

“THE ONGOING LIFE OF NATIVE CULTURES”. NON-EUROPEANS AND THE GLOBALIZED HUMANITIES

Academic community in its modern form is undoubtedly a European invention. Nonetheless, this institution proved to possess a transcultural potentiality. Over the last quarter of a century, the globalized academic space grew to unprecedented scale. First of all, the phenomenon is clearly visible in the domain of science and technology. Several non-European and non-Western countries, such as China, India, Japan, South Korea and Singapore have joined the leading group, reduced, only a few decades ago, to the United States, Europe and the Soviet Union. Next newcomers,— culturally as dissimilar as Brazil and Saudi Arabia¹ —, are making great efforts in order not to stay very far behind. Only a few decades ago the postmodern philosophy was ready to admit, with Paul Feuerabend and others, that scientific truths are not as universal as we the Western people used to believe. In the meanwhile, the reality dismantled the theory, proving that scientific truths and modern technologies are quite willingly adopted in diverse cultural contexts² and may in fact be quite near to universality ascribed to them by the positivism. But what about the

¹ In 2009, the creation of KAUST, a fabulously endowed Saudi institution, that becomes at the present moment the best paying university worldwide, causes some consternation in the international scientific community at the thought that some of the cutting-edge research might indeed be shifted to such an “unthinkable” cultural environment.

² The non-European cultures not only adopt science as “something Western”, but also extensively rediscover their own scientific heritage and identify science as the core of their own cultural legacy. In many cases, this rediscovery of intellectual figures of the past is closely followed by the re-elaboration of their legacy fitting the needs of the present, that can be conceptualized in Hobsbawmanian terms of „inventing traditions” (cf. Hobsbawm et al., 1992). Interesting cases, – such as the exploitation, in diverse contemporary contexts, of the figures of medieval Andalusian scholars and inventors, such as f. ex. a 9th c. polymath Abbas ibn Firnas or a 13th c. botanist and chemist Ibn al-Baitar al-Malaqi –, are a promissory topic for further research (curiously, the latter, born in Málaga as his Arabic name indicates, is “reinterpreted” by Malaysian popular consciousness to become a scholar from Malacca...). The global appropriation of the medieval Andalusia as a “source of universal civilization” can only be compared to that of Italian Renaissance.

humanities? Will the humanistic model of knowledge also follow the trend established by the sciences and translated into a new reality of transnational universities? Or will the humanities rather stay behind, closed in local, national domains?

The answer to this question is far from obvious. Of course, if we think about the humanities, the notion of strong cultural identification comes to mind in the first place. What else the humanities could be if not a pious cultivation of contents rooted in local past and memory? But on the other hand, the humanities are transcultural too, as long as the search for universal values and truths remains at the core of such disciplines as literary comparativism, religious studies or esthetics. Art, literature or music are ways of transmitting the cultural identity from generation to generation, but at the same time they are ways of access to what is most universally valuable in each of the diverse, local cultural legacies. As a consequence, the humanities, proving to be as much transcultural as the sciences and the technology, may find their place in the globalized academia with all its typical traits, such as international stuff in permanent mobility and global linguistic normalization (universal usage of English). In fact, the phenomena quite parallel to those that can be observed in the domain of transnational science start to shape, at least to some extent, also the landscape of contemporary humanities. English as a tool of communication, even if it faces stronger resistance than in sciences, is gradually accepted. Transnational recognition is more and more sought after by the researchers and the thinkers. International mobility becomes more and more intense. Nonetheless, each of these phenomena acquires a new significance in the domain of humanities. The consequences of apparently self-evident gestures and choices are complex and hard to predict.

The future of the humanities deserves a careful consideration, especially if we adopt the perspective of non-European and non-Western cultures. The risks related to the choice of joining the transnational academia are relatively greater in their case. Several factors are implied: the future of the local languages and the literatures to which those languages are vehicular, the way how cultures conceptualize their place in the world, the identity and the authenticity of their intellectual elites in diaspora. The stakes are high: from total disappearance or marginalized and precarious survival to the eventuality of growth and flourishing fostered by new conditions. Can native cultures take advantage of the opportunities created by the globalization of humanities?

