

## Political commitment and the international construction of symbolic recognition during the Cold War: The impact of the 1956 crises on literary transfers

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The relations between literature and politics have already been the subject of detailed sociological and historical studies focused on particular national spaces, with a particular emphasis on (post-)crisis conjunctures (Sapiro 1999; Gobille 2005). An analysis of the conjunction between the political crisis and the literary field, on the other hand, has rarely been attempted through the prism of international literary transfers (Popa 2010). It raises difficult theoretical and methodological questions, particularly regarding synchronization vs. the discrepancy between temporalities specific to the literary and political fields on the one hand, and to the spaces of production and reception of literary works on the other. Moreover, the difficulty consists in observing simultaneously the reconversions of different types of capital which occur not only in a single national space in times of crisis (Bourdieu 1984; Dobry 1986), but also between distinct national spaces – the spaces of the origin and translation of works. Another difficulty emerges, finally, when we consider transfers involving national literary fields characterized by forms of structuring and degrees of autonomy that are very different when seen from the political angle. These questions can be formulated by analysing East/West literary transfers during the Cold War. For heuristic purposes, I shall examine here the impact that the political crises which occurred in 1956 in two communist countries in Eastern Europe had on the translation in France of literary works originating in these countries. By focusing on this aspect, I hope at the same time to illuminate, from a specific angle, the many different trajectories taken by the communist regimes, beyond the characteristics they had in common (Dreyfus et al. 2000).

I shall rely here on an empirical survey which has involved interviews, archival sources and a database containing the flows of translations of Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and Romanian literary works into French for the period 1945–1992 (Popa 2002a; 2010). As for the flows of Soviet literature, they have been reconstructed only for the period 1945–1959 and are treated separately (Popa 2002b). The treatment of these data has allowed me to analyse the historical dynamics of these flows and their national distributions. It has led to the formalization of several modalities of the international transfer of literary works, both authorized and unauthorized,

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\* The study is based on a guest lecture at the Institute of World Literature SAS in April 2016.

which I have called “translation channels” (Popa 2006); the dynamics of this transfer varied according to the historical configurations and the countries from which the translated texts originated. It is the analysis of these flows as well as their channels of mediation and publishing reception, and not the mechanical transposition of a political temporality onto the chronology of literary transfers, which has made it possible to identify the year 1956 as a crucial moment in the reconfiguration of these transfers.

It is therefore not a question of analysing the dynamics of these political crises as such, but of examining their effects on the internationalization of the professional trajectories of writers who expressed a political commitment on this occasion, and on the circulation and recognition of their works. At the same time, I will sketch the impact of these crises on the reconfiguration of the intellectual and publishing space in which these works were translated, targeting the redefinition of the positions of the various actors who favoured these literary transfers. These different angles of analysis will enable me to investigate, on several levels, the link between commitment in circumstances of political crisis and the international circulation of literary works.

### POLITICAL AND LITERARY RECONFIGURATIONS

In the political and social history of communism and the Cold War, 1956 is associated with the de-Stalinization following the report presented by Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the CPSU and a succession of political crises, described as revolutionary moments, in Poland and Hungary. In the course of these episodes, but also earlier (especially from 1954 onwards), writers publicly committed themselves against censorship, in favour of freedom of creation and, more generally, in favour of the political liberalization of the regimes in power. They deployed their interventions in Writers’ Unions, in public debating circles and in the literary press, also rejecting socialist realism, the official aesthetics they had been obliged to apply in the Stalinist era. The main challenge facing their political commitment lay, not in producing critical works, or even works that expressed a commitment *against* the Communist Party and the regime in power, but in rejecting the injunctions to show their commitment *in favour* of this regime – injunctions to which they had previously been subjected through, *inter alia*, socialist realism. They thus benefited from the rise of so-called “revisionist” fractions within the Polish and Hungarian Communist Parties working for an internal reform of socialism. However, in a sometimes contradictory and reversible process, writers could also claim the right to make a political intervention, taking ownership of the imperative of commitment that had been brandished until then by Party conservatives to criticize writers’ aspirations to practise *l’art pour l’art*. In this redistribution of position-takings, and in order to prevent this commitment from being aimed against the Party and the regime then in power, the conservatives’ line of retreat now lay in encouraging the literary profession to deal exclusively with literature (“stop arguing and just write some good books”).

