Abstract & Keywords

Die Inseln im Südmeere, the only novel by Danish poet Adam Oehlenschläger, was forgotten soon after publication and has remained largely unknown. It was written between 1824 and 1826, at a time when the fame of the writer once crowned poet laureate was gradually beginning to wane. However, this did not stop him from continuing to write poetry and to publish large numbers of mainly dramas and poems year after year.

A considerable part of his extensive work is based on existing material which he used to create his plays, verse epic, poems and prose. The sources of this material were extremely diverse, e. g. Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* or Suhm's historical works, as well as the vast reservoir of Old Norse literature or collections of ballads and fairy tales. The process of creating new works of literature from existing texts is almost as old as literature itself and was – at least until Romanticism – one of the most common literary production methods. Only in the course of early Romanticism did the idea of the author as the creator of an original literary work begin to gain acceptance, entailing a shift from the traditional rewriting of existing material towards the creation of (seemingly) new content. Yet in Romanticism in particular, enthusiasm also arose for tracking down and disseminating older texts, thanks to a newly awakened interest in the Middle Ages, and in text genres such as folk tales, chapbooks, fairy tales, myths and legends – in short, interest in anything that people considered original and unaltered. Oehlenschläger, who was soon labelled the leading exponent and communicator of Romanticism in the North, made a concerted effort in his works to breathe new life into traditional material and motifs, very often choosing texts from the Nordic culture and re-popularising them with his rewriting not just in his own country but even translating his works himself and passing them on mainly to Germany. This meant that, in addition to the flow of literary movements and cultural achievements from South to North, much quoted in literary history, a flow in the opposite direction became established as well.

The novel *Die Inseln im Südmeere* is also based on existing material, in this case Schnabel's *Wunderliche Fata einiger Seefahrer*, better known by the title *Insel Felsenburg*, which was widely read in the 18th and 19th centuries. Nevertheless, Oehlenschläger's novel is to be considered an exception in more than one respect. Firstly, it is, as already mentioned, the only work of this genre in Oehlenschläger's œuvre. Secondly, it does not involve the passing of Nordic material to the South, but rather the traditional direction of transfer of a text from Germany to the North. Thirdly, the novel was originally written in German, and only subsequently "translated" by the author into his native Danish under the title *Øen i Sydhavet*. All three points are intensively discussed in Oehlenschläger's highly informative foreword. In it, he develops an actual poetics of the novel by describing the creative process that resulted in his transforming Schnabel's book which had been part of his early reading, into a work of his own. The disclosure of the relationship to his hypotext speaks of a high degree of self-reflection and therefore contradicts the traditional understanding of this author as just a "natural talent", as "naturens muntre søn" ["nature's lively son"].

The present work essentially focuses on two areas of investigation. Firstly, it shows the type of work Schnabel's novel became under Oehlenschläger's pen, i. e. what the text from

the 18th century inspired in the Romantic author. Secondly, this work investigates both the German and Danish versions, their relationship to each other, the possible reasons for differences as well as their presumed effects on German or Danish readers. This is followed by an examination of the different versions as an additional theme, because the lack of enthusiasm with which both the German and the Danish editions of the novel were received resulted in the author making extensive revisions to the text in both languages. In the case of the Danish edition, these modifications were even continued after Oehlenschläger's death by his editor F. L. Liebenberg, followed by further changes in the 20th century in an edition by the publisher Gyldendal, which in turn resulted in a new version of the Danish text. This investigation takes on not only the creative process of redesigning Schnabel's work, but also material aspects of the first version of Oehlenschläger's novel. The so far largely unedited exchange of letters about the novel with his major German publisher, Johann Friedrich Cotta, shows how the Danish author wanted the publisher to design his work, what kind of typographical examples he gave the publisher and lastly how the novel's lack of success led to a lasting discord, if not even to the breakdown of this long-term author-publisher relationship.