The presence of non-European and non-Western students at the universities in Europe and the United States is an important fact at least since the end of the colonial era³. This presence shapes deeper and deeper the academic landscape in European and Western humanities. Also the universities of the new type, growing all over the world, slowly abandon their pragmatic, science & technology orientation, showing willingness to create some departments of humanities. Needless to say the existing void and this new demand appear as tempting to many scholars less and less at their ease in the saturated world of European and American universities, living under a permanent pressure of cuts and reductions. The challenge of creating entirely new, transcultural humanities is progressively taking shape.

For sure, the search for points of intersection between cultures is not a brand new endeavor. In the 20th century, a great intellectual investment had been made to approach not only the cultural, but also the religious diversity of the world from a universalist perspective. Following the motto of *philosophia perennis* proposed by Aldous Huxley, comparative religious studies tried to establish great parallels in the domain of human conceptualizations of the sacred. The Absolute, the divine reality, as it had been assumed, must be, if we reach a sufficient level of abstraction, something universal. This common truth concerning the Absolute, transcending local, culturally defined liturgies and beliefs, was sought after by a line of researchers and thinkers going from Rudolf Otto to Mircea Eliade. Numerous approximations had been made, not only between India and Europe, but also between Christianity and Islam. In the former domain, such works as *Mysticism east and west* by Otto made an epoch; in the latter, the name of the Swiss scholar Titus Burckhardt is to be cited. Nonetheless, at the end of the 20th century these efforts started to be seen as insufficient and obsolete⁴. Religion — the notion taken in the most approximate and generalizing meaning — started to be regarded not as a potential space of

³ Evidently, some non-Western students started to appear at the university already in the 19th century. Nonetheless, these cases had a character of exception, often rather unwelcome or merely tolerated by the dominant cultural powers. By the contrary, at the end of colonial era, the admission of students coming from former colonies became a political project aiming at the formation of new elites for the independent countries. Numerous international agreements were established to organize and finance the admission of thousands of people at the metropolitan universities. As an example, a recently published study presents a detailed history of the “migration in search of a diploma” in Belgian case (cf. Caestercker et al., 2012).

⁴ The natural passing away of a generation could also be a cause: the last great scholars in the domain of comparative study of religions died during the 80ties: Burckhardt in 1984, Eliade in 1986.

transcultural dialogue and mutual understanding, but as the main obstacle to it. In 1996, Samuel Huntington assumed that religion is the key factor differentiating the civilizations. What is more, the supposed irreducibility of dissent in faith started to be seen as the cause of inevitable clashes between the civilizations (cf. Huntington, 1996).

At the beginning of the 21st century, if the demand of universal values was to be continued, a new starting point had to be proposed. Unsurprisingly, the debate shifted from the absolute, intransigent religious truths to the domains in which plural and relative points of view find larger space. In *What Is World Literature?*, a book published in 2003 by David Damrosch, an old, Goethean idea of *Weltliteratur* is brought back into the limelight. As the author observes, the change of paradigms has been forced not only by intellectual, but also by social reasons: "New patterns of immigration, rapid changes in college and university populations, and the general rise of ethnic consciousness have given a new impetus to studies of hybridity, creolization, and métissage" (Damrosch, 2003, 83-84). But what matters is not only the shift in the domain of fashionable topics and privileged perspectives. Damrosch reflects on the problematic existence / nonexistence of world literature as area of studies: "With most literature faculty based in departments organized along national lines, in many schools 'world literature' was treated as an introductory course, suitable for beginning students but fundamentally vague in conception and unrigorous in application, a preliminary stage prior to serious work in a literature major based on close study of a culture and its language" (Damrosch, 2003, 282). Nonetheless, by the turn of the millennium, this idea of "philological" studies entered a deep crisis, ceding place to enlarged, synthetic approaches. Fostering a renovated concept of world literature, Damrosch proposes to see it not as a simple sum of works created in different local or national contexts, but as a dynamic phenomenon of circulation, translation and decontextualized reinterpretation of texts: "an elliptical refraction of national literatures", "writing that gains in translation" and "a mode of reading" rather than "a set canon of texts" (Damrosch, 2003, 281). World literature, as he understands it, would be an interacting totality of works that are, paradoxically, read first of all in translation, going beyond their original public reduced to the number of users of a given language.