The relaxation of political constraints on the spaces of cultural production was indeed unstable and reversible, while the outcome of the crises of autumn 1956 was different in the two countries. The compromise reached by the Polish CP was perceived as a victory for the reformers; it would nevertheless prove relative and pro-

visional. In the literary space, it favoured the adoption of position-takings that were temporarily uncensored – something unprecedented in a popular democracy. In France, this solution was hailed by left-wing intellectuals such as Dionys Mascolo, a former member of the French Communist Party, as a “socialist revolution brought about within socialism” (Mascolo 1957, 93). On the other hand, the radicalization of the process in Hungary led to the intervention of the Soviet army, almost unanimously condemned in France. Only the French Communist Party justified it, describing this crisis as a counter-revolution. In other eastern European countries, the outcome to the Hungarian crisis would, in the second half of the 1950s, help to bolster the views of those opposed to the thaw. In Hungary itself, it led to the condemnation of the main protagonists of the reform movement, including several writers. While some of them went into exile, most were subjected to exclusion from the party and/or literary institutions, faced with publication bans, or even gaoled as a punishment for the position-takings they had taken up. Moreover, the Union of Hungarian Writers was dissolved (to be re-created a few years later).

An analysis of translations of Polish and Hungarian literature in France – especially as compared with those of other East European literatures of that time –, makes it possible to question the effects which the political commitment of the name and/or work of these writers (Matonti 2005; Sapiro 2009) could entail on the international circulation of their literary productions, on the recognition which they could acquire in the West, and on their possible migratory trajectories. This analysis also makes it possible to examine symbolic and even material resources (in the form of copyrights, for example) that translation, and the literary fame that it generates in other countries, can offer, conversely, to authors who are marginalized and even persecuted in their own countries. These mechanisms are part of a broader reconfiguration of the literary transfers examined here, as produced in the context of the political crises of 1956.

In contrast, prior to these crises, literary transfers had reflected none of the transformations already affecting the morphology of the East European literary fields, especially after 1954; the characteristics of such transfers ever since the beginning of the Cold War had persisted. Produced in a context where the relative autonomy of literary spaces had been powerfully challenged by the establishment of undemocratic regimes in Eastern Europe, the literatures of these countries had been very selectively received in the French intellectual field – governed, for its part, by specific logics of operation that had long since been gradually built up. The literary institutions of this space and its agents had certainly been put to the test but had testified to their relative capacity to resist in times of crisis, especially during the German Occupation (Sapiro 1999; Simonin 1994). However, the strengthening of the heteronomous pole of the French literary field at the end of the Second World War, due in particular to the temporary prominence of the model of committed literature at the expense of *l'art pour l'art*, as well as the influence of the French Communist Party and its intellectual and publishing outlets, contributed to the politicization of the translation of literary works from the new people's democracies. For the cultural apparatus of the French Communist Party, they served to spread a “progressive” literature and represented

a bulwark against Anglo-Saxon “imperialist” literature, helping to establish the prestige of one ideological camp to the detriment of the other. More generally, especially in the case of contemporary literature, the reception of these works was, right from the start, caught up in the issues and ideological splits of the beginnings of the Cold War. Socialist realist literary works were at the same time challenged by the translation of an anti-communist literature whose circulation evaded the control exercised by popular democracies and their cultural outlets in France. Between 1947 and 1955, however, the number of authorized translations exceeded that of unauthorized translations (limited to the works of exiled writers). This observation goes hand in hand with that of a partitioning of the channels of transfer and publishing, as well as the networks of the most active intermediaries and translators: essentially, the split lay between pro-communist and anti-communist trends.

These characteristics persisted even after 1956 in the case of literary transfers from countries such as Romania and Czechoslovakia whose regimes remained much more reluctant to follow the path of de-Stalinization and to relax the political constraints on the spaces of cultural production. As far as the translation flows we are studying are concerned, no change in the equilibrium between the two spaces of transfer occurred either: the authorized space of literary transfer alone involved almost three quarters of the translations that would be produced during the period 1956–1967. A reconfiguration of literary transfer nevertheless did occur, benefiting the international circulation of Polish and Hungarian literature in particular, as demonstrated by the intensification of the international circulation of literary works and the discovery of a large number of writers previously unknown in France, and by a de-compartmentalization of reception channels. Other unprecedented trends helped to shape this reconfiguration, allowing it to be connected with the aesthetic and political position-takings both of translated writers and of intermediaries working for the international circulation of these literary works.

