

## **Marketing Transnational Childhoods: The Bio Blurbs of Third Culture Novelists**

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### **Abstract**

Many contemporary novelists experienced high levels of transnational mobility during their childhood and were thus raised ‘among’ different countries and cultures. Predominantly the offspring of diplomats, business executives, missionaries, military personnel and academics, these writers have compelling backgrounds of transnational and transient childhoods. Third Culture Kid (TCK), coined by the sociologist Ruth Useem, is the term given to this childhood experience. Until 2010, the term TCK was only used by sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and cultural educators, but never before by scholars of literary studies. In 2011, Antje Rauwerda adapted this concept and coined the term ‘Third Culture Literature’ to describe the fictional writings by authors who share a ‘cultural background of expatriatism’. For Rauwerda, these novelists do not fit ‘a postcolonial, diasporic or cosmopolitan paradigm’ so that an up-to-date classification is needed for this new ‘subset of international writing’. The purpose of this article is to verify to what extent cultural identities are deployed in the marketing of Third Culture Literature. The article focuses on five contemporary well-known authors (such as Ian Martel and Ian McEwan) who have ‘grown up across worlds’ and analyses over 25 biographical details that are offered to readers by publishers in selected editions of their novels. The biographical details I examine are not only distributed in English but also, for example, in Arabic, Danish, German and Spanish. Not all publishers choose to portray their transnational authors in a ‘global’ light. However, due to the primarily international settings of Third Culture novels, many publishers either adopt the expatriate culture of their authors or adapt their biographies in order to kindle their target audiences.

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### **Introduction – Transnational Childhoods**

Many contemporary novelists experienced high levels of transnational mobility during their childhood and were thus raised ‘among’ many countries and cultures. Predominantly the offspring of diplomats, business executives, missionaries, military personnel and academics, these writers have compelling backgrounds of transient and transnational childhoods. Award winner Yann Martel, for example, was born in Spain and grew up in Costa Rica, France, Mexico and Alaska. Third Culture Kid (TCK), originally adopted by the sociologist Ruth Useem, is the name given to this childhood experience. In 2010, Antje Rauwerda adapted this concept and coined the term Third Culture Literature (TCL) to describe a new literary classification of fiction written by Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCK).

Because Yann Martel holds a Canadian passport, when he won the Man Booker Prize in 2002, he was on the one hand he was praised by the Canadian press for his achievement, but on the other hand, it ‘launched a controversy about what determines the ‘Canadianness’ of an

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author.<sup>1</sup> Journalists tend to locate texts ‘in terms of geography,’<sup>2</sup> yet in Martel’s case this is difficult. Publishers too, according to Rauwerda, identify authors by nation, and in publishing ‘there is little accommodation possible for authors whose origin is unclear, or whose “nationality” includes a lengthy series of countries.’<sup>3</sup>

Taking Rauwerda’s comment on publishers’ identification of Third Culture Authors (TCA) as a starting point, by focusing on the biographical details that are offered to readers in selected editions of contemporary novels of five TCAs (who all write in English),<sup>4</sup> this paper will verify to what extent cultural identities<sup>5</sup> are deployed in the marketing of TCL. It will be argued that publishers in different countries purposely construct the backgrounds of their TCAs on book covers in order to engage target readers. In doing so, however, they ignore the complex issue of identity in TCK discourse.

Firstly, the biographical notes of the emerging novelist Alice Greenway will be compared to those of the established TCA Ian McEwan; the bio blurbs of two sons of diplomats, Yann Martel and Nicholas Shakespeare, will then be analysed. In order to examine how TCAs choose to portray their résumés unrestrictedly, finally, the biographical notes on Heidi Durrow’s website will be compared to those published in her novel.

## Defining Third Culture Literature

TCK is the term coined by the sociologist Ruth Useem in the 1950s to describe children who spent a significant part of their formative years outside their parents’ culture. Useem believed that TCKs neither belong to their parents’ culture (the ‘first’ culture), nor to the new host culture (the ‘second’ culture), but belong to a ‘third’ expatriate culture of their own.<sup>6</sup> In 1999 David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken expanded on this topic and added that TCKs’ ‘sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar experience.’<sup>7</sup>

A TCK is not necessarily still a child. However, the word ‘kid’ is significant because, according to Pollock and Van Reken, this international experience ‘must occur during the developmental years – from birth to eighteen years of age.’<sup>8</sup> Sharing the views of developmental psychologists,<sup>9</sup> Pollock and Van Reken believe that this is an important time when a ‘child’s sense of identity, relationships with others, and view of the world are being formed in the most

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<sup>1</sup> Antje M. Rauwerda, ‘Not Your Typical “Diaspora” or “Third World Cosmopolitan”: Unexpectedly International Writing,’ *Wasafiri* 25.3 (2010) 17.

<sup>2</sup> Rauwerda, Not Your Typical Diaspora 17.

<sup>3</sup> Antje M. Rauwerda, *The Writer and the Overseas Childhood: The Third Culture Literature of Kingsolver, McEwan and Others* (Jefferson NC: McFarland, 2012) 4.

<sup>4</sup> Biographical notes in foreign editions of novels will also be analysed. The translations of the biographical notes into English have been translated by the author of this article.

<sup>5</sup> For further discussion on ‘identity’ and ‘cultural identity’, see for example Erik H. Erikson, ‘The Problem of Ego Identity,’ *Psychological Issues* 1, 1 (1959) 101-64, and Peter Adler, ‘Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Multiculturalism,’ *International Communication: A Reader* eds. Richard E. Porter and Larry A. Samovar (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1976) 362-78. For the purposes of this paper, Adler’s meaning of ‘cultural identity’ as published in the above mentioned article will be adopted: ‘Cultural identity is the symbol of one’s essential experience of oneself as it incorporates the worldview, value system, attitudes, and beliefs of a group with which such elements are shared. In its most manifest form, cultural identity takes the shape of names which both locate and differentiate the person.’ Accessed online (version of 2002), 24 June 2016 <http://mediate.com/articles/adler3.cfm>.

<sup>6</sup> For the origins of this term see Ruth H. Useem, ‘Third Culture Kids: Focus of Major Study,’ *Newslinks* 12, 3 (January 1993) 1.

<sup>7</sup> David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken, *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds* (Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1999) 19.

<sup>8</sup> Pollock and Van Reken 27.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950).

basic ways.’<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, they argue that ATCKs must struggle with common challenges such as identity dilemmas, unresolved grief, ‘restlessness’ and ‘rootlessness’<sup>11</sup>.