The Damroschian vision of renovated literary studies gives rise to a series of interrogations. The essayist accentuates the necessity of translation and, what remains at the level of implication, it's mainly the translation into English that he means. Even if such

a linguistic normalization became already a natural and universally admitted gesture in contemporary science and technology, such a perspective seems much more difficult to accept in humanities. The reasons seem obvious, but some of them should be nonetheless clearly stated here. If we adopt the perspective of non-European cultures, the universal translation could be a promise and a danger at the same time. One may object that the translation never obliterates the original, but in fact, at least in some cases of “weak”, minor languages and cultures, it could. It is easy to imagine the situation in which the English version of native texts becomes the *editio princeps* studied and commented at the globalized university, taking place of the forgotten original.

The advent of the global English for sure didn't cause the extinction of local languages, but still it fosters a further loss of an enormous part of linguistic patrimony of the humanity. In fact, the linguists alarm that in all the world languages are dying at an accelerated pace. Many endeavors are made to slow down this process, to document the disappearing and to revitalize those languages that still have a chance to survive. In the meanwhile, the global extinction of languages is to a certain degree accepted by those who should be interested in keeping them alive. The speakers of minor languages are strongly attracted towards the spheres of culture established by the great, “civilizational” ones. The celebrated Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, stating that each language is an original and unrepeatably conceptualization of the world, affecting the way how the speakers perceive the reality, gives to each language the status of unique and irreplaceable intellectual tool. Nonetheless, the tongues seem to be valuable and attractive to the speakers not for their own sake. First of all, the choice of a determined language is taken in function of what community it gives access to; the broader the community, the better for the speaker. This choice of language is also conditioned by the intellectual world that is implied in it. Even if we reject the attitude of strict pragmatism — that many speakers of the endangered and disappearing tongues, living in the poorest parts of the world are forced to adopt — it can still be claimed that languages are worth keeping first of all for the things that had been said and written in them. Revitalization of languages becomes thus a revitalization of literatures.

Should these two key issues go always together, or are they separable? Literature and its language appear as organically joined realities, but this might imply they are doomed to perish together. Against all those who believe that the poetry is what is lost in translation, David Damrosch claims that it is in translation that a massive part of humanity's literary

patrimony can be saved. This presupposition could contain a promise of a new lease of life to what we can summarily call "native literatures". Their study, which used to be reduced to a very narrow circle of specialists monopolizing their expertise, becomes now available for a larger interpreting community.

Giving precedence to the translation over the original means quite a small revolution in our understanding of literary studies. Damrosch inverts the logic of traditional philology, promoting the study of literatures to which we don't have direct access, because we ignore the languages in which the texts were written. Traditional philologist would never venture into a study of a text he or she knows only through a translation. Of course, we could see this as a sign of professional scrupulosity, but it has a price: it means that a large part of the literary patrimony of humanity is very often out of the scope of the scholarly reflection. Damrosch also brings further arguments in favor of his proposal to dismiss the philological paradigm. He tries to pinpoint the conceptual limitations of these specialized philological studies as they functioned since the 19th century till, more or less, the late 1980s, in order to show how illusory the "professional scrupulosity" in fact was.