#### COMMITMENT TO THE FREEDOM OF CREATION AND THE EXPANSION OF AUTHORIZED LITERARY TRANSFER

One of these developments concerned Polish writers (and subsequently Hungarian writers, after the end of the period of repression, i.e. during the 1960s). It consisted in widening the authorized space of literary transfer, made possible by a temporary satisfaction of the demands and commitments of writers in favour of freedom of creation and the abandoning of socialist realist literature, i.e. by the loosening of political constraints on the space of publication itself. The morphology of this space had in fact gradually developed thanks to the (re)authorization of writers as well as of aesthetic trends and literary genres previously prohibited or marginalized. This is the case, for example, with the detective novel (a genre (re)launched notably by Leopold Tyrmand in 1956: one of his novels was translated by Stock in 1960), and also with science fiction (practiced by Stanisław Lem with great success both nationally and internationally, as evidenced by the many translations of his work into French, German and English). These transformations favoured the authorized translation in France of contemporary literature, first Polish and then Hungarian – these litera-

tures were now being translated by French publishers occupying central positions in the publishing field, such as Julliard and Gallimard (who were their main importers between 1956 and 1967). The reception of these contemporary literatures was thus no longer the responsibility of publishing houses run by, or close, to the Communist Party, as was the case previously, and as was still the case for Czech and Romanian literatures.

Belated or previously improbable literary debuts also now became possible and could be connected to debuts in translation. Examples were the playwright Sławomir Mrożek (whose work was associated with the theatre of the absurd) and the novelist Marek Hłasko. Having made his literary debut in 1954, at only twenty years of age, the latter was the author of novels of a very raw realism, poles apart from the official aesthetic now being challenged; these novels were (temporarily) published or even reissued in Poland in significant print runs. Hłasko also published short stories in the cultural newspaper of the student organization *Po Prostu*, which was a major collective actor in the reform movement: the young writer was one of its leading figures during the period of cultural liberalization. Hłasko's status was recognized in Poland by the Publishers' Prize, and he was turned into a symbol of "nonconformist" intellectual youth. He was translated for the first time into French in 1958: a first collection of short stories was published by Julliard under the title *Le premier pas dans les nuages* (The first step into the clouds). At that time, Julliard was a publisher known for publishing "fast, a lot [and] young", according to Maurice Nadeau (1990, 53) – his publishing house was then mainly investing in new writers with a "revisionist" profile. Hłasko was legally able to spend time in Paris the same year that the French translation of his book came out. On this occasion he entered into contact with the Polish journal in exile *Kultura*, which reissued texts that Hłasko had already published in the Polish official press. As the central body for the publication of texts written by banned, censored and, most often, exiled Polish authors, *Kultura* was considered by the Warsaw regime as a political opponent. So Hłasko was subjected to a smear campaign in the national press, while the film based on his book *The Eighth Day of the Week* which was due to be shown at the Cannes Film Festival was banned. Although it was published in Poland in 1957, the book itself was now regarded as a calumny of the communist system and the Polish nation because of the realistic picture it painted of the country.

This attack on one of the writers associated with the reform movement testified to the relatively rapid devaluation of this political resource, and Hłasko was not its only target; for example the journal *Po Prostu* was also banned. Hłasko was one of the dozens of intellectuals who resigned from the Polish Communist Party in reaction to these reversals of cultural policy; such a resignation then constituted a new element in the repertory of protest action for intellectuals in the socialist countries. The translation into France of *The Eighth Day of the Week*, subsequent to the smear campaign to which the Polish writer was subjected, no longer came about via the official channels of literary transfer, even if it was still published by Julliard in 1959. It is revealing of the intellectual but also political affinities which can prop up the circulation of literary works abroad that this translation was actually produced by a French translator

of Polish origin, Anna Posner, who was at that time breaking away from the French Communist Party. She assessed the position-takings of the PCF in the light of the Polish reformist experience of which she was directly aware and whose literary representatives she sought to promote by means of translation. As he was now in the West, the writer himself requested political asylum when the Polish authorities refused to renew his passport. However, he would only temporarily be able to capitalize on the literary fame that he had acquired thanks to translations of his work.