Antje Rauwerda extensively examined these struggles in novels written by ATCKs. Up until 2010, the term TCK was used only by sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and cultural educators, but never before by literary scholars. Innovatively, Rauwerda analyses the works of seventeen TCAs to prove that ‘there is a field of literature that, most simply, shares characteristics reflecting the third culture context out of which it is produced.’<sup>12</sup> In contrast to diasporic and cosmopolitan authors who share one homeland or ‘centre’, having been raised in many countries and thus not being attached to one place or nationality, Rauwerda convincingly explains why a more fitting literary classification is needed for TCAs. Neither is postcolonial literature the apt categorisation for these TC novels. Rather than exposing binary dislocation, a clear feature of colonial and postcolonial literature, TCL ‘is distinguished by its tendency to avoid binary comparisons’<sup>13</sup> and to display ‘multiple rather than binary displacement.’<sup>14</sup>

Whilst discussing the contemporary understanding of world literature(s) and describing transcultural literature, Arianna Dagnino similarly asserts that in the transnation ‘binaries of center/periphery and national self/other are dissolved.’<sup>15</sup> Transnational literature is ‘branching away from the tradition of (im)migrant and postcolonial literatures.’<sup>16</sup> Obviously, many literary classifications, such as hybrid, migrant, expatriate, refugee, diasporic, transcultural and postcolonial, coexist, interact and overlap.<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding ‘the inevitable issues raised by categorization and the desire of most, if not all, writers to escape unwanted definitions,’<sup>18</sup> Dagnino’s solution is to classify these transcultural literatures ‘in the context of the other subfamilies of the Literatures of Mobility.’<sup>19</sup>

Following Dagnino’s line of reasoning, I propose that TCL, like transcultural literature, is a subfamily of Literatures of Mobility. What makes TC writings stand out from similar literary subsets is that they are produced by TC writers. Whilst they were growing up and their identities were developing, they moved from one country to the next. These transient childhoods have resulted in unique and fascinating fiction. Clearly, in all of these Literatures of Mobility a leitmotif is displacement. But in TCL, transit goes hand in hand with childhood. So the keynote in this discourse is childhood mobility and, in spite of discussing adult authors, the ‘kid’ of TCK must always be kept in mind. Nowadays in book marketing, the author is very much alive. But is the author’s transient upbringing important for publishers when it comes to promoting TC novels?

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<sup>10</sup> Pollock and Van Reken 27.

<sup>11</sup> See Pollock and Van Reken 121-129.

<sup>12</sup> Rauwerda, *The Writer* 23.

<sup>13</sup> Rauwerda, *Not Your Typical Diaspora* 20.

<sup>14</sup> Rauwerda, *Not Your Typical Diaspora* 21.

<sup>15</sup> Arianna Dagnino, ‘Transcultural Literature and Contemporary World Literature(s),’ *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 15.5 (2013) 6.

<sup>16</sup> Dagnino 6.

<sup>17</sup> Dagnino 6.

<sup>18</sup> Dagnino 6.

<sup>19</sup> Dagnino 6. For further discussion on ‘Literatures of Mobility’, see also Arianna Dagnino ‘Global Mobility, Transcultural Literature, and Multiple Modes of Modernity,’ *Transcultural Studies* 2 (2013) 130-160. In this article, Dagnino explains that Literatures of Mobility are ‘those literatures that are affected by or deal with travels/exploratory drives, migratory flows, exile/diasporic experiences, expatriate/transnational narratives, and, more recently, neo-nomadic trajectories.’

## Blurbs as ‘Curiosity Arousers’

The term ‘blurb’ was coined in 1907 by the American humourist Gelett Burgess to describe a ‘flamboyant advertisement; an inspired testimonial.’<sup>20</sup> Today the term means ‘the short note by the publisher or author describing and recommending a book and introducing the author’<sup>21</sup> and blurbs on book covers may include a summary of the plot, praise from reviewers or other authors, quotes from the work and, most importantly for this analysis, a biography of the author. These author biographies that appear on book covers are now generally called ‘bio blurbs’, whereas the author details that are found either before or after the main text are sometimes given the title ‘A Note About the Author’ by publishers. In this paper, these notes are named ‘biographical notes’. Appearing alongside the main work, both bio blurbs and biographical notes are part of a book’s paratext.<sup>22</sup> In paratextuality discourse, literary scholars have tended to concentrate on how paratexts construct a frame for the main text, thus primarily ‘frame stories’ within narratives have been analysed and very little attention has been given to bio blurbs and biographical notes.

Maria Luisa Gea Valor and Kate Douglas are among the few scholars who have analysed bio blurbs of novelists. They both argue that, because when wanting to know more about a book the reader usually looks at the information on its back cover, publishing companies spend much money, time and energy in designing their book covers to attract potential customers.<sup>23</sup> Thus, behind the blurbs, which Gea Valor sees as ‘curiosity arousers’, which are ‘intended to pique the reader’s interest,’<sup>24</sup> there are marketing strategies so that in the blurbing discourse, the concept of the author is ‘manipulated to suit certain critical, ideological, and economic agendas.’<sup>25</sup> These manipulative short biographical texts of TCAs will now be analysed.

## Emerging vs. Established Third Culture Authors

Alice Greenway is the emerging author of two novels. Her debut novel *White Ghost Girls* was first printed in 2006 whilst her second work *The Bird Skinner*<sup>26</sup> was published in 2014. Ian McEwan, on the other hand, has written over ten novels and many screenplays, librettos, articles and children’s books. Furthermore, in 1998, McEwan won the Man Booker Prize for his novel *Amsterdam*.

Born in 1964 in Washington D.C., Alice Greenway is the daughter of the journalist Hugh Greenway, who worked from 1962 to 1972 for *Time Life* in London, Washington, Boston, Saigon, Bangkok, and Hong Kong. ‘After *Time Life*, from 1972 to 1978 he worked for the *Washington Post* in Washington, Saigon, Hong Kong, and Jerusalem.’<sup>27</sup> Thus, as the ‘offspring of an American correspondent to Vietnam’,<sup>28</sup> Alice Greenway grew up in Hong Kong and also lived in Bangkok and Jerusalem.

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<sup>20</sup> Gelett Burgess, *Burgess Unabridged: A New Dictionary of Words You Have Always Needed* (New York: Walker, 1914) 7.

<sup>21</sup> Geoffrey Ashall Glaister, *Encyclopedia of the Book* (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 1996) 51.

<sup>22</sup> See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane. E. Lewin 1987 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 3.

<sup>23</sup> See Maria Luisa Gea Valor, ‘Advertising Books: A Linguistic Analysis of Blurbs,’ *IBÉRICA* 10 (2005) 42.

<sup>24</sup> Gea Valor 42.

<sup>25</sup> Kate Douglas, ‘‘Blurbing’ Biographical: Authorship and Autobiography,’ *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* 24.4 (2001) 821.