Among other examples, Damrosch brings about the case of Nahuatl poetic tradition, which survived in a Christianized version in the collectaneas gathered by Bernardino de Sahagún and other missionaries. Against the claims of the colonizers, the native literature didn't disappear without a trace. What is more, we can still observe "the ongoing life of native cultures" (Damrosch, 2003, 108). The change of paradigm caused by the social shifts and massive migrations that introduce new public into the academia brought into light many works that nobody was interested in before. Here comes the example of Sahagún's *Psalmodia Chistiana*, illustrating a larger process of growing visibility of native patrimonies. Obscure literary works silenced by the colonial history, materials that even the specialists used to neglect, are proposed to a broader public and become topics of a broader academic debate.

The chief denunciation made by Damrosch aims at the artificiality of the basic notions and categories ascribed to the native literary patrimony. He tries to deconstruct the history of the concepts that appeared at the moment of the scholarly "discovery" of the native American literature. At that moment, the Nahuatl poetry started a kind of existence *post mortem*, no longer as a living patrimony, but as an object of research, squeezed inside an inadequate conceptual grid.

First of the notions deconstructed by Damrosch is that of Mesoamerica. He compares it, in a rather daring way, with the concept of Mesopotamia. What do the two things have in common? For sure, the internal structure of meaning is very similar for both concepts. In fact, they don't pinpoint any crucial characteristic of the historical and cultural reality they bring into consideration. They don't correspond to realities defined so to say from within, starting from a defining feature, but, by the contrary, both are described through a mere geographical metaphor, as something that lay "in between". Between two rivers or between two continents, never mind. This kind of concept reveals the helplessness of the scholars, their incapacity of finding the clue for the cultural complex they tried to study.

But the similarities between Mesoamerica and Mesopotamia don't stop here. There is much to be said also about the periodization of Mesoamerican cultures and the general image of them drawn by the scholars. Again, the experience of the Middle East, chronologically anterior to the academic discovery of Mesoamerica, whispered ready-made solutions. The general scheme of periods for pre-Columbian America reflected the scheme of early, classical and late periods, used for ancient Mediterranean history, together with established patterns of "selective attention". As Damrosch observes, the Winckelmannian paradigm was retained also for Mesoamerica, favoring the earlier, "purer" periods and neglecting the later periods of hybridity, identified with "decay". Among the Mediterranean patterns applied to the Mesoamerican history, Damrosch discovers even some traces of rather naive thinking in terms of Greek and Romans, that formed distorting lenses through which the history of native American culture is seen. As if it could be nothing else, the history of American civilizations repeats the Mediterranean beginnings, with derivative, militaristic Aztecs/Romans coming after creative and noble Mayas/Greeks (Damrosch, 2003, 81-82).

Mesoamerica is only one of the examples explored by Damrosch. Nonetheless, it's worth a while to follow the case a bit further and get a glimpse on the Mesoamerican situation to see Damrosch's remarks in a larger context. The predominance of Spanish hides a much more complex reality, composed by tenths of languages belonging to different linguistic groups; there exists also, as mentioned above, an ancient literary tradition, not completely obliterated by the Spanish colonization and remaining alive at the present day. This is why the contemporary Mesoamerica is such an interesting example of cooperation between the native cultures and the international academia. The projects of revitalization

referred to this linguistic reality appear at the same time as necessary and viable, because many languages are still quite robust, even if endangered by the fact that children aren't educated and schooled in their traditions. Since many years, actions of cultural reaffirmation have been undertaken. But the clue aspect in this case is the participation of the native linguists and activists in the whole process of discussion concerning linguistic practices and ideologies. The "localist" approach faces the "universalist" trends, strongly reinforced by the pragmatic perspectives of migration, employment and wealth, usually associated with Spanish (cf. England, 2003). We could deplore this fact, but on the other hand it could be argued that languages fall into disuse because the persons who used to speak them take an effective option to favor more promissory linguistic tools, such as — in this case — Spanish (or English). The choice of universality is also an autonomous decision that shouldn't be despised or impaired.

