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Research Article

Frontierwhorlroamer: Eugene Jolas's Cosmopoetics

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It is essentially the story of a *Man from Babel* who seeks, through linguistic, psychological and philosophical struggles, an occidental unity within himself and the world around him; who believes finally that the Occident is One, and that the Columbian reality represents the hope for a new dynamic synthesis of races and languages.

Eugene Jolas, Synopsis for an Autobiography [1]

The article analyzes Eugene Jolas' two multilingual poems "Frontier-Poem" (1935) and "America Mystica" (1937) in the transnational context of European Union and hemispheric conceptualizations of the Americas to show how Jolas worked towards a new paradigm and terminology to name the transnational identities created through mass migrations and unstable boundaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. With poetic sensibility forged at the confluence of the utilitarian jargon of journalism and the irrepressible plurality of the collective unconscious, Jolas's cosmopoetics offered the universal language of Atlantica, which, paradoxically, was to be both all-inclusive (consisting of essences of all idioms in the world) and universally spoken. Only such a language promised literary expression for the "frontierwhorlroamer", whose poetics grew out of linguistic mixtures of transcontinental wandering.

Key words: Cosmopoetics, translanguaging, genre, code switching

Introduction

Eugene Jolas did not fit into a single idiom, into national categories, poetic traditions and anthologies: he stood always apart. Not surprisingly, he fought to stretch the boundaries of these categories in his journalism, articles in the international journal *transition* he funded and edited, and in his poetry. Indeed, in his time, philosophical vocabularies lacked words to describe his hybrid transnational identity, so he devised his own, like "frontierwhorlroamer (english compound) confused man from European border" in a dictionary he composed of a syncretic language he referred to as Atlantica, or *Man From Babel* as he titled his autobiography. While he searched for a way to express his own liminal

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position, Jolas also sought to express this liminality in his poetry, writing some poems simultaneously in English, French and German with immixtures of Spanish, Dutch, Old Norse, Maya and made-up tongues. For this multilingual poetry Jolas devised new terminology as well and referred to it as “poèmes-fleuves”, “poèmes-frontières”, “wanderpoems” and “cable poems”. As I show the creative cultural immediacy of these terms in my analysis of Jolas’ two long multilingual poems — “Frontier-Poem”, written in Strasburg in 1935 and published in the last issue of *transition* in 1938, and “America Mystica” devised as a part of a much longer series entitled *Reporters*, but published separately in *transition* 26 in 1937 — I argue for a new reading of Jolas’s work in the transnational context of European Union and hemispheric conceptualizations of the Americas.

Discussion

Expressing the need for new terminology to name the transnational identities created through mass migrations and unstable boundaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century puts Jolas and his works at the very center of many current conceptualizations of hybrid identities: postcolonial, transnational, globalization, hemispheric and border studies critics have long been postulating new aesthetic paradigms able to assess the value of what is beyond one culture’s and tradition’s grasp. Such a new paradigm is also what we need to be able to fully appreciate Jolas’s significance not only for modernism but also for the later experimental literature that his multilingual poetics fostered. The poems I focus on here respond to their context of the decade of the 1930s marked by an economic crisis in the U.S., continuing upheavals of the Russian Revolution, and growing strength and popular appeal of the two greatest totalitarian regimes of twentieth century Europe: Stalinism and Nazism. Significantly, both of the latter ideologies campaigned against the avant-garde and modernist aesthetics that *transition* promoted, mainly because such aesthetics opposed a totalitarian uniformity of language and expression. Jolas’s revolution of the word, embodied in his insistent mixing of lexicons, offers a radical politics of language that refuses to admit monolingualism even at the level of subjectivity, let alone of a national community or literature. By mixing idioms at the level of syntax, Jolas underscores the reality of linguistic diversity against the monolingual norms of nations and homogenizing claims of language purists and supporters of artificial languages.