<sup>26</sup> Alice Greenway, *The Bird Skinner* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> ‘HDS Greenway: Biography,’ *The American Academy in Berlin*, 20 January 2015

<http://www.americanacademy.de/home/person/hds-greenway>.

<sup>28</sup> Rauwerda, Not Your Typical Diaspora 20.

Ian McEwan was born in 1948 in Aldershot, a military garrison town in England. The son of a soldier, McEwan spent his childhood in Singapore, Libya and Germany. In 1959, McEwan returned to England where he attended a state-run boarding school.<sup>29</sup>

Greenway's *White Ghost Girls* was first published in 2006. In both the American and British editions, readers are told that the author of the novel lived in many countries:

Alice Greenway is an American who grew up in Hong Kong. As the daughter of a foreign correspondent, she also lived in Bangkok, Jerusalem and the United States. She later returned to Hong Kong and now lives in Scotland with her family. This is her first novel.<sup>30</sup>

Greenway's debut novel was published in German in 2009 by marebuchverlag and subsequently by Fischer Verlag. Both editions inform readers that:

Alice Greenway, 1964 in Washington D.C. geboren, aufgewachsen in Hongkong, Bangkok, Washington, Jerusalem und Massachusetts, studierte an der Yale University. Heute lebt sie mit ihrer Familie in Edinburgh, Schottland.<sup>31</sup>

Ian McEwan's award winning *Amsterdam* was first published in Great Britain in 1998 by Jonathan Cape. The 10<sup>th</sup> impression of the 1998 Vintage paperback portrays the author as follows:

Ian McEwan has written two collections of stories, *First Love*, *Last Rites* and *In Between the Sheets*, and nine novels, *The Cement Garden*, *The Comfort of Strangers*, *The Child in Time*, *The Innocent*, *Black Dogs*, *The Daydreamer*, *Enduring Love*, *Amsterdam* and *Atonement*. He has also written several film scripts, including *The Imitation Game*, *The Ploughman's Lunch*, *Sour Sweet*, *The Good Son* and *The Innocent*.<sup>32</sup>

In order to make the novelist more appealing to readers, the publisher portrays the author as an experienced and prolific writer by adding a long list of the works the author has previously written.

The German edition of *Amsterdam*, which was published in 2001 by Diogenese, mentions the prestigious prizes won by the novelist:

IAN MCEWAN, geboren 1948 in Aldershot (Hampshire), lebt in London. Schon seine ersten Erzählungen wurden mit dem Somerset-Maugham-Award ausgezeichnet. 1998 erhielt er den Booker-Preis für *Amsterdam* und 1999 den Shakespeare-Preis der Alfred-Toepfer-Stiftung für das Gesamtwerk. Die Romane *Abbitte* und *Saturday* waren international große Erfolge. Ian McEwan ist Ehrenmitglied der American Academy of Arts and Sciences.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See Jack Slay, *Ian McEwan* (New York: Twayne, 1996) 1, and Rachel Cooke, 'Ian McEwan: I had the time of my life,' *The Guardian*, 25 January 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/aug/19/ian-mcewan-sweet-tooth-interview>.

<sup>30</sup> Biographical details found in the front matter of Alice Greenway, *White Ghost Girls* (New York: Black Cat, 2006). See also Alice Greenway, *White Ghost Girls* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006).

<sup>31</sup> Translation from German of biographical details found in the front matter of Alice Greenway, *Weißer Geister*, trans. Uwe-Michael Gutzschhahn (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 2011): 'Alice Greenway, born in 1964 in Washington D.C., was raised in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Washington, Jerusalem and Massachusetts. She studied at Yale University. She lives with her family in Edinburgh, Scotland.'

<sup>32</sup> Biographical details found in the front matter of Ian McEwan, *Amsterdam*, 10<sup>th</sup> imp. (Vintage: London, 1998).

<sup>33</sup> Translation from German of biographical details found on the back cover of Ian McEwan, *Amsterdam*, trans. Hans-Christian Oeser (Diogenese: Zurich, 2001): 'Ian McEwan was born in 1948 in Aldershot (Hampshire) and lives in London. His first stories were awarded the Somerset Maugham Award. In 1998, he was awarded the Booker Prize for *Amsterdam* and in 1999 the Shakespeare Prize from the Alfred Toepfer Foundation for his complete

The biographical details provided on McEwan's *Amsterdam* and Greenway's *White Ghost Girls* show that whereas publishers promote Greenway's hypermobile past and use her TCK background to arouse readers' curiosity, McEwan's transient childhood is neglected. The settings of the two novels and the age of the authors might explain why.

With the exception of a handful of his novels (such as *The Innocent* and *Atonement*), McEwan's novels are primarily located in Great Britain. Some of the characters of *Amsterdam* travel shortly to the Netherlands, but otherwise, with vivid descriptions of the Lake District and of the life in London of the foreign secretary, the novel's setting is very 'British'. *White Ghost Girls*, on the other hand, is the story of two American sisters in Hong Kong who cherish the visits and adventurous stories of their father who works as a war correspondent in Vietnam. Until their sudden return to America, the sisters and their mother live in an expatriate environment. Thus, this novel spells internationalism and, accordingly, publishers might assume that Greenway's novel would attract a different kind of readership from that of *Amsterdam*.

As it is set in Hong Kong, the publishers of *White Ghost Girls* play on the writer's childhood in Hong Kong in order to represent her as an experienced author who can give an authentic view of life in Hong Kong. In fact, the English-speaking publishers exaggerate (one might also be tempted to say 'misrepresent') Greenway's childhood in Hong Kong. As first detail, the reader is told that the writer grew up in Hong Kong. The second sentence informs that Greenway 'also' lived in Bangkok, Jerusalem and the United States but it is not specified when this occurred. The same is true for the statement 'She later returned to Hong Kong.'<sup>34</sup> Was she a child, youth or adult during her travels to these above-mentioned countries? As the daughter of a correspondent, the reader can only speculate that she accompanied her father around the world as a child or youth.

The German edition, on the other hand, does not emphasise the author's life in Hong Kong as the daughter of a correspondent but simply mentions it in the list of all the places where the author was raised. Whereas the English-speaking publishers represent the author as an individual who, due to her father's profession, has acquired vast experience in and on Hong Kong, the German publishers depict Greenway as a person who has independently acquired 'global' experience and hyperbolise the places she has lived in. Instead of informing that the author lived in the United States, as the English-speaking publishers do, the German publishers reject grouping Greenway's experience in America together and list the two states of Washington and Massachusetts separately. Furthermore, German-speaking readers are told that Greenway studied at Yale University, a detail that is not disclosed in the English editions. Thus, the German publishers are not only promoting the writer as a person who has lived in many places, but also enliven the biographical details by representing the emerging author as a knowledgeable individual who has studied at a well-known university.