Even if the "passive" right to conserve one's own language and culture is more often stressed, there exists an "active" right to cultural dynamism as well, implying the freedom of rejecting or abandoning obsolete forms of culture. Keeping languages and traditions alive has a price. The "revitalisationist" option could even hide a subtle kind of oppression and exclusion, that of preventing new participants from joining the global streams of mobility. It could be just another form of denial imposed by the rich against the poor. The revitalization of local languages could be used as a way of stabilizing the populations through giving them formal rights. The dominating cultural powers might decide to "dignify" the traditional patrimony, manipulating the situation in which the natives effectively remain in the outskirts of an intellectual universe they might otherwise choose to join. The fact that the persons of local origin participate in the process of revitalization is not automatically a guarantee of its authenticity. To what degree are the native linguists "native"? To what degree are they just a "human product" of the university in which arbitrary statements and abstract ideas "made in Europe", such as the necessity of preserving the *status quo* of the traditional cultures, still form a core of the discourse, perpetuated in the rising generation of native scholars?

This problem can be referred not only to the linguistic option, but also to many other aspects of the cultural self-portrait, that can be durably distorted when the native culture comes massively to the university. Denunciating the limitations and the omissions observed in earlier studies, Damrosch opens a larger discussion on how the world literature

should be studied now. For sure, it's necessary to keep a balance between the search for similarities (Damrosch, criticizing the earlier scholars for their naive views, continues the same endeavor) and the sensitivity to the idiosyncratic aspects, the irreducibility and the specificity of cultures. Visions based on forced approximations are among the risks of the globalized humanities. Apparently, as Damrosch presents them, they belong to the first stage of building the transcultural dimension. The obvious mistakes were inherent to the necessarily Europocentric vision that was the flaw of those first attempts. For sure not everything in human history is just a repetition of some primordial pattern; not everything, on the other hand, is peculiar and beyond the comprehension of a lay reader.

Yet another sensitive question arises: by whom the patrimony of native cultures should be studied, whose patrimony in fact it is? Does it belong to the descendants of these native cultures or is it to be seen as a common patrimony of the humanity? The two perspectives don't seem to be mutually exclusive, nonetheless we cannot deny that some cultures demand now or may demand in the future some forms of exclusivity, concerning at least some aspects of their patrimony. Such exclusivity was impossible to preserve during the colonial period when power backed up the endeavors of archeologists and explorers. Acting in the name of research and scholarly interests, they committed not only acts that, from the perspective of non-European cultures, may rightly be regarded as blatant examples of robbery (cf. the chapter "Gilgamesh's Quest", Damrosch, 2003, 39-77), but also performed more subtle intrusions into what the cultures in question would rather keep in some kind of secrecy. The natives sometimes don't wish to become object of studies. During the colonial period, such attitude used to be identified with their primitivism and inborn obstinacy that the civilization should break with more or less violent means. Nevertheless, the times changed and the obstinacy remains. Non-Europeans rather often express the wish of preserving something to their exclusive usage. I don't think about deep religious or magical secrets that require initiation; also some apparently superficial aspects of culture, such as the usage of language, can be restricted. In *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* Paul Rabinow observed that the natives would prefer the foreigners not to speak Arabic, especially after they had learned enough English or French to communicate with them. The language is treated as an exclusive domain, reserved for the "insiders", the members of the community. It's a mark of cultural distinction and even a supposed superiority over the "Barbarians".

Any intent of appropriation of this exclusive asset by the strangers may be treated as a sort of cultural impertinence (cf. Rabinow, 1977).