His insistence on writing in many languages in the same text strictly distinguishes between two forms of unity: the totalizing one that would like to see the whole world as a sea of sameness achievable through translation or a universal tongue, and the cosmopolitan one which finds a universality in difference. The seemingly contradictory juxtaposition of universality and difference here testifies to my engagement with the rethinking of cosmopolitanism by the so-called new cosmopolitans — among others Homi Bhabha, James Clifford or Walter D. Mignolo — who in an attempt to distance the term from the prejudices inherent in Enlightenment universalism, postulated new forms of cosmopolitanism describing it with an array of modifiers: vernacular, rooted, critical, discrepant, actually existing etc. [2]. The latter term, offered by another significant voice in the debate, Bruce Robbins, in his introduction to *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, suggests that cosmopolitanism has a specific valence in the historical

moment of globalization. Because of the increased connectivity among cultures, more people consider themselves part of many realities and live in a net of overlapping allegiances, rather than being non-aligned or limited to patriotic loyalties. Their politics becomes more cosmopolitan because they see the world from many points of view, which in turn makes them unlikely to support international or interethnic conflicts. Such was precisely Jolas's position; he too saw that through shifting boundaries, transcontinental travel, displacement of wars, economic migrations, and technologies such as the telegraph, cultures and their lexicons became interconnected in ways that needed a new poetics.

Multilingualism was his answer. Marjorie Perloff refers to Jolas's poetics as simply "multilingual poetics", Emily Apter brands it "plurilingual dogma" [3]. Modifying Robbins's *cosmopolitics*, I propose to call it *cosmopoetics* to highlight the cosmopolitan philosophy that underlies Jolas's linguistic experiments. His cosmopolitan engagement was what distinguished him from other modernists who experimented with languages. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, James Joyce's incorporation of multilingual wordplay into *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, represent the period's fascination with the foreign and the frequent utilization of collage of languages as a creative technique. However, if for them multilingualism was an exercise in high-art, Jolas derived his cosmopoetics from translingual mixtures actually existing in the borderlands: he grew up in the convergence of languages and cultures of the European frontier-land of Alsace-Lorraine. His own childhood house was a frontier where idioms met: his father spoke French and patois, his mother, German; since they met in the United States, they also conversed in clumsy English (MB 6). Later, in the U.S. Jolas worked in multilingual newsrooms translating chopped telegraph messages, while living in the streets of New York where the languages of immigrant workers mixed on a daily basis. His poetic sensibility emerged at the confluence of the utilitarian jargon of journalism and the irrepressible plurality of the collective unconscious.

What Jolas offered in his multilingual poems was the universal language of Atlantica, which he called a "super-tongue for intercontinental expression" [4]. On the one hand, he looked to Jungian psychology to theorize this Babel tongue as the "language of night", or an expression of the collective unconscious. On the other, he claimed that such a mixed language was already spoken in the streets of New York, which he observed as a reporter: "while engaged in reporting police news among the aliens ... I heard polyglot intonations, international distortions, aggressive twangs, illogical mixtures". Both these sources of the universal language, psychological (collective unconscious) and sociological (the street), Jolas perceived as equally organic. His multilingual poems thus illustrate the opposition between English as the limiting, imperial global tongue and multilingualism as the challenging force that comes from border thinking (to use Mignolo's term) or contact zones (to use Mary Louise Pratt's).

Illustrating borderland as an origin for Jolas's cosmopoetics, "Frontier-Poem" acts as an example of its two proposed literary forms: "poème-frontière" (or frontier-poem) and "poème-fleuve" (river-poem) [5]. As the title itself implies, "Frontier-Poem" enacts a border, not in the sense of a division or separation, however, but in the sense of mixture, overlapping identities and languages that borders generate in their vicinity. For Jolas, the primary image of such a permeable borderland is Lorraine. He describes it in the preface to his collection of poetry *I Have Seen Monsters and Angels* (1938) as "history-haunted

region, le *pays messin*, la Lorraine annexée et desannexée, Lothringen, Lotharingie” [6]. The lexicons he taps into in this description, French, German and a linguistically mixed term Lotharingie (derived from Latin), reflect the history of the region, which due to its rich iron and coal deposits attracted both powers and changed hands across centuries. Germany annexed Alsace-Lorraine in 1871 in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war. Despite the moved borders and insistent Germanization through education and administration that followed, the region remained strongly French with “a Franconian patois” (MB 5) spoken in its streets. Moreover, as a heavily industrialized area, with coalmines and steel mills, Lorraine attracted workers from the all over the German Empire and the rest of Europe, which contributed to its linguistic mix.