Interestingly, when McEwan was still an emerging author in 1978, twenty years before *Amsterdam*, publishers chose to give relevance to his catalog of writings and the biographical details published in *The Cement Garden* disclose that:

Ian McEwan was born in England in 1948 and began writing in 1970. He lives and works in London. His stories have appeared in *American Review*, *Transatlantic Review*, *Tri-Quarterly*, *Amazing Stories*, *Bananas*, *New Review*, *Encounter*, *Time Out*, *De Revisor* and *Avenue* (Holland) and *Nagy Vilag* (Hungary). His first book, *First Love, Last Rites*, won the Somerset Maugham Award in 1976. This, and his second book, *In Between The Sheets*,

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works. The novels *Atonement* and *Saturday* were international successes. Ian McEwan is an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.'

<sup>34</sup> See biographical details found in the front matter of Alice Greenway, *White Ghost Girls*.

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are also published in Picador, together with his novels *The Comfort of Strangers* and *The Child in Time*.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly, for publishers, the list of McEwan's publications has always been more significant than his transient upbringing. When analysing literary translation in current European book markets, Kovač and Wischenbart split authors into two groups: 'cultural residents' and 'cultural migrants'.<sup>36</sup> The first group of oldest (generally these authors were born before 1950) and most translated authors live 'for the better part of their careers and so to this present day, in the country of their parents.'<sup>37</sup> Cultural migrants, on the other hand, 'move from one culture to another.'<sup>38</sup> Many of these emerging authors 'have managed to project themselves on high-speed and important international, or even truly global, literary trajectories.'<sup>39</sup> McEwan's author branding began before reading audiences were beginning to be lead towards 'globally travelling authors',<sup>40</sup> thus he has been represented by publishers predominantly as a 'British' author.

Most of McEwan's bio blurbs begin with the author's birth details.<sup>41</sup> Both places of birth and citizenship pose thought-provoking questions about identity in TCK discourse. Comments such as 'I was a perpetual foreigner to the place of my birth'<sup>42</sup> and 'If you asked where I feel I belong, I couldn't identify any geographical place'<sup>43</sup> are often found in TCK studies and indicate that identity and belonging are major issues for TCKs. Yet the biographical details of McEwan and Greenway demonstrate that publishers tend to ignore this controversy and, in emphasising the authors' place of birth and citizenship, as Rauwerda points out,<sup>44</sup> choose to identify their authors by nation.

### **'Diplobrats': The Children of Diplomats**

As the sons of diplomats,<sup>45</sup> both the authors Yann Martel and Nicholas Shakespeare are TCKs and grew up in many countries. Born in Spain, where his parents were doing graduate studies and who later joined the Canadian foreign service, Martel grew up in Alaska, Canada, Costa Rica, France, Mexico and Spain.<sup>46</sup> Martel's *Life of Pi* was awarded the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2002 and in 2013 the film version of the novel won four Oscar awards.

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<sup>35</sup> Biographical details found in the front matter of Ian McEwan, *The Cement Garden*, 1978, 15<sup>th</sup> imp. (Pan Books: London, 1980).

<sup>36</sup> See Miha Kovač and Rüdiger Wischenbart. With Jennifer Jursitzky and Sabine Kaldonek. Research by Julia Coufal, 'Diversity Report 2010: Literary Translation in Current European Book Markets. An Analysis of Authors, Languages, and Flows,' *Wisichenbart.com* (2010) 30 June 2016 [http://www.wisichenbart.com/upload/Diversity-Report\\_2010.pdf](http://www.wisichenbart.com/upload/Diversity-Report_2010.pdf) 23.

<sup>37</sup> Kovač and Wischenbart et al. 23.

<sup>38</sup> Kovač and Wischenbart et al. 24.

<sup>39</sup> Kovač and Wischenbart et al. 24.

<sup>40</sup> Kovač and Wischenbart et al. 26.

<sup>41</sup> The bio blurbs of both the French and Italian editions of *Amsterdam* begin with McEwan's place of birth. See Ian McEwan, *Amsterdam*, trans. Suzanne V. Mayoux (Gallimard Folio: Paris, 2005) and Ian McEwan, *Amsterdam*, trans. Susanna Basso (ET Scrittori Einaudi: Torino, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> Ann Baker Cottrell, 'Explaining Differences,' *Writing Out of Limbo: International Childhoods, Global Nomads and Third Culture Kids* ed. Gene H. Bell-Villada and Nina Sichel with Faith Eidse and Elaine Neil Orr (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011) 65.

<sup>43</sup> Cottrell 66.

<sup>44</sup> See Rauwerda, *The Writer* 4.

<sup>45</sup> In TCK discourse these children are sometimes referred to as 'diplobrats' or 'diplokids'.

<sup>46</sup> See 'Yann Martel: Biography,' *British Council Literature*, 24 January 2016 <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/yann-martel>.

Nicholas Shakespeare's novel *The Dancer Upstairs* was also adapted to film and in an interview regarding this adaptation he speaks about growing up in South America: 'I was growing up in Brazil during the Death Squads; I was growing up in Argentine during the Dirty War; and I was growing up in Peru during the Shining Path.'<sup>47</sup> Shakespeare also spent part of his childhood in the Far East.<sup>48</sup>

Harcourt and Knopf originally published the American and Canadian editions of Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* in 2001. The first US edition portrays Martel as follows:

Yann Martel was born in Spain in 1963 of Canadian parents. After studying philosophy at university, he worked variously as a dishwasher, tree planter, and security guard. Then he began to write. When he's not living somewhere else, he lives in Montreal.<sup>49</sup>

Interestingly, the first Canadian edition of *Life of Pi* and the subsequent Vintage Canada paperback edition do not mention that the author's parents are Canadian:

YANN MARTEL was born in Spain in 1963. After studying philosophy at Trent University and doing various odd jobs, he began to write. He is the prize-winning author of *The Facts behind the Helsinki Roccamatios*, a collection of short stories, and of *Self*, a novel, both of them published internationally. He lives in Montreal.<sup>50</sup>

Canongate was the first British publishing house to release *Life of Pi*. The biographical notes of their 2003 reprint of the novel inform that:

Yann Martel was born in Spain but currently lives in Montreal. He is the highly acclaimed author of *Self*, a novel, and of the story collection *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios*. *Life of Pi* is his third book and was shortlisted for the Governor General Award, the Commonwealth Writers Prize and was the winner of the 2002 Man Booker Prize.<sup>51</sup>

On occasion of the film adaptation of Martel's novel, Canongate reprinted the novel and revised Martel's biography:

Yann Martel was born in Spain in 1963 of Canadian parents. After studying philosophy at university, he worked odd jobs and travelled before turning to writing. In addition to *Life of Pi*, he is the author of the novels *Self* and *Beatrice and Virgil*, the stories *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios*, and the collection of letters to the Prime Minister of Canada *What is Stephen Harper Reading?* Yann Martel lives in Saskatchewan, Canada.<sup>52</sup>

The publishing group Éditions Gallimard first published the French translation of *Life of Pi* in 2003. Catering for the Canadian francophone market too, this edition emphasizes that Martel's parents come from Québec:

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<sup>47</sup> 'Shakespeare, Nicholas: The Dancer Upstairs,' *Urbancinefile: The World of Film in Australia, on the Internet*, (3 July, 2003) 21 January 2016 [http://www.urbancinefile.com.au/home/view.asp?Article\\_ID=7508&p=y](http://www.urbancinefile.com.au/home/view.asp?Article_ID=7508&p=y).