### TRANSLATION AS A VECTOR OF CIRCULATION AND RECOGNITION OF PROHIBITED WORKS

The trajectory that we have just traced makes it possible to pinpoint examples of the effects of the Polish crisis of 1956 on the possible connections between the authorized modalities of both publication and translation. It also suggests, however, that a writer who had constructed a position in the authorized space of publication and recognition of his own country could slip into the unauthorized space of literary transfer because of the position-takings he had adopted, and because of still uncertain and fluid political circumstances (Dobry 1986). Heuristically speaking, the Hungarian crisis of 1956 makes it possible to examine this mechanism of international literary transfer as well as looking at other forms of connection between the political commitment of one's name and/or works, the construction and/or reinforcement of one's literary fame, and the translation of one's works. Indeed, in the wake of the repression that followed this crisis, translation offered an alternative space of publication for writers who were now banned in their own countries, or even provided them, from abroad, with a form of (counter-) legitimation both literary and political. The space for the transfer of Hungarian literature was now filled by works previously authorized but now banned; they were added to works written in exile by authors who had left their country after the intervention of the Soviet army, and that could sometimes be part of a committed literature produced in reaction to this event.

The writers translated did not always share the same relations with literary and partisan institutions and more generally with politics. The examples of Victor Határ and Gyula Háy testify to this. Born in Hungary in 1914 and 1900 respectively, their work was translated from manuscripts circulating clandestinely on the eve of the 1956 revolution, in the case of Határ, and from an officially published and then banned edition, in the case of Háy. This different relationship to translation corresponded to their respective positions in the literary field as well as their political trajectories. Határ, an avant-garde poet, was expelled from the Union of Writers in 1949, as well as barred from authorized channels of publication, and then gaoled for attempting to illegally cross the border (a gesture that was a strong indicator of disaffection with the regime in power). As for Háy, he was an old Communist militant whose commitment went back to the Béla Kun Commune of 1919. Because of this commitment, and after the Communist Party had been banned in Hungary, he was obliged to go into exile during the inter-war period first in Germany, where he became a successful theatre writer, then in the USSR. Back in Hungary in 1945, he sought to devote himself to

the renewal of the country in general, and of Hungarian theatre in particular, but his aspirations were thwarted by the constraints of socialist realism. The two writers, on the other hand, both supported the reform process begun in 1953. Gyula Háy actively participated in it, because he had been given room for manoeuvre within the socialist institutions he had joined. He supported the policies of the reforming Prime Minister Imre Nagy within the Union of Writers and contributed articles to its journal. It was he who voiced the radio appeal for help that was addressed to intellectuals worldwide during the Soviet invasion. He was later sentenced to six years in prison.

The two writers went into exile in the West: Háy to Switzerland in the mid-1960s (after being amnestied); Határ to London immediately after the crushing of the 1956 revolution. The former was published in France in the aftermath of this event, first in magazines, then in book form in 1966 – a relatively late date, but one that marked the tenth anniversary of the 1956 revolution. The translation was adapted into French by the director Bernard Sobel, a former student of Brecht. Finally, Maurice Nadeau was the one who revealed Határ to the French public in 1962, in his “experimental” collection *Les Lettres Nouvelles* published by Julliard.

The effects of the banning and repression of writers on literary transfers can, however, be much more rapid than these examples suggest, despite the time lag substantial to the actual process of translation. This is illustrated by the urgency with which special issues of the periodicals *Les Temps Modernes* and *Esprit* were produced, containing the translation of extracts from literary works that had been selected with a view to illustrating the intellectual and political underpinnings of the 1956 revolution. The translation of certain authorial monographs also showed this. The crises faced by the space of production of literary works could therefore significantly accelerate the tempo of unauthorized literary transfers. Some of the translated works could even be written in the wake of the events themselves. The outcome of the Hungarian crisis triggered a literary production located on the frontiers of fiction, testimony and journalism, and aimed at satisfying the Western public’s need for information about this political situation in particular, and Eastern European countries in general. To varying degrees, the contents of these works (such as Tibor Méray’s *Last Report*, Miklós Batori’s novel *The Bricks*, and *Volunteers for the Scaffold* by Vincent Savarius, the pseudonym of Béla Szász) testify to the anti-communist commitment of their authors, who were indeed writers but could also be direct participants in, or observers of, the 1956 crisis; all of them were now in exile.

The speed with which the intermediaries of literary transfer sought to convey to France the literary and political consequences of this crisis also stemmed from an improvised strategy: the possibility of accessing a Western intellectual space through the translation of a literary work gradually came to be envisaged – because of the visibility, or even the celebrity, that it could bring – as a means of protecting that work’s author against the forms of persecution that he faced in his own country. In this particular case, there were writers sentenced to between eighteen months and nine years of imprisonment: the best known (and the most severely punished) was Tibor Déry. Born in 1894 to a well-off Jewish bourgeois family in Budapest, Déry was a writer close to the avant-gardes, a member of the Communist Party since its found-