The term “poème-fleuve” suggests a similar unity made up of many sources since rivers connote a body of water that consists of many tributaries and often mark topographical borders. Again, the rivers of Lorraine figure most prominently as a geographical basis of the image: the Saar, the Mosel, but above all the Rhine, which merits its own word in Jolas’s *Atlantica* dictionary: “babelbank (English compound word) river bank dividing two languages: Rhine”. The Rhine also reigns in “Frontier-Poem”, which bore the working title “The Languages Flow Towards the Atlantic” in an early draft. This title adds another dimension to the river metaphor by comparing the flow of words to the tributaries of a river; that they flow towards the Atlantic reflects the Westward direction of the majority of migration that Jolas alludes to. For him, European migration always headed for the Americas, and such is also the direction of the poem, which, while it begins with the frontier-land of Jolas’s childhood region, ends with “the visionary Americas of our minds”. Thus the eponymous frontier, and in another draft “The Frontier” was the entirety of the title, evokes also the internal American migration towards the West.

As “Frontier-Poem” rather than a verse simply entitled “The Frontier”, the whole poem enacts a number of frontiers: between countries, between idioms, between day and night, between consciousness and unconsciousness or wakefulness and dream. It balances an equal mixture of English, French and German, the boundaries between which at times blur as they would in the contact zone of a border. A typical stanza may open with French just to switch to German and English in the following lines:

le rhin coule à travers mon ame
viele worte sind nicht gut am diesem ufer
the saint was inebriated with god.

A line may also start in one language to travel through another and a third one to end in the first one again, like in “wir sind bald vor den frontières of the raubtiere”. The choice of French and German as predominant immixtures to the English text adds further specificity to the geographical location of the poem in the borderland of Lorraine.

While it might begin with a specific geographical location and tend towards a list of others, the poem remains a subconscious dream journey rather than a geographically situated voyage because in the subconscious images of many locations freely mix and fluidly overlap. The dream takes the speaking persona back to his home, described with the German word ‘heim’ and thus situated within that language. The dream journey in a boat through the landscape of wineries, vintners, and folksongs — parameters of national

identity — happens at dusk or at twilight, always at a fluid liminal moment “between tag und nacht”. The fluidity of the frontier emerges also in the “poème-fleuve” characteristics of the poem, as the rivers constitute the integral part of its imagery. It begins with a description of the Rhine, the banks of which cut through space, and then repeatedly returns to the “river-song”, “fluslandschaft” (river-land-landscape), “tendres streams”, and the Rhine itself that “coule à travers” (flows through) the speaker’s soul. Also the way in which “Frontier-Poem” begins with a single speaker only to develop into collective narration in the first person plural “we” depends on the river metaphor: tributaries flowing into the single stream that began it. The speaker, who at first traveled on his own through his (imaginary) homeland, joins up with other wanderers like himself. Although the assumption of a single universal voice could be read as totalizing in its presumption of unanimity, the dialogic quality of a speaker’s voice in a multilingual poem escapes such presumptions: the mixture of languages never allows perfect unity but always underscores the resistance of the foreign and emphasizes differences even as it forges connections among vocabularies.

Jolas employed Jungian ideas of the “collective unconscious” and its corollary visionary art to conceptualize the condition of hybrid creative consciousness and to conceive of a language that could express it. When in his *transition* essay “Workshop” Jolas asserts that “an inter-racial language will have to be forged to express the collective inner vision of mankind”, his vocabulary closely mirrors Jungian terminology. Since his own subconscious worked in three languages in his multilingual dreams and daily experiences, Jolas assumed that the humanity’s collective unconscious had to include all the languages they spoke. He referred to this collective tongue of the unconscious as the *Language of Night* and expanded on in a monograph of the same title published in 1932.