<sup>48</sup> See 'Nicholas Shakespeare: Biography,' *British Council Literature*, 2 February 2016 <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/nicholas-shakespeare>.

<sup>49</sup> Biographical details found on back cover of Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (New York: Harcourt, 2001).

<sup>50</sup> Biographical details found inside back flap of book cover of Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2001). See also Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2002).

<sup>51</sup> Biographical details found in the front matter of Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*, 2001, 4<sup>th</sup> imp. (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003).

<sup>52</sup> Biographical details found in the front matter of Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*, 2001, 8<sup>th</sup> imp. (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2012).

Né en Espagne en 1963, de parents québécois, Yann Martel, habite aujourd'hui à Montréal. Il a vécu dans de nombreux pays et a étudié la philosophie aux Universités de Trent et Concordia. *L'Histoire de Pi*, son deuxième roman, a été vendu dans plus de quarante-deux pays.<sup>53</sup>

*Life of Pi* was first published in Spain in 2003 by Ediciones Destino. Here the reader is told that Martel is the son of diplomats:

Yann Martel (1963) es canadiense pero, hijo de diplomáticos, nació en España y su infancia ha transcurrido en países como Francia, México o Alaska. Ya de adulto ha pasado temporadas en Irán, Turquía y la India. Estudió Filosofía en la Universidad de Trent y ha publicado el libro de relatos *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatio* y la novela *Self*. Para *Vida de Pi* invirtió cuatro años que se han visto recompensados con el premio Booker, el favor de la crítica y cientos de miles de lectores en todo el mundo.<sup>54</sup>

His parents' profession is also mentioned in the German (text 1), Arabic (text 2) and Italian (text 3) editions.

### Text 1

Yann Martel wurde 1963 in Spanien geboren. Seine Eltern sind Diplomaten. Er wuchs in Costa Rica, Frankreich, Mexiko, Alaska und Kanada auf und lebte später im Iran, in der Türkei und in Indien. Er studierte Philosophie und wohnt mit seiner Familie in Sarkatoon, Kanada. »Schiffbruch mit Tiger« ist sein zweiter Roman, er war nominiert für den Governor General Award und den Commonwealth Writers Prize und gewann den Booker Prize 2002. Wurde 2012 von Ang Lee verfilmt.

Im Fischer Verlag erschienen außerdem: »Die Hintergründe zu den Helsinki-Roccamatios« und »Ein Hemd des 20. Jahrhunderts«.<sup>55</sup>

### Text 2

Yann Martel was born in Spain in 1963 into a family of diplomats. During his childhood, he moved around several times (with his family): Costa Rica, France, Mexico, Alaska and

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<sup>53</sup> Translation from French of biographical details in Yann Martel, *L'Histoire de Pi*, 2001, trans. Nicole and Émile Martel (Paris: Gallimard Denoël, 2003): 'Born in Spain in 1963, to Québécois parents, Yann Martel now lives in Montreal. He has lived in many countries and studied philosophy at Trent University and Concordia. *Life of Pi*, his second novel, has been sold in more than forty-two countries.'

<sup>54</sup> Translation from Spanish of biographical details in Yann Martel, *Vida de Pi*, 2001, trans. John Martel and Bianca Southwood (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 2003): 'Martel (1963) is Canadian, but as the son of diplomats was born in Spain, and his childhood was spent in countries such as France, Mexico or Alaska. As an adult, he sojourned in Iran, Turkey and India. He studied philosophy at Trent University and has published a book of stories *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatio* and the novel *Self*. *Life of Pi*, which took him four years to write, was rewarded with the Booker Prize, the acclaim of critics, and hundreds of thousands of readers worldwide.'

<sup>55</sup> Translation from German of biographical details found in the front matter of Yann Martel, *Schiffbruch mit Tiger*, 2001, trans. Manfred Allié and Gabriele Kempf-Allié, 17<sup>th</sup> imp. (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 2013): 'Yann Martel was born in 1963 in Spain. His parents are diplomats. He grew up in Costa Rica, France, Mexico, Alaska and Canada, and later lived in Iran, Turkey and India. He studied philosophy and lives with his family in Saskatoon, Canada. *Life of Pi* is his second novel, which was nominated for the Governor General's Award and the Commonwealth Writers Prize and won the Booker Prize in 2002. In 2012 it was adapted into film by Ang Lee. Fischer Verlag also published *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatio* and *Beatrice and Virgil*.' Here, it is worth briefly mentioning that a mistake was made in the typing of the German biographical details. Instead of writing that Martel currently lives in Saskatoon, the Canadian city has erroneously been spelt 'Sarkatoon' by the publisher.

Canada. As a youth, he went to Iran, Turkey and India. After studying philosophy at the University of Toronto in Canada, he took on odd jobs until, when aged 27, he began a career as a writer. Following a novel and a short story collection, *Life of Pi* is his third work. In 2002 he was awarded the Man Booker Prize for literature, which earned him a high reputation and admitted him entrance into the world literature. As yet, his novel has been translated into forty languages. Currently Yann Martel lives in Montreal.<sup>56</sup>

### Text 3

Figlio di diplomatici canadesi, e' nato in Spagna nel 1963 e ha abitato un po' ovunque: Alaska, Columbia Britannica, Costa Rica, Francia, Ontario, Messico e India. Attualmente vive a Saskatoon in Canada. Pubblicato in oltre trenta paesi, vincitore del Man Booker Prize 2002, uno dei più prestigiosi premi letterari, *Vita di Pi*, e' diventato un caso letterario internazionale. Dall'Inghilterra agli Stati Uniti, ha scalato le classifiche di vendita, conquistando milioni di lettori. Dal romanzo e' stato tratto un film 3D prodotto dalla 20th Century Fox e diretto dal pluripremiato regista Ang Lee. Con Piemme ha pubblicato anche *Self*.<sup>57</sup>