ing, who was forced to go into exile in Vienna and Berlin and then in Paris during the inter-war period. Despite this militant past, he was deemed too non-conformist to be one of the writers officially promoted in the era of socialist realism. However, he was very active in the reform movement, which led to his exclusion from the Communist Party in 1955. It was not until after his condemnation that, in France, his work was urgently translated, beginning not by his (long) emblematic novels, but by relatively short texts, more specifically by a kind of parable of the Stalinist period, *Niki: the story of a dog*. This book had been officially published in Hungary during the period of the reformer Imre Nagy's provisional return to power. This first French translation of Dery's work was published by Seuil in 1957. It was signed, under a pseudonym, by a translator of Hungarian origin, Ladislav Gara, who had just broken away from the Budapest regime for which he had worked as a press correspondent in Paris since the end of the Second World War.

This form of individual political support through literary means was here underpinned by a transnational mobilization in favour of Déry and his co-accused. This campaign was the first of its kind to be organized in the West since the establishment of the popular democracies and was carried out by the Comité Déry, created in 1958. It was meant more generally to raise awareness of the need to defend East European authors' right to freedom of expression. This campaign was remembered by those involved as a time when political splits between the participants could be overcome – but this should not obscure the essentially heterogeneous nature of the movement. This heterogeneity was in turn due to the diversity of social, political and professional positions and proprieties of the French intellectuals who, on this occasion, contributed to the campaign the prestige associated with their own names. The Comité Déry thus brought together various groups: former French Resistance fighters who had broken with the institution which brought them together, i.e. the National Writers' Committee, before the Hungarian crisis (such as François Mauriac, Gabriel Marcel, Jean Cassou and Louis Martin-Chauffier); those who were currently also breaking away (such as Vercors); ex-Communists (such as Claude Roy); ex-fellow travellers (such as Louis de Villefosse); and members of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an “anti-totalitarian” intellectual organization (such as Raymond Aron). These were joined by publishers (Paul Flamand, Jérôme Lindon, Gaston Gallimard and René Juliard) who also contributed to the importation of Hungarian and Polish literature.

This way of expressing political commitment by allowing the fame associated to one's name to be used in a campaign was accompanied, for some French intellectuals, by a commitment in their work in favour of the cause of insurgent Hungarian writers. Ladislav Gara, the translator already mentioned, set up a publishing project that illustrates this mode of intervention. It was based on a literary network of French poets and translators, something he had long been trying to set up, while taking advantage of readjustments or redefinitions of their positions in reaction to the Hungarian crisis. In 1957, Gara launched the collection *Hommage des poètes français aux poètes hongrois* published by Seghers, inviting Pierre Emmanuel, Jean Follain, André Frénaud, Claude Roy, and Pierre Seghers himself to each write a poem on this theme.

The gaoled Hungarian writers would gradually be amnestied. Those who continued to live in Hungary after this episode could, in addition, return to the authorized channels of publication and even, in the case of Déry (Krause 2002), of literary transfer. This strategy of official literary appropriation implicitly benefited the Hungarian regime, desirous of improving its internal legitimacy and its international image, both of them significantly compromised in 1956. It would be doubtful to see the transnational mobilization in favour of Déry as the sole reason for his freeing. This episode nevertheless nourished the social belief that international literary fame protected its holder against the persecution that might befall him, or had already befallen him. This belief would be a lever in other campaigns to defend East European writers who had difficult relations with the political authorities.

### POLITICAL AND PROFESSIONAL REDEPLOYMENT OF THE NETWORKS OF MEDIATION

The international circulation of Hungarian and Polish literary works and, more particularly, their importation into France reaped almost immediate (as well as belated) benefits from the politicization of the literary stakes that stemmed from the crises of 1956. They also benefited from the political and professional redeployments produced in the French intellectual field in reaction to these crises, though these redeployments operated according to the logics specific to this space.

This transformation was indeed due to many different dynamics; besides, a detailed reconstruction of the trajectories of individual and collective actors in the French intellectual field could place them in the context of longer temporalities. These might involve such moves as a political disengagement from the French Communist Party, either partial or complete, followed if necessary by joining new structures (as with the writer Louis de Villefosse, a former fellow traveller, who became the secretary of the Comité Déry); such moves testified to an “intellectual crisis in French communism” (Pudal 2005). Another phenomenon was the legitimization of positions previously stigmatized for their “anti-totalitarian” commitment (as was the case with the Congress for Cultural Freedom) or of very marginal positions such as cultural institutions in exile (the periodical *Kultura* is one example). These redeployments were also fuelled by an additional trend: political interest, and kinds of knowledge and know-how previously acquired through a pro-communist commitment, could be converted into an activity of mediation and even translation that benefited the literatures of the socialist countries.