C.G. Jung’s article “Psychology and Poetry”, which Jolas translated and published in *transition*, proposes that visionary poets speak “with the voice of thousands and tens of thousands, predicting changes in the contemporaneous consciousness”. A visionary artist is a “collective man” whose art transcends his personal story to tap instead into the collective unconscious. The idea of a poet as a “collective man” explains the development of the collective voice in “Frontier-Poem:” the speaker embodies the voice of thousands. Those gathered in the collective ‘we’ are described as “die celestial wanderers prêts à monter l’étoile” [ready to climb the star] ready to seek insight in a vertical ascent. Described as wanderers, they signal the migratory flows, but their migration takes them up towards the stars, in a utopian vision that ends at Plato’s Atlantis:

We shall build the mantic bridge
We shall sing in all the languages of the continents
We shall discover les langues de l’atlantide
We shall find the first and last word.

By means of a prophetic the bridge, the collective narrator of the poem will reach Atlantis, the imaginary lost island where a single tongue unites everybody: the oortext dormant in the collective unconscious [7].

If “Frontier-Poem” points to the source of Jolas’ revolution of the word as derived from the collective unconscious, the unpublished epic *Reporters*, with its subtitle *Migrations*,

acts as an exposé of the influence of journalism and the telegraph on his cosmopoetics. Since throughout his life Jolas worked as a journalist, the pragmatic language of journalism became both the target of his critique and the source of experiments. The multilingual epic narrates the life of a reporter who mediates between idioms and styles of writing of various nations. Because of his trilingualism, Jolas often worked in the reception room, where telegraph machines spewed chopped news in German or French that needed to be translated into English. In the unpublished chapters of his autobiography, he reflects on “the complete solitude” of his nightshifts interrupted only by “the three teletype machines behind [his] desk, hammering out their savage binary rhythms”. The mechanistic (‘hammering’) and primal (‘savage’) description of the Teletype message recurs also throughout *Reporters* where he transposes the metallic sounds of the telegraph into sound poetry:

Metallic incantations glide into space
the rune sounds of the clatterkeys susurrate
or
Cliquetis des mots acéphales. Les machines à écrire ronronnent. Ghshghshtouirrrrrrr. Et
encore ggggglglglglglglggl. The English verbs have a music of incantations.

The teletype turns communication into clanging robot-like exchanges of codes. They might sound incantatory or musical at times, but their message remains runic, difficult to decipher among the clattery humming noises. “Mots acéphales” suggests that the words used in teletype messages lack syllables, but maybe also their heads or leaders: they are misguided and lost as much as beheaded or deformed. All we are left with is some incomprehensible guttural sounds: growling rather than speech.

In another part of *Reporters* Jolas sees in the mechanization of communication a disease of language that causes deformation of myths, of the knowledge deposited in the collective unconscious.

Le chagrin du monde entre avec des mots-babel. Nous entendons la brillerie des telescripteurs en démente. La maladie de langage déforme tous les mythes.

Geile bilder tanzen in lustdurchdroehnten liedern. Eternal palabras whirl in the gutter. Dynamo ditties grow ever louder. Blastkillers escaboussent la mitologia de colon.

Où est la musique de l’atlantide? Oursanta astigra moule shilla. Rounfalore. Las estrellas caen sobre le jardin des plantes. Mouliga. Veltelou astra frim louda.

Both the composite “mots-babel” — words in many languages or perhaps words of Babel — which bring with them awareness of the suffering of the world and the chattering of the Teletype confuse and unsettle the listener. Nothing remains to clutch at since even the proud words have been defiled, thrown in the gutter. Again, Jolas searches for Atlantis and the musical synchronicity its primal vocabulary promised. Hence the made-up words that close the drafted poem reverberate with music as they bring idioms together into an incomprehensible string of sounds.