*Inheritance* is the most recent of Nicholas Shakespeare's novels and was published in Great Britain in 2010 by Harvill Secker. Similarly to *Life of Pi*, this novel takes the reader on a journey to many countries such as Australia, Armenia, France and Italy. The biographical notes in this novel represent the author as follows:

Nicholas Shakespeare was born in 1957. The son of a diplomat, much of his youth was spent in the Far East and South America. His novels have been translated into twenty languages. They include *The Vision of Elena Silves*, winner of the Somerset Maugham Award, *Snowleg* and *The Dancer Upstairs*, which was chosen by the American Libraries Association in 1997 as the year's best novel, and in 2001 was made into a film of the same name by John Malkovich. His most recent novel is *Secrets of the Sea*. He is married with two small boys and currently lives in Oxford.<sup>58</sup>

The German and Spanish editions of *Inheritance* were both published for the first time in 2011. The biographical notes in these novels both refer to Shakespeare's transient life, to the literary prizes he has won, and to the film adaptation of his novel *The Dancer Upstairs*:

### Text 4

NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE, 1957 in England geboren, verbrachte als Sohn eines Diplomaten annähernd zwanzig Jahre in Asien und Lateinamerika. Er studierte Literatur und arbeitete als Journalist, bevor er zu schreiben begann. Auf Deutsch erschienen von

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<sup>56</sup> For the original text see the front matter of Yann Martel, *Ḥayāt Bāy: Riwāyah*, trans. Abū Hawāš (Cologne : Kamel Verlag, Manshūrāt al-Jamal, 2006). Translation of biographical details from Arabic for this article by Dr A. Masarwa, Institute for Arabic & Islamic Studies, University of Muenster, Germany.

<sup>57</sup> Translation from Italian of biographical details found on the back flap of Yann Martel, *Vita di Pi*. 2001, trans. Clara Nubile (Milano: Piemme, 2012): 'The son of Canadian diplomats, he was born in Spain in 1963 and has lived everywhere: Alaska, British Columbia, Costa Rica, France, Ontario, Mexico and India. He currently lives in Saskatoon in Canada. Published in more than thirty countries, winner of the Man Booker Prize 2002, one of the most prestigious literary prizes, *Life of Pi* became a worldwide literary success. From England to the United States, it climbed the charts, winning millions of readers. The novel was adapted to a 3D movie, produced by 20th Century Fox and directed by award-winning director Ang Lee. His novel *Self* was also published by Piemme.'

<sup>58</sup> Biographical details found in the back matter of Nicholas Shakespeare, *The Inheritance*, 3<sup>rd</sup> imp. (London: Harvill Secker, 2010).

ihm bislang sechs Romane, darunter «Der Obrist und die Tänzerin», der von John Malkovich verfilmt wurde, sowie die autorisierte Biographie von Bruce Chatwin. Sein Werk wurde vielfach preisgekrönt, unter anderem mit dem Somerset Maugham Award und dem Betty Trask Award. Shakespeare lebt abwechselnd im englischen Wiltshire und in einem Strandhaus auf Tasmanien.<sup>59</sup>

### Text 5

Nicholas Shakespeare nació en 1957. Hijo de un diplomático, pasó buena parte de su juventud en el Extremo Oriente y Sudamérica. Se ha desempeñado como periodista para la BBC y editor literario. Sus novelas están traducidas a veinte idiomas. Entre ellas, *La visión de Elena Silves*, ganadora del Premio Somerset Maugham, *Snowleg; Pasos de baile*, elegida en 1997 por la Asociación de Bibliotecas de Estados Unidos como la mejor novela del año y trasladada al cine en 2001 por John Malkovich, y *Secrets of the Sea*. Ha sido finalista de los premios Booker, Impac y del Betty Trask.<sup>60</sup>

Interestingly, whereas all the biographical notes for Martel specify that he was born in Spain, Nicholas Shakespeare's place of birth (Great Britain) is not always mentioned. The biographies of Shakespeare always disclose that he is the son of a diplomat, whereas those of Martel primarily state that his parents are Canadian but rarely mention that his parents were diplomats.

Another striking feature is that, with the exception of the Spanish editions of *Life of Pi* and *Inheritance*, all publishers find it important to specify where the authors currently live (in the earlier editions of *Life of Pi*, Montreal is stated and in the recent editions, readers are told that Martel now lives in Saskatchewan).

Evidently, both authors are represented as wanderers. The English-speaking editions of *Life of Pi* do omit to list all the countries Martel has lived in and only mention his past in Spain (place of birth) and his present in Canada (where he studied and where he now lives), but by emphasising that the author 'strayed' from one job to the next, he is, nevertheless, portrayed as a 'restless' person.

Unlike other editions, the French edition of Martel's novel, *L'Histoire de Pi* does not state that Martel's parents are Canadian but specifies that his parents are 'Québécois'. Moreover, whereas all other editions of *Life of Pi* mention that Martel studied philosophy at Trent University (in Ontario where predominantly English is spoken), this French edition points out that Martel studied at the universities of Trent and Concordia. The University of Concordia is located in Montréal, Québec, where French is the official language. It can be assumed that these details, which hint that Martel speaks perfect French, are pinned down by the French-speaking

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<sup>59</sup> Translation from German of biographical details found on the back flap of Nicholas Shakespeare, *Die Erbschaft*, 2010, trans. Hans M. Herzog (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 2011): 'NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE, born in England in 1957 as the son of a diplomat, spent almost twenty years in Asia and Latin America. He studied literature and worked as a journalist before he began to write. Six novels have been published to date in German, including *The Dancer Upstairs*, which was filmed by John Malkovich, as well as the authorised biography of Bruce Chatwin. His work won many awards, including the Somerset Maugham Award and the Betty Trask Award. Shakespeare lives alternately in Wiltshire in England and in a beach house in Tasmania.'

<sup>60</sup> Translation from Spanish of biographical details found in the front matter of Nicholas Shakespeare, *La Herencia*, 2010, trans. Susana Rodríguez-Vida (Barcelona: Austral, 2012): 'Nicholas Shakespeare was born in 1957. The son of a diplomat, he spent much of his youth in the Far East and South America. He has worked as a journalist for the BBC and as a literary editor. His novels have been translated into twenty languages. Among them, *The vision of Elena Silves*, winner of the Somerset Maugham Award, *Snowleg; The Dancer Upstairs*, chosen in 1997 by the Library Association of the United States as the best novel of the year and adapted to film in 2001 by John Malkovich, and *Secrets of the Sea*, chosen as finalist for the Booker prize, Impac and the Betty Trask award.'

publisher to captivate the Francophone market. After reading this description, and without looking at the imprint, a French-speaking reader might think that Martel wrote the novel originally in French.