In the course of this reconfiguration, we can observe the appearance of a new type of intermediary for these literatures, such as the writer Claude Roy, who came to the French Communist Party from the Resistance and left it following the Hungarian crisis. His resignation did not diminish his ties with the socialist countries, but redefined them and even helped to strengthen them: Claude Roy (re)invested this field from a literary angle and in the light of the most reformist political experiments then being carried out. In January 1957 he went to Poland, along with other French intellectuals, to attend the legislative elections. He continued to travel regularly in Eastern Europe, particularly to the countries where the reform of socialism,

and later amore radical questioning of it, seemed to be most advanced – in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in the mid-1960s, and again in Poland, especially at the turn of the 1980s. Finally, he was now contributing to the importation and the symbolic recognition of works and authors from these countries through prefaces, reviews, reader's reports, translation proposals, and even through the translation-adaptation of a play by a Hungarian author. This translation was in fact produced in collaboration with one of the Hungarian writers gaoled in 1956, Tibor Tardos, who had since gone into exile in France. "Hybrid" in terms of his political dispositions and the networks he was capable of mobilizing, this new type of mediator could now carry out his activities within both spaces of transfer at once, as shown by the trajectories of several important translators of the period such as the aforementioned Ladislav Gara and Anna Posner.

The differentiated capacities of these intermediary networks to mobilize links and information coming from the socialist countries, especially about their respective literatures, as well as the possession of rare forms of linguistic capital, became valued resources during this reconfiguration of literary transfer. They could also foster competition between publishers for specific works and authors. Indirectly, these dynamics encouraged or even forced the importers of other Eastern European literatures, apparently less concerned than Polish and Hungarian literatures with the reconfigurations described here, to redeploy their literary strategies and even their political commitments. If we have here been able to show how, through the dissemination of prohibited texts in socialist countries, translation could constitute for their intermediaries a possible repertoire of political commitment – against communism, in this case – we ought at least to mention the symmetrical case: the commitment in favour of the importation of East European literary works but on behalf, this time, of a renovated communism. An emblematic example of this type of investment is Louis Aragon, who launched the "Littératures soviétiques" collection at Gallimard in 1956 (after running another collection, "Au pays de Staline", in one of the PCF publishing houses; Popa 2002b), and fostered through it a renewed kind of socialist realism (Olivera 2002). This activity, both literary and political, was itself (re)defined in the wake of the political crises described here, and would also profit from later attempts to reform socialism from within, especially during the Prague Spring. The end of this political experiment, moreover, would have an impact on the transfer of Czechoslovak literature to France homologous to that caused by the crises of 1956 and sketched out above.

This study shows that an overlapping between the political and literary stakes occurred far beyond the national spaces in which the crises of 1956 took place. The reconversions that happened in a crisis situation between different types of capital specific to certain social spaces *within* national borders were also accompanied, via international transfer, by reconversions of capital *between* national spaces. The political capital that writers acquired or consolidated on this occasion could reinforce or, on the contrary, weaken (at least temporarily) the literary positions that these writers occupied. However, this capital could also be reinvested in favour of the international circulation of literary works, leading to the "enlargement" of the symbolic fame of

these writers, even benefiting the construction of the “brand image” of a whole literature. Conversely, as a vector of international literary circulation, translation could provide writers who benefited from it with symbolic resources that were at least partially convertible into their national space of belonging. It introduced degrees of legitimacy and forms of recognition concurrent with those provided (or denied) to these writers by national cultural institutions, there by entailing significant political effects.

Translated from French by Andrew Brown

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Literary transfer. Political commitment. Political crisis. Literary recognition. Cold War. France. Eastern Europe.

The article examines the impact that the political crises which occurred in 1956 in two communist countries in Eastern Europe (Hungary and Poland) had on the translation in France of literary works originating in these countries. The aim is not to analyse the dynamics of these crises as such, but their effects on the internationalization of the professional trajectories of writers who expressed a political commitment on this occasion, and on the circulation of their works. The analysis also takes into account the reconfiguration of the intellectual space in which these works were translated, targeting the redefinition of the positions of various actors who favoured the literary transfers. These different angles of analysis enable one to investigate, on several levels, the link between political commitment and the international circulation of literary works, showing that an overlapping between the political and literary stages occurred far beyond the national spaces in which the crises of 1956 took place.

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