Laying of the first telegraph cable between Europe and America in 1858 — after five attempts over a nine-year period — was a moment of triumph for cosmopolitan ideals. The speeches surrounding the event took on a celebratory tone: nothing could stand in the way of universal peace when the globe was connected by a means of instantaneous

communication across long distances. Though the moment might be seen as one of the small steps towards globalization as we know it, it took another fifty-five years to span the Pacific Ocean, and over fifty years for the messages to become more usual and frequent, making its use most prevalent in the early years of the twentieth century: the time of Jolas' reporting career.

Compared to mail, the telegraph brought with it not only the mechanistic sound that reverberated in Jolas' newsroom but also an entirely new way of transmitting messages that actually disrupted as much as aided international communication. Above all, the use of the machine was very expensive — around the turn of the century to send a report from Europe to the United States cost \$5 per word — and thus forced journalists to develop a very crisp and concise style since they literally had to count their words [8]. Sometimes, they even combined words into syncretic neologisms to limit the cost of the dispatch, for example writing *SLONGS* for “as long as”. These neologisms gave rise to a whole new journalistic code, known as “cablese”, which necessitated one more level of translation thus further deforming the message and increasing the confusion of international communication. By extension, cablese added also to the distrust in language's communicative function [9].

On the other hand, however, cablese influenced literature: Hemingway explained his succinct style with the fascination with the “lingo of the transatlantic cable” and Orwell derived from it the doublespeak of 1984 [10]. Jolas admits the influence of the telegraph also on his poetics. In yet another depiction of his newsroom life he describes his multilingual poems as “cable poems”.

Below, in the streets near Grand Central station, life in the hot night, although reduced in intensity was still going on. In those moments I experimented with what I termed “cable poems”, in which I intermingled words from several languages:

Nightern clung to summer delirium the streets were strickem
Sous les lumières électriques that glared und die mueden
bettler kreisten um die poubelles waiting for gifts
the L thundered past bronxwarding and an inner stille
trickled through my fingers the ninos whispered secrets
on a stoop a horse-drawn vehicle nodded through Lexington avenue
...

An old woman shshshshslunked into the hot mist I saw her
grieving augen during a momentflash and furcht came
crawling up me.

The influence of the telegraph shows in Jolas's frequent invention of portmanteau neologisms, as in “bronxwarding” above to mean going towards Bronx, or “momentflash” to describe the scintillating awareness gained from a swift look into the old woman's eyes.

Dougald McMillan in *Transition: The History of the Literary Era 1927–1938* explains these portmanteaus as deriving from German and its literary tradition, and finds them clumsily inappropriate when used in English. Arguably productive in German, where the technique is a common way of creating words, in English “it can appear laboured ... or lead to unnatural sentence rhythms” [11]. Reviewers contemporary to Jolas, however,

aptly drew attention to the two possible sources of this technique in English: Lewis Carroll and the cablese. The British reviewers' caustic comments directed Jolas to reread Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*; James Agate from *Daily London Express* even sent him a copy of the poem [12]. Another reviewer deems Jolas's neologisms as "old stuff": "Any good newspaper man (and Jolas was one in Paris) knows cablese" (60/1400). These reviews obviously meant to deride Jolas's style, which explains why he referred to his multilingual poems as "cable poems" only once, and only in an unpublished draft of his autobiography.

Although this term provides such a valuable insight into the origins of Jolas's cosmopoetics in the mechanical realities of his journalist practice, he edited it out later to refer instead to the idiom he created in his poetry as the language of the night, *Atlantica* or "the great American language", all of which also derive from his reportorial life. As words crisscrossed in the newsroom at night, they added to the linguistic mixture of Jolas's consciousness. What he earlier conceptualized as the language of the collective unconscious he believed actually observable as spoken in the street. When Jolas moved back to the United States in 1933, he settled in New York to work for a Francophone news agency and reported on the immigrant lives of the streets of Manhattan, which he characterized as "the interlinguistic vastness". Drawing on the access his occupation gave him, Jolas embarked on ethnographic linguistic research and took extensive notes on the "synthetic language" he heard in New York. He called his practice "an experiment in inter-racial philology".