What are the features that characterise Oehlenschläger's rewriting of Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg*? The Danish author adopted Schnabel's basic narrative structure that, with the themes of shipwreck and rescue on a remote island, includes the topoi which make up the Robinsonade genre. Schnabel's novel takes place in three different periods and is enriched by a number of stories of new castaways, resulting in a multi-layered, polyphonic narrative structure. Schnabel's main characters, in particular Albert Julius and his great-grandnephew Eberhard Julius, also appear in Oehlenschläger's work; similarly, the Danish author integrates the three time periods into his novel and even expands it by a fourth. Implicitly, there also exists a fifth, since Oehlenschläger – in contrast to Schnabel – can look back on the events of the early 18th century from a distance of almost a hundred years. While Schnabel presents the images of time from different centuries as a pandemonium of the most terrible crimes and intrigues that make the existence on the remote island seem like a paradisiacal idyll by comparison, Oehlenschläger uses the inclusion of several eras to create a journey through a literary cosmos that begins on the first page of the novel with a quote from Goethe's *Faust* and is concluded – in the last chapter of the fourth part – with the discovery of a former Viking settlement on "Klein-Felsenburg", the neighbouring island to "Insel Felsenburg", in the "deepest" layer of time, i. e. in the earliest time period. There, the offspring of the first generation of castaways and their friends come across a temple with statues of Nordic gods that were erected by the Vikings – the former companions of Harald Haarderaade – on their return from Constantinople whose story is found by the residents of Felsenburg engraved on silver platters. It is composed in Icelandic verses whose metres recall the stanza form of the Nibelungenlied and translated for the Felsenburg inhabitants, depending on the version of Oehlenschläger's text, into German or Danish rhymes by an Icelandic sailor who had also been stranded.

Between these framework principles, the novel not only contains countless conversations about literature, painting, music and theatre, etc. Several poets also appear in person – made possible by the elaborate intertwining of the different time periods –, for example Italian Renaissance poet Ariosto whom Cyrillo de Valaro, the first settler of the island of Felsenburg, got to know in his youth and from whom he learned how to read his epic poem

Orlando Furioso, a work that was greatly treasured in the Romantic era, Oehlenschläger's own period, not least because of the ironic self-reflective distance to the subject matter that also characterises Oehlenschläger's novel, in which the reflection of the poetic design process forms the predominant theme as part of the general discussions on art and literature.

By establishing the main characters in his novel as the offspring of Luther and Shakespeare, the author makes them actors in a virtual historico-cultural universe that is based on a Nordic element with the traces of the Vikings discovered on the island of Klein-Felsenburg. The literally fundamental position of Nordic culture does form the conclusion of the novel but, when looking back on the text as a whole, it also constitutes the basis for the unfolding of a European canon of art and literature in which not only the bilingual version of the novel itself, but above all the tightly woven net of metaphors of land and sea journeys, refer to the dynamism of intertextuality and the literary transmission in their oscillation and navigation between different texts, artistic genres and cultures.

The present work regards the single components of this textual diversity as voices engaged in dialogue, which is why the examination is based on Bakhtin's theoretical concepts of polyphony and dialogism complemented by the Bakhtin-inspired intertextuality theories, as developed e. g. by Kristeva, and involving other findings, e. g. by Genette or Broich and Pfister that are committed to the "narrower" intertextuality concepts. Descriptive translation theories and concepts relating to the history of books suggest themselves for the analysis of the differing versions existing in two languages.

Using these theoretical tools, the study works out in which way Oehlenschläger's novel enters into dialogue with its hypotext, redesigns it, rewrites it and – as the author asserts – reinvents it. The result is a multi-layered text that combines traits of the coming-of-age novel with features of the Romantic novel, whose fragmentary, open-ended nature can be seen e. g. in the unending nature of the numerous conversations on art and literature. The danger that this kind of topic could simply result in a collection of art theory essays is banished by recourse to parts of Schnabel's plot, because this forms the basic structure for a lively "dramaturgy" of discussions on literature, art and music that in many cases are so skillfully woven into the narrative drawn from the hypotext that they hardly ever appear in abstract scholarliness, but form an integral component of quite often dramatic events. Schnabel's polyphonic text structure therefore gave the Danish author the opportunity to develop a versatile novel that is open to other texts and whose tendency to excessive debates can be checked and shaped into exciting scenes on the basis of Schnabel's structured and shape-giving background.

This investigation concludes that Oehlenschläger's novel has the potential to revise the image of its author as a gifted but not very reflective writer and, thanks to the fascinating textual complexity, is deserving of considerably more attention and circulation than it has been accorded so far.

Keywords
Rewriting, polyphony, dialogism, intertextuality, biculturality, bilinguality, translation, romanticism, romantic novel.

Rewriting, Polyphonie, Dialogizität, Intertextualität, Bikulturalität, Zweisprachigkeit, Übersetzung, Romantik, romantischer Roman.