This example leads to a hypothesis: if the representatives of a given culture acquire any new intellectual assets (such as, in this case, the competence in foreign languages), they might tend to capitalize them in order to preserve the exclusivity of their own patrimony and their own cultural domain. In more and more cases a similar demand may appear: please don't speak my language, please don't meddle in my cultural affairs. The condition of being a scholar on research mission, that, as the Victorian explorers believed, should grant an open access to all the cultural secrets and treasures, may not always be considered as sufficient credentials. The denial of access can be understandably extended to different areas, such as, f. ex.: please don't enter my temples. But further restrictions may appear as well. This is a bit like the tale about three bears that come home after a long absence and ask: who ate from my plate, who drank from my cup, who slept in my bed? Understandably, a bear could also get angry and ask: who read my books, and to what purpose? For this reason, it is by no means evident that the study of native literatures by anybody anywhere, simply as a part of world literature, would always be welcome. Globalized humanities may also produce their anti-globalists.

But let's return to the reflection on the perspectives of the "ongoing life of native cultures" evoked by Damrosch. Effectively, some of them join the double cause of linguistic revitalization and cultural survival through literature and original literary creation. Just to give an example: as Clare Sullivan states, the poetry in Zapotec, the oldest written language in America, "confronts the threat of globalization with its verses" (Sullivan, 2012). Nonetheless, the culture shared by 75 to 100,000 people is threatened, as the author concludes, not only by identity loss, but also by the environmental degradation. What importance does it really have that its literary treasures are discussed in a prestigious transnational journal, such as "World Literature Today"? To what degree does such recognition contribute to strengthen the endangered culture? For sure, it enhances its symbolical value in local and national contexts, but it cannot preserve it if the roots of the vital survival of the community are cut.

What are the consequences of studying a literature in such terms as we understand it academically? Undoubtedly it leads to some form of recognition and preservation. But the key question is: in what cases or what circumstances the academic study is to be identified

with vital cultivation? The basic condition of keeping a patrimony alive is the continuity of cultural evolution, constant re-elaboration and change in forms and contents. I have my doubts concerning the question if the university is in fact a space that can promote this kind of creative continuity. I'm rather inclined to believe that university is always secondary to other spaces of authentic development of cultures. There is no possibility of a living culture "inside the university". It would be the equivalent of a zoological species bred in captivity; there are many endangered animals that disappeared in the wild and survive only in the zoos, but it would be overoptimistic to believe that they are "preserved"; in fact these species should be considered as living dead as long as they don't find a proper habitat. Similarly, the academic study of a native patrimony is meaningful as long as it remains secondary in relation to the living flux of an evolving culture, disposing of a space of its own outside academia. At the university, the patrimony of a literature can be "classicized". But by no means is it clear if it can become object of a creative revision and re-elaboration, leading to the emergence of new forms. I'm afraid the influence of the university goes rather in the direction of petrifying the obsolete, even if it is by celebrating the works of the past, giving them special value and focusing attention on them. This celebration could prevent people and peoples from changing their cultural patterns freely or dissuade them from abandoning the archaisms in order to acquire new usages, while life and strength of a culture lies in dynamic and constant change.

To some degree, the unconditional inclusion of native cultures in the globalized academia, proposed by Damrosch could be summarized as a pragmatic choice of integration, according to a Chinese proverb: "if you can't vanquish your enemy, join him". Arguably, the native culture should find its place inside the university exactly for the reason that it has no other place, it possesses no space of circulation of its own. The transmission of its patrimony should occur inside an educational system of a western type, inside the academia, because in the contemporary conditions there is simply no other option. The native students who join the university should study their native culture just as any other student studies any other national literature.

Is the choice of academia, put in these terms, really without alternative? Such solution seems obvious. The issue requires reconsideration not in spite of, but because of its apparent obviousness. Taking the problem roughly, there exist two ways of transmission of knowledge: transmission through participation, characteristic for pre-modern societies,