By calling the new American tongue 'inter-racial', Jolas mimics the racialized vocabulary of politicians and linguists of his time in order to subvert it. Such a collation of language with race rather than ethnicity or nationality can be seen for example in H.L. Mencken's extremely popular 1919 volume *The American Language*. Mencken talks of "great immigrations" when "American people came into contact, on a large scale with peoples of divergent race, particularly Germans, Irish Catholics and Chinese" [13]. Some of Jolas's lexicon here parallels also that of Theodore Roosevelt's 1917 wartime appeal entitled "The Children of the Crucible" in which the President evokes images of crucible and melting pot to call for "all Americans of other [than British] race origin" to abandon their national attachments and their national languages: "We cannot tolerate any attempt to oppose or supplant the language and culture that came down to us from the builders of the republic with the language and culture of any European country" [14]. The unifying, monolingual Americanization efforts intensified before and during each of the twentieth century world wars, fueled by the fear of the imaginary enemy already within the country.

Jolas's proposed American idiom differs from that postulated by Mencken or Roosevelt; although his vocabulary echoes theirs, the aim of his rhetoric opposes their monolingualism by asserting multilingualism of his *Atlantica*. Jolas also talks of the "Great American Language" and races melting together in a crucible, but always scrupulously remembers that the foreign is resistant and impossible to erase within the new unity. While Mencken tended to see American English as already different from British English insofar as to claim it as a new language, Jolas saw it only as a foundation for a new Eur-American language. Coterminous with *Atlantica* that Jolas repeatedly extols in his autobiography as "the language of the future", this Eur-American language constitutes a mix of Anglo-Saxon with other immigrant words: English acts as an ever-expanding base for the new form of expression.

Jolas's sociolinguistic study of the idioms and jargons of New York streets made him conclude that "although the English language was the magnet which attracted all the other elements, in most cases these remained independent and there was an infinite variety of speech to be heard in the city, a fantasia of many-tongued words". Influenced by the linguistic politics of the time, which put forward English as the only American tongue, he agreed that English was the primary idiom of New York, but at the same time he insisted on the resistance of the foreign, on the foreign idioms' independence and infinite variety still audible in the city. That he supported, rather than discouraged such multilingualism is clear in his choice of musical wording and description of New York's linguistic blends as fantasia, a musical composition with a free form and an improvisatory style.

In "Race and Language", Jolas identifies "a new race of people" as coming from the "the crucible of intercontinental mutations ... due to the vast migrations of the past decades" and sees emergent characteristics of this new race "on the soil of the American continent". The linguistic blend follows naturally because when people intermingle, so do their languages:

The major languages of Europe as well as the linguistic remnants of ancestral forms of speech with a super language the basis of which, on the North-American continent, for instance, may be considered a definitely Eur-American language ... already being spoken in all the big cities of America where immigrant and Anglo-Saxon words have a growing tendency to intermingle.

The idea of "a super language" already spoken in American metropolises finds its reflection in another multilingual poem "America Mystica", published in *transition* 26 in 1937. Fittingly, the poem, divided into five shorter ones numbered XLIV to XLVIII, initially also belonged to the unpublished epic *Reporters*, which situates it in the context of Jolas's reportorial influences. When in his autobiography Jolas comments on the process of its creation, he remembers his meditation on the "urban cosmopolis" of the "New York crucible" seen through the eyes of an immigrant reporter and wonders about the dreams of its many inhabitants: "Did they recall in their deep sleep words from the vanished European past?". Yet again, he combines his linguistic research into the speech of the streets with the "language of night" and imagines that Americans dreamt in a mixture of vocabularies of which English was only one component. He mirrors this polyglot tongue in "America Mystica".

