

1950er Jahre führte er am Jüdischen Historischen Institut in Warschau Nachforschungen durch. Nach Italien zurückgekehrt, begann er in linksorientierten Zeitschriften zu veröffentlichen. Seine umfangreiche Publikation über die NS-Judenverfolgung in Polen, die 1958 unter dem Titel *Ricorda cosa ti ha fatto Amalek* (Erinnere dich, was Amalek dir angetan hat) herauskam, würdigte den Widerstand im Warschauer Ghetto. Die englische Fassung, die als *A Tower from the Enemy. Contributions to a History of Jewish Resistance in Poland* erschien, fand in den USA keinen Anklang, wo Nirenstein als Vertreter einer kommunistischen Geschichtsauffassung abgelehnt wurde.

Mit Begegnungen zwischen Ost und West beim Prozess gegen Adolf Heinz Beckerle (1902–1976) befasst sich Nadège Ragaru. Als deutscher Gesandter in Sofia war der frühere Frankfurter Polizeipräsident am NS-Judenmord beteiligt. Von 1944 an befand er sich in sowjetischer Gefangenschaft. Die Hessische Zentralspruchkammer in Frankfurt stufte ihn 1950 in Abwesenheit als „Hauptschuldigen“. 1955 kehrte er zurück, ehe ihn 1967/68 ein Verfahren am Frankfurter Schwurgericht erteilte; er entging einer Verurteilung, weil er als krankheitsbedingt verhandlungsunfähig erachtet wurde. Vanessa Voisin erläutert spezifische Rückwirkungen des Jerusalemer Eichmann-Prozesses auf die sowjetische Propaganda, während Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska ein westdeutsches Medienereignis hinterfragt: die Rezeption von Hans Scholzes 1955 erstmals veröffentlichten Erzählungen *Am grünen Strand der Spree*. In einer Episode daraus beobachtet ein Gefreiter die Massenerschießung jüdischer Zivilisten durch lettische Helfer unter SS-Kommando, wobei ortsansässige weißrussische Kinder dies zufrieden mit „Jewreii kaputt“ kommentieren (S. 272). Ein darauf basierender, im März 1960 erstmals ausgestrahlter WDR-Fernsehfilm konfrontierte die Zuschauer 22 Minuten lang mit dieser grauenvollen Erschießungsszene (S. 256). Die Autorin sieht hier eine zweifache Absicht am Werk: den von zahlreichen Wehrmatsangehörigen bezeugten Massenmord an der jüdischen Zivilbevölkerung erstmals öffentlich zu thematisieren und „zugleich die deutsche Verantwortung im Grunde zu verschleiern“ (S. 273). Jonathan Kaplan untersucht die Bemühungen des Außenministeriums der DDR, in einer „Aktion Nazidiplomaten“ führende Vertreter der Bonner Republik auch mithilfe eines „National Committee to Combat Nazism in the USA“ anzuprangern. Wie hier abermals deutlich wird, überwog trotz der allgemeinen ideologischen Differenzen im Kalten Krieg beim Holocaust-Gedenken mitunter das Verflechtungsmoment, indem der Informationsfluss die zwischen Ost und West gezogenen Grenzen überwand. Dies geschah insbesondere dann, wenn es darum ging, beim Judenmord Tatverdächtige „juristisch zur Verantwortung zu ziehen, der Opfer zu gedenken oder die an den Juden Europas verübten Gräueltaten zu bezeugen“ (S. 21).

Ein Personenregister hilft bei der schnellen Orientierung in diesem in vielerlei Hinsicht anregenden Sammelwerk. Weitere Forschungsthemen ließen sich leicht hinzufügen, sodass zu hoffen ist, dass die von Koch und Stach ausgebreiteten Hinweise in der Forschung alsbald aufgegriffen werden.

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Elective Affinities. Rethinking Entanglements between Latin America and East-Central Europe. Hrsg. von Agnieszka H. Hudzik, Joanna M. Moszczyńska, Jorge Estrada and Patricia A. Gwozdz. (Mimesis, Bd. 107.) De Gruyter. Berlin – Boston 2024. X, 313 S. Hardcover ISBN 978-3-111-24745-8 (€ 99,95; Open Access unter <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783111247861/pdf?licenseType=open-access>.)

In recent years, scholarly interest in the historical connections between Latin America and East Central Europe has grown significantly, reflecting a broader effort to reassess the global dimensions of history from a non-Western perspective. Much of this research concentrates on the second half of the twentieth century, which was a period marked by the strategic outreach

of state socialist regimes in Eastern Europe to the Global South.² Progressive intellectuals and political actors across Latin America at the time also increasingly turned to the socialist bloc, viewing it both as a model for alternative paths to modernization as well as a potential ally in their struggles against imperialism and underdevelopment.

Culture was one of the primary links between Latin America and East-Central Europe during the Cold War, and recent scholarship has been uncovering the depth and complexity of these transnational cultural exchanges. One notable contribution is a recent edited volume that brings together a variety of case studies on efforts at the cultural diplomacy, artistic collaborations, and ideological solidarities that shaped interregional ties.³ Other publications have focused mostly on selected countries or prominent figures; the articles in one collection of essays, for instance, explore Pablo Neruda's literary and political entanglements with Eastern Europe, country by country.⁴ All of these works underscore the significance of culture within the broader geopolitical and historical context of the connections between Latin America and East Central Europe.