In Martel's case, another good example of how publishers try to represent the author according to the tastes of potential buyers are the opening lines of the biographies in Canongate's 2003 edition and in the Spanish edition. Respectively, the readers are informed that 'Yann Martel was born in Spain but currently lives in Montreal' and that Martel 'is Canadian, but as the son of diplomats was born in Spain, and his childhood was spent in countries such as France, Mexico or Alaska.' These examples show that the use of a conjunction can play an important role in bio blurbs. By using the conjunction 'but', the English-speaking publishers wish to point out to the reader that Martel was indeed born in Spain, yet this does not mean that he is a Spanish man still living in Spain. He now lives in Canada, which on the one hand shows that he has moved around, but on the other hand, emphasises his attachment to Canada, a market with many English-speaking readers.

If the English publishers are aiming at 'arousing curiosity' in the English-speaking world, then the Spanish publisher wishes to do the same in Spanish-speaking countries, which represents a big market in the publishing world. The Spanish publisher writes that Martel is Canadian and this too is followed by the conjunction 'but' to emphasise that a contrast is coming. The author holds a Canadian passport; however, this should not put off readers who are interested in authors with affiliations to Spain. Thus, the reader is told that Martel was born in Spain and spent his childhood in 'Francia, México o Alaska.' Curiously, this Spanish edition omits mentioning that Martel also lived in Costa Rica, a Spanish-speaking country.

Baffling is also the list of countries mentioned in the biography of the Italian edition of Martel's novel. The publisher stresses that the author has sojourned almost everywhere and lists 'Alaska, Columbia Britannica, Costa Rica, Francia, Ontario, Messico e India.' Iran and Turkey are omitted (these countries are mentioned in the Arabic, German and Spanish editions) and instead of mentioning Canada, like all other editions do, this Italian version, startlingly, pins down the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Ontario. In both these provinces, English is the main language spoken, so the strategy used by the Italian publishers does not help to stress that the author is bilingual (English and French).

Nicholas Shakespeare is also depicted as a compelling traveller in all three biographies. He is always represented as the son of a diplomat, but, whereas in the English and Spanish editions he has merely spent 'much of his youth' in the Far East and South America, for the German-speaking readers, Shakespeare has spent 'nearly twenty years' in the Far East and South America.<sup>61</sup> This is another good example of how publishers stress biographical details in different ways.

It is the German publisher that highlights that Shakespeare is a truly global author. This can be noticed at the end of his biographical details when it is stated that one moment Shakespeare is in the 'rural' county of Wiltshire and the next, he is in a house on a beach in Tasmania. Thus, here, readers are informed that currently Shakespeare, similarly to his childhood, leads an extremely transitional lifestyle.

All three of Shakespeare's biographies mention prizes that the author won in the past, previous works published by the same author (once again to stimulate the reader so that they will buy other books), and that his novel *The Dancer Upstairs* was made into a film by John

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<sup>61</sup> See text 4.

Malkovich.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, all the above biographies spell a global reality, but it is only the Arabic edition that attempts to give a name to an author's location in the literary field. Exclusively this edition speaks literally of Martel's place on the map of 'world literature'.<sup>63</sup> Dagnino sees as an essential element of world literature(s) the Literatures of Mobility,<sup>64</sup> which, as previously stated, could also include TCL.

According to Kovač and Wischenbart, there is a new trend in book marketing. Book award juries favour either 'globally travelling authors or the stories that the authors' movements and whereabouts allow these authors to tell.'<sup>65</sup> They believe that reading audiences share this taste as readers are 'used to such panoramic cultural views from other culture and media content'.<sup>66</sup> Evidently, the diversified ways in which publishers have chosen to represent the childhood mobility of Martel and Shakespeare show that features of their biographies are filtered to influence current global readerships. On book covers, the biographies of these two TCAs are depicted as 'cultural migrants', yet the authentic chronicle of TC upbringing is lost to marketing strategies. Fortunately, for the sake of comparison, the true experiences of TCAs can be found elsewhere, as the analysis of the bio blurbs of Heidi Durrow will demonstrate.

### **TCKs of Intercultural Marriages**

It is striking that many TCAs, such as Chloe Aridjis, Tana French, Claire Messud and Joseph O'Neill, not only have been raised around the world but have mixed ethnic backgrounds. I have chosen the novelist Heidi Durrow in order to verify how publishers deal with both her TC upbringing and mixed background.

Born in 1969, the award-winning author of *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* says about herself that she is the 'daughter of an African-American enlisted Air Force man and a white Danish woman'<sup>67</sup> who, as part of a military family, 'moved around every few years with stints in North Carolina, Turkey, Washington state, and Germany.'<sup>68</sup> To the question 'What are you?' she replies: 'I am a product of a peripatetic upbringing and a child of two cultures and languages. I am the result of a love across color lines that was illegal in many states until 1967.'<sup>69</sup>

Although Durrow calls herself a 'mixed-chick' and has founded the *Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival* to celebrate 'the stories of the Mixed racial and cultural experience through films, books, visual arts and performance',<sup>70</sup> neither the American nor the British edition of her novel *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* mention her mixed background. After winning the Barbara Kingsolver's Bellwether Prize for Fiction in 2008, Durrow's work was first published in 2010 in America by Algonquin Books, one of the largest independent publishing companies in the United States. The novel was also published in 2010 in Great Britain. With the exception that the biographical details of the British edition do not mention Durrow's previous publications, both editions write the following about her:

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<sup>62</sup> This text structure can also be noticed in the biographies of Yann Martel, thus confirming Gea Valor's findings that bio blurbs comprise the author's previous publications, awards won, hobbies, current place of residence and family details, see Gea Valor 51.

<sup>63</sup> See text 2.

<sup>64</sup> See Dagnino 8.

<sup>65</sup> Kovač and Wischenbart et al. 26.

<sup>66</sup> Kovač and Wischenbart et al. 26.

<sup>67</sup> Heidi W. Durrow, 'About Heidi,' *Website of Heidi W. Durrow*, 18 January 2016, <http://heidiwdurrow.com/bio/>.

<sup>68</sup> Durrow About Heidi.

<sup>69</sup> Durrow About Heidi.

<sup>70</sup> Heidi W. Durrow, 'Mixed Remixed Festival,' *Website of Heidi W. Durrow*, 22 June 2016, <http://heidiwdurrow.com/mixed-remixed/>.