The poem also grows out of the need to conceptualize and universalize the Americas into a unified hemisphere, which preoccupied many cultural and political theorists in the 1930s. In its projected symphonic unity, Jolas's "America Mystica" resonates for example with the theories of the social historian Waldo Frank, whose *The Re-Discovery of America* (1929) Jolas reviewed in *transition* 19/20. While postulating creation of "an American world" which could provide a counterbalance to "the grave of Europe", Frank's book critically assesses U.S. culture as devoid of its mythological roots [15]. Latin Americans, much more in tune with their mythological past, emerge as superior to the unenlightened Northerners in their shared aspiration to hemispheric unity [16]. While the influence of the book is noticeable already in the title of Jolas's poem, which — minus

the linguistic multilingual play — mirrors one of the book's chapters titled "Mystic America", Frank's thesis triggers many ideas Jolas often expressed in his critical essays (RDA 210).

Another important influence on Jolas's preoccupation with defining the Americas as a symphonious whole comes from his Paris friend the Cuban writer and musicologist Alejo Carpentier, who convinced him to travel to Latin America in the early 1930s. An unpublished chapter of Jolas's autobiography points to this "Pan-American Journey" — as he referred to his trip in the title of the drafted chapter — as a possible genesis of the poem. Carpentier argued repeatedly that Jolas "must see the Indian civilization — it's something quite different from anything [he's] ever seen" and offered to write letters of introduction to Diego Rivera and other Latin American intellectuals. Jolas admits that he finally agreed to travel "under the aegis of [Carpentier's] militant Pan-American utopianism", which suggests that although young Carpentier, who had not yet developed his famous theory of "lo real maravilloso" as a unifying aesthetics for Latin American art, had already strongly supported any hemispheric conceptualizations of the Americas. Carpentier influenced also Jolas's linguistic and literary interests: he started studying Spanish and reading Latin American literature. Together they "hung around the Musée de l'Homme at the Trocadéro, where the names of Anahuac, Quetzalcoatl, Quirigua and Yukatan evoked incantatory rhythms". Precisely the sounds of such names give rise the opening lines of "America Mystica": "Hako venoome vovoe ase amexoveva esevistavho".

The incantation may imitate Nahuatl or another existing non-Indo-European tongue, but clearly the sound matters beyond meaning and thus inserts the poem into the tradition of sound poetry. On the other hand, the incomprehensible incantation also speaks to Victor Shklovsky's formalist essay-cum-manifesto "Resurrection of the Word" (1914), which proposed that literature should use both "savage incantation" and religious motifs which evoke the incomprehensibility and universal appeal of Church Latin in medieval Europe. The incantatory first three lines of "America Mystica" are followed by equal proportions of German, English and French, with inclusion of English and German cablese portmanteau neologisms, like "tremblefell", "hymnblue" or "südabend". The poem's linguistic chaos is interspersed with Old Norse, Spanish and some proper nouns from Native American lexicons: "Guanahani", which is the indigenous name of San Salvador and "Chilam-Bilam", the Jaguar Priest, author of the Mayan book of prophesy (translated in 1933 by Ralph Roy). Jolas also mentions the "cheyenne tongue" and "Montana rhythm". These linguistic choices limit the unity proposed by the poem to Europe and the Americas.

The first stanza that follows the invocation proclaims that "the great migrations have not ceased" and implies a universal reach of these migrations by evoking "ygdrassyl", the ash tree whose roots and branches hold together the universe in Old Norse mythology. Significantly, Columbus appears in the following stanza, and his 'finding' of Guanahani marks the first connection between continents through "the wayfarers" and "pilgrim-hearts" idealistically imagined as impressed by the fairy-tales, festivals and myths of Guanahani's inhabitants. The silence of the "now" when "the quiet lamp burns hymnblue" and "the duologue is faraway it is deepnight over asphalt and acres" suggests a much less congenial present, one in which there is no celebration or even dialogue, replaced as they are with the apocalyptic images of "the drowning man", "the bronze men ... uprooted

in the corrals and an invalid [who] stumbles over a skull”. In an outright condemnation of the colonial endeavor, Jolas criticizes the deracination and destruction that Columbus “drunk with the heavenly vision” brought to the Americas. Asphalt and fields displace legends. Jolas also targets the religious zeal for conversion if “heavenly vision” could make Columbus drunk and unaware of his ardor’s destructive aftermath.