The volume titled *Elective Affinities*, edited by Agnieszka H. Hudzik, Joanna M. Moszczyńska, Jorge Estrada, and Patricia A. Gwozdz, thus aligns well with this growing scholarly trend that seeks to reassess transregional dynamics beyond the traditional East-West and North-South binaries. The volume emerged out of a conference on literary history held in 2022 at the Freie Universität Berlin, which served as a catalyst for the scholarly inquiries presented in its chapters. The title, which is an allusion to Goethe's novel of the same name, clearly signals the editors' interpretation of the mutual, though not predetermined, attraction between Latin America and East Central Europe. Accordingly, the volume explores a wide range of literary encounters that took place primarily during the Cold War, but it also pays attention to earlier contexts as well as longer historical continuities and other after-effects.

Conceptually, the book approaches these connections through the lens of "entanglement," a term that allows for a multidirectional, non-hierarchical analysis of exchange, influence, and mutual perception. This multicentered approach, while valid—particularly given its origins in a conference setting where the heterogeneity of papers is inevitable—nonetheless introduces a degree of fragmentation that may undermine its overall coherence. Consequently, although the volume makes an important contribution to the field, it does not really offer a coherent analysis of the broader political and structural frameworks that shaped these transregional interactions. Its conceptual framework, presented in the introduction, rests mostly on the intersection of postcolonial and post-socialist perspectives.⁵ This approach, while somewhat vague, allows the authors to engage with the notion of "world literature" or "global literature" transversally: Rather than positioning Latin America and East Central Europe as recipients of cultural influence from dominant (usually Western) centers, the editors and contributors explore how literary texts and actors from these (semi)peripheral regions articulated alternative modernities and created transregional solidarities. Therefore, despite its fragmented nature, the volume presents numerous illu-

2 A notable example is: JAMES MARK, PAUL BETTS (eds.): *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonisation*, Oxford 2022.

3 BOJANA KOVAČEVIĆ PETROVIĆ, EMILIO J. GALLARDO SABORIDO (eds.): *Las relaciones culturales entre América Latina y los países socialistas europeos durante la Guerra Fría*, Buenos Aires—Novi Sad 2023.

4 ILINCA ILIAN, MAJA ŠABEC (eds.): *Pablo Neruda en el espejo del socialismo: Destino(s) literario(s) en Europa Central y del Sureste durante la Guerra Fría*, Bruxelles et al. 2024.

5 See: SHARAD CHARI, KATHERINE VERDERY: *Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War*, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009), 1, pp. 6–34.

minating case studies. The contributions are structured into seven thematic sections, yet three principal motifs emerge that seem to account for the mutual interest between Eastern Europe and Latin America.

First—and arguably the most prominent dynamic—is the active cultural diplomacy of the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries that sought to engage Latin American intellectuals as part of a broader soft power strategy during the Cold War. Networks such as the one in Mexico described by José Luis Nogales Baena, for example, actively promoted Soviet culture. At the same time, Latin American writers, artists, and political figures were invited to visit Eastern Europe on organized trips that were, as one Argentine intellectual quoted in Ana Davis González’s chapter put it: “not a trip to the USSR but a ‘trip to the revolution’” (p. 90). These visits often resulted in publications and translations, contributing to the diversification of the Soviet bloc’s external cultural relations. At the same time, however, the authoritarianism and human rights violations characteristic of the Soviet bloc elicited ambivalent responses among Latin American intellectuals. As Elisa Kriza demonstrates, figures such as José Revueltas and Octavio Paz grappled with these contradictions and took critical stances. In contrast, as Pablo Sánchez’s chapter explores, other writers—including Neruda and Miguel Ángel Asturias—leaned toward a more sympathetic or idealized portrayal of the state socialist experience. They often emphasized its “humane” nature, for instance, as Neruda and Asturias did in their jointly written book, *Comiendo en Hungría*.

Second, the volume addresses the role of diaspora writing, focusing on Eastern Europeans who fled state socialism and settled in Latin America. In these narratives, Latin America often appears as a distant and exotic other as well as a place to escape from the disillusion or trauma of the Interwar, World War II, and state socialist years. These emigrant Eastern European writers engaged with their new cultural environments in complex ways, producing hybrid literary identities and cross-cultural perspectives. Aleksandra Tobiasz, for example, examines Witold Gombrowicz’s self-perception as an exiled Polish intellectual in Argentina, highlighting how his displacement shaped his literary production and his critical stance toward national identity and cultural hierarchies. Likewise, Javier Toscano looks at the experience of migration as a central and constitutive element in Vilém Flusser’s philosophical framework. Robert Schade also offers a compelling analysis of the Jewish-Brazilian diasporic microcosm that formed the backdrop to Moacyr Seliar’s literary production, which he then situates within broader narratives of identity and transnational belonging.

Third, the volume delves into the genuine cultural interest among Eastern European authors, particularly those seeking to expand the intellectual and imaginative boundaries of their often tightly controlled societies. Driven more by curiosity than ideology, these kinds of engagements challenge the assumption that Cold War cultural exchange was solely orchestrated from above. This was certainly the case for László Passuth, a very popular writer in socialist Hungary, as explained in the chapter by Mónika Szente-Varga. The same holds true for Alma M. Karlin’s interest in Peruvian folklore and Sergio Pitól’s fascination with Polish literature, as described by Jaša Drnovšek and Monika Dąbrowska, respectively. Moreover, the volume also includes literary texts by two young authors, Karen Villeda and Dorota Masłowska, which are much more than an intriguing artistic addition in that they reveal that this mutual interest still lives on.

Further contributions in the volume, though not explicitly discussed here, also offer valuable insights into these entanglements. By bringing these case studies together, *Elective Affinities* demonstrates that cultural ties between the two regions have always been shaped by a mix of political agendas, personal life stories, and genuine curiosity. Rather than imposing a single explanatory model, the volume allows these case studies to speak to each other, offering a nuanced understanding of how cross-cultural affinities were elected and constructed.