and transmission through schooling, that we can associate with modernity. The case of native cultures could be seen as a passage from participation to schooling, with an additional circumstance to be taken into account: in many cases the circuit of transmission through participation is already broken; evidently, this contributes for the tendency to consider school and academia as the only solution. But on the other hand, why should a native culture remain outside the academia? A number of reasons might be brought into consideration. First of all, if a minor culture becomes so radically integrated in the mainstream, it stops offering an alternative. It can no longer be considered as a bearer of a specific type of knowledge nor an idiosyncratic way of life. Traditional wisdom and lore becomes integrated into a wider system of conceptual coordinates. As Damrosch persuasively demonstrated in reference to the past (without giving substantial guarantee that this system of coordinates might become any better in the future), academia may distort and falsify the images of cultures. Thus, it might happen that the native students coming to study their own culture at the university are forced to assimilate some distorted or falsified vision of it, definitively falling out of contact with their authentic patrimony. This is a very pessimistic point of view, hopefully not true. In any case the way towards the integration of native patrimonies inside the academia is far from smooth. Gayatri Spivak, a university colleague of Damrosch, speaks about the same problems in the essays published recently in the volume *Esthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, explicitly differing from many points of view presented in *What Is World Literature?*. Among other remarks, she points out that the inclusion of native literatures in the scope of global comparativism still presupposes that they are somehow squeezed inside the mold of the discipline which is clearly of European origin, instead of gaining a space of their own. The intents of studying the native literatures in the context of European-oriented academic tradition would inevitably lead to a kind of constant clash against the theory. Bringing some ideas of Étienne Balibar into the issue, Spivak says that "equivalence blurs differences, whereas equality requires them", and it is the "blurring" that comparative literature as a discipline needs (Spivak, 2012, 471).

As a conclusion, it's time to ask the widest, the most general question: is it safe for native cultures to entrust their destiny to the globalized academia? The answer to these doubts and interrogations depends on what we do really think about the internationalized science & research machine. For sure, it is a Moloch generating knowledge and discourse

with unprecedented efficacy. All the discursive powers of the colonial period could be seen as modest and relatively innocuous, compared to this. How does the Moloch look like from the perspective of the cultures that passed through the trauma of colonization and had been nearly annihilated?

In fact, if we consider a large landscape of different cultures in the world, we can see their representatives join the internationalized university quite willingly. It is indeed very common in the world to find native intellectuals with university jobs abroad; very often this category of people produce the most audible voices of a given culture. I could haphazardly cite several names just from my research experience: Tunisian Abdelwahhab Meddeb in Paris, Malaysian Farish Noor in Berlin, Sao Tomense Inocência Mata in Lisbon, and so on. There are plenty of cultures in the world that seem to have more qualified people outside than within. In a study concerning African countries I realized in 2009, I was rather inclined to see this situation as a hindrance for the native cultures (cf. Łukaszyk, 2009). If I've modified my point of view since thence, it might be because I've discovered how common and generalized this situation is in the contemporary world. Not only poor and unstable, but also rich, well developed and relatively stable countries, like f. ex. Malaysia, have intellectuals with university jobs abroad. As the native cultures become stronger, the advantages of this situation may progressively overweight the risks and the disadvantages. For sure, from one particular point of view, this situation has advantages. Intellectual outsiders can criticize their governments in relative safety. On the other hand, their political views may be influenced by the local political "environment" of their adopted homelands. They might easily become completely alienated from the local conditions of their original homelands, becoming a kind of learned puppets giving voice to discourses that don't necessarily serve the interests of their native cultures or simply have a blatantly artificial character.

In Damrosch, we can see a bright prospect of the native scholars studying the native cultures at the globalized university. But unfortunately nor the color of their skin nor the shape of their facial traces can be automatically taken for sufficient guarantee that their scholarship is free from distortions and manipulations. They could simply perpetuate the old mistakes, transmitted to them inside the academic institution. Such a scholarship might even be, paradoxically, an utmost fulfillment of Sahagún's project: to eradicate the old, pagan culture, giving the Indians some new songs that sound familiar, but in fact have nothing in common with the crucial features of their original identity. If the things are

not to happen according to this scenario, deep changes of intellectual paradigms are needed, perhaps much deeper than the ones proposed by Damrosch.

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