After establishing this colonial background, a first-person speaker begins their narration and “see[s] the chimerical America of my [his] mind” to ask for a unity of the American continents: “will the continents be one in the fantasmatic forests of the soul”. The unity seems to be achieved mainly within the speaker, who accommodates all people flooding his heart — “alle menschen fluten in mein hertz” — and once he makes this assertion, the persona becomes plural with the help of the same river metaphor employed in “Frontier-Poem”. A “wir” and a “we” speak throughout the rest of the poem. This plural narrator recalls the legends of the land to “unwrap the luminous fog and look for the hidden miracles the ballads of the alien races”. That by ‘alien races’ Jolas means indigenous Americans is indicated by the evocation of “primeval forests” and “the Chilam-Balam qui prophétise”, marking the narrator as the river of immigrant newcomers. The group then grows with the inclusion of the “frontiersmen” who “are still with us” and Northern European immigrants who “are also here with memories of the ice-age nomads”. In a romantic gesture, new and old inhabitants of America connect through a “marriage of their souls” and a musical intermingling of their languages: “the soul of the Pennsylvania Dutch farmer épouse l’ame de l’ouvrier franco-américain the cheyenne tongue glides into the Montana rhythm”. Despite such romanticism of his vision, Jolas does not imagine the new America as entirely optimistic: while “the ships are freighted with ecstatic men and women”, “the continent is incandescent with the cries of the mutilated hearts”. The hope of the immigrants while on board contrasts with the painful reality they encounter once they arrive. Jolas acknowledges also the mutilated hearts of Native America that lay the foundation for the immigrant flows.

Conclusion

“America Mystica” ends with an evocation of a new language to connect the collective speakers: “we dream one tongue from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego / We dream a new race visionary with the logos of God”. The dreamed language becomes visionary, as if seeing — of the mythical and mystical kind essential to Jolas — is only possible through language. That is why the collectivity can be formed in a multilingual poem, where words mix freely promising an unprejudiced connection among people. Jolas’s hope for a universal appeal of his all-inclusive Atlantica rests on the assumption of continuous inclusion that simulates the Babel of multilingual reality. Jolas writes that “this new language should not number several hundred thousands words, but millions of words”, and then adds, aware that such inclusiveness may sound totalitarian, “it does not mean that the great languages will be completely annihilated or absorbed into the ‘big language.’ These individual languages will continue their separate existence, but only their essence will flow into the thundering ocean of the language of the future”. Here, the fundamental paradox of Jolas’s cosmopoetics unfolds: he wants his all-inclusive language to be universal as well, no matter how impossible the learning of a tongue that consists of essences of all idioms in the world

would be. Yet, Atlantica promises literary expression for the hemispheric “frontierwhorlroamers”, whose poetics grows out of linguistic mixtures of trans-continental roaming, their identities multiplying across frontiers and within borderlands, whirling of wars and economic migrations, in a tightening web of technologies and allegiances: all processes that have only accelerated since Jolas wrote about them almost a hundred years ago.

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Пересекающий границы: космопоэтика Юджина Джоласа

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В статье анализируются две мультилингвальные поэмы Юджина Джоласа «Поэма-граница» (1935) и «Америка Мистика» (1937) в транснациональном контексте Европейского союза и концептуализации стран Северной и Южной Америки, чтобы показать, как Джолас работал над новой парадигмой и терминологией в попытке назвать транснациональные идентичности, созданные в результате массовых миграций и нестабильных границ конца XIX и начала XX века. С поэтической чувствительностью, сформированной в месте слияния утилитарного жаргона журналистики и неудержимой множественности коллективного бессознательного, космопоэтика Джоласа предложила универсальный язык Атлантики, который, как это ни парадоксально, должен был быть всеобъемлющим (состоящим из сущностей всех идиом в мире) и общепризнанным. Только такой язык обещал литературное выражение для «покорителя границ», чья поэтика выросла из языковых смесей трансконтинентальных странствий.

Ключевые слова: космопоэтика, транслингвизм, жанр, переключение кодов

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