A graduate of Stanford University, Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, and Yale Law School, **HEIDI W. DURROW** has received grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the American Scandinavian Foundation, and the Lois Roth Endowment, as well as a Fellowship for Emerging Writers from the Jerome Foundation. Her writing has been published in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, the *Literary Review*, and others.<sup>71</sup>

Considering the omission of references to her 'mixed African-American roots', in these biographical notes the publishers are identifying the novelist with the 'white culture' and not with the 'black/white mixed chick culture' that the author actively celebrates in her blog and podcasts.<sup>72</sup> The Danish and French editions of 2010, on the other hand, explicitly state that Durrow was born to a Danish mother and to an 'African-American' soldier (see texts 6 and 7 respectively).

### **Text 6**

Heidi Wedel Durrow er datter af en sort amerikansk soldat og en dansk mor og har tilbragt en stor del af sin barndom i Danmark. Hun er tidligere advokat og journalist.<sup>73</sup>

### **Text 7**

Heidi W. Durrow est la fille d'une Danoise et d'un Afro-Américain travaillant pour l'US Air Force. Directrice de festivals culturels, elle a 42 ans et vit à New York. Son premier roman, *La Fille tombée du ciel*, a reçu le prix Barbara Kingsolver Bellwether en 2008.<sup>74</sup>

Whereas the Danish bio blurb, for obvious marketing reasons, emphasises that Durrow spent part of her childhood in Denmark, similarly to the American and British editions, the French edition does not mention the author's transient childhood. However, what the French edition promotes and the other editions do not, is that Durrow is the director of cultural festivals and won a literary prize in 2008.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Biographical details found in Heidi W. Durrow, *The Girl Who Fell From the Sky*, 3<sup>rd</sup> imp. (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2010) and Heidi W. Durrow, *The Girl Who Fell From the Sky* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2010).

<sup>72</sup> Durrow's podcast is now called *The Mixed Experience*. The former podcast *Mixed Chicks Chat* is no longer active.

<sup>73</sup> Translation from Danish of biographical details on back cover of Heidi W. Durrow, *Pigen der faldt ned fra Himlen*, trans. Thomas Munkholt (Copenhagen, Denmark: Forlaget Punktum, 2010): 'Heidi Wedel Durrow is the daughter of a black American soldier and a Danish mother and has spent much of her childhood in Denmark. She is a former lawyer and journalist.'

<sup>74</sup> Translation from French of biographical details on back cover of Heidi W. Durrow, *La Fille tombée du ciel*. 2010, trans. Marie de Prémonville (Paris: Anne Carrière, 2011): 'Heidi W. Durrow is the daughter of a Danish woman and an African-American working for the U.S. Air Force. A director of cultural festivals, she is 42 years old and lives in New York. Her first novel, *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*, was awarded the Barbara Kingslover Bellwether prize in 2008.'

<sup>75</sup> Spurred by the so different ways in which the backgrounds of these TCAs are represented, I contacted authors and publishers in order to determine how biographical details evolve. This research found that authors usually write the biographical details for the original edition of their debut novel (which can then be altered by the editors), and that depending on licencing agreements, publishing houses are mostly free to portray their foreign authors as they wish.

## Conclusion – Fluid Identities

If ‘cultural identity takes the shape of names which both locate and differentiate the person’,<sup>76</sup> the biographical details published on her home page, clearly show that through the compelling labels she gives herself, Heidi Durrow ‘locates’ herself within a ‘fluid’<sup>77</sup> and mixed group. Durrow’s publishers, though, generally ignore her notion of belonging and ‘differentiate’ her personal account on book covers. In fact, the bio blurbs of the five TCAs I have analysed show that not all publishers choose to represent their transnational authors in a ‘global’ light. However, due to the primarily international settings of TC novels and global trends that are shaping current book markets, such as the growing significance of Literatures of Mobility, many publishers disclose the expatriate culture of their authors. They do not always provide exhaustive TC details, but parts of their hypermobile histories are strategically ‘extracted’ and adapted to encourage target audiences to read the respective novels.

Alice Greenway’s novel, for example, is transnational in its subject matter. In an attempt to boost ‘the third culture context out of which it is produced’<sup>78</sup> and to attract target audiences, the publishers list all the countries the writer lived in, including Hong Kong, where the story is primarily set. With particularly British settings, Ian McEwan’s novels, on the other hand, are aimed at a different group of consumers, thus, the novelist’s mobile childhood is always overlooked on book covers and emphasis instead is placed on book prizes and previous publications. Interestingly, only McEwan was born before 1950. Therefore he fits into Kovač and Wischenbart’s group of national ‘cultural residents’, as opposed to the other four TCAs, who are ‘cultural migrants’. Undoubtedly, McEwan is branded by publishers as a ‘British resident’.

Yann Martel’s English-speaking publishers also choose to ignore the author’s TC upbringing, whereas the foreign editions of *Life of Pi* disclose his hypermobile childhood. The editions in English, however, mention that the writer was born in Spain. Generally, the short author biographies printed on book covers include novelists’ previous publications, book awards won, current place of residence, family details and, as in Martel’s case, place of birth. Frequently, however, TC individuals belong to a group of people and not to a place.

As Ruth Van Reken points out, culture for TCKs ‘may be something defined by shared experience rather than shared nationality or ethnicity’,<sup>79</sup> thus, when discussing the issues TCKs face, ‘we need to rethink our traditional ways of defining diversity and identity.’<sup>80</sup> Van Reken’s studies have in fact shown that for TCKs, one of the hardest questions to answer is ‘where am I from, what is my place of origin?’<sup>81</sup> TCKs dislike being ‘labelled’ by their passport or birth country and must frequently ‘battle imposed identities’.<sup>82</sup>

Yet, this analysis of over twenty-five bio blurbs of TCAs has shown that in disclosing passport or birth countries and neglecting or emphasising childhood countries of residence for merchandising purposes, publishers tend to impose identities on their TCK novelists. But bio

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<sup>76</sup> Adler 2002.

<sup>77</sup> Durrow About Heidi.

<sup>78</sup> Rauwerda, *The Writer* 23.

<sup>79</sup> Ruth E Van Reken, ‘Third Culture Kids,’ *The Telegraph*, (13 November 2009). 29 June 2016 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/expateducation/6545869/Third-culture-kids.html>.

<sup>80</sup> Van Reken *Third Culture Kids*.

<sup>81</sup> Pollock and Van Reken 121.

<sup>82</sup> See for example Gabriela Alvarado, ‘Battling an Imposed Identity: The Life of a TCK Perceived as “Another American Girl”,’ *Race, Ethnicity, And Me - Trinity University*, 28 June 2016 [http://web.trinity.edu/Documents/student\\_affairs\\_docs/CCI\\_docs/Diversity/Battling%20an%20Imposed%20Identity.pdf](http://web.trinity.edu/Documents/student_affairs_docs/CCI_docs/Diversity/Battling%20an%20Imposed%20Identity.pdf).

blurbs are brief advertisements and at the end of the identity/representation battle, book marketing wins.

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