations of different yet interrelated histories can be perceived as tackling the politics of comparison. We as readers might be urged to reconsider the terms we use in understanding and comparing diverse cultures –including our own.

A final observation on selected novels as part of the world literary system is that the intermediate position their semi-peripheral quality suggests helps them exceed the thematic frames that are given to them by the West. I have argued that the categorisation of the novels should not be reduced to mere national narratives. That perspective would suggest that these texts are deprived of a mutually informing relationship with their Western contemporaries as well as of the liberty to criticise the wider realities that surround them. Located in the semi-periphery, they acquire their particular status, character and perspective within the world literary system. As my analysis of *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* and *Transmission* shows,

cosmopolitanism calls for a further criticism of globalisation. This criticism entails the awareness of class inequalities as well as of the historical differences that influence modes of belonging to the world.

The word “epilogue” suggests a closing. However, bringing any study to a close inevitably provokes new questions and speculations. With regard to the world literary system, I wonder whether current global processes may demand a more fundamental re-evaluation of the ways in which world literature can be theorised. Future research might stimulate other studies about the connection between the periphery and the semi-periphery. Through further analysis, the relationship between the semi-periphery and the core may be enlarged, as other aspects, other texts and other cultures will be integrated into the realm of world literature. This might enhance the importance of the semi-periphery as cultural and intellectual capital. The increasing visibility and influence of countries of the semi-periphery in the global socio-political and economic arena will surely implicate the course of globalisation and its impact on the realm of culture.

In my introductory chapter, I have posed a number of questions. I asked whether it is possible to imagine a kind of world literature that conceives all literatures as active and critical participants, paving the way for the researcher to analyse these relations with a keen awareness of the historical moment that marks them all. I also enquired if we could analyse these texts without homogenising them all under the heading of globalisation. Both questions are pertinent and can be further expanded on through a comparative but non-hierarchical study of selected Turkish and Anglo-Indian novels. I hope to have made clear that analyses of these texts as cultural constructs underline the significance of change in world literature: in line with Wallerstein’s ideas, literature and world-systems constantly evolve. The concepts and themes that my chapters examine — such as theatricality, subalternity, hybridity and cosmopolitanism— all relate to this dynamism in world literature. Those themes have

provided me with the points of entry into the variegated ways in which Agaoglu, Pamuk, Rushdie, Roy, Adiga, Tekin, Shafak, Desai and Kunzru dramatise the complexity and potential of the literatures of Turkey and India in their effort to engage with the West. The critical potential of these literatures will continue to play a key role in shaping our perception of the world in which we live and contribute to the cultivation of more inclusive and pluralistic worldviews.