

Data and Culture

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December 5, 2022. Cultural transmission.

reminders

- ▶ projects! due 12/19
- ▶ for Thursday: present work in progress, make progress
- ▶ student evaluations: rutgers.bluer.com/rutgers
 - ▶ please answer “what parts of course...” question

review: historical networks

- ▶ shift from individual stories to structural positions
- ▶ revolution regarded as collective mobilization
- ▶ individuals regarded as ties between social groups
- ▶ the data sandwich
 - ▶ social historians made the data
 - ▶ sociologists like to crunch it
 - ▶ specific histories → recurrent social problems

cultural transmission/circulation questions

- ▶ descriptive
 - ▶ what gets transmitted?
 - ▶ what factors shape transmission?
 - ▶ what happens in transmission?
- ▶ normative
 - ▶ what makes the conditions of cultural circulation fair or unfair?
 - ▶ who is responsible?

the world of literature

- ▶ handout (1): some initial mapping

Casanova: the world republic of letters

- ▶ **descriptive**: an implicit, widely shared understanding governs literary circulation
 - ▶ literature categorized by **language**, **nation**, and **status**
 - ▶ status produces a center and a periphery (a “world system”)
- ▶ belonging to a high-status literature **advantages individual writers**
 - ▶ economic and political power do not fully predict national status
- ▶ a writer’s status **within** a nation does not fully predict their **global** stature
 - ▶ but **international** acclaim regularly leads to **national** prestige
- ▶ for a long time Paris **was** the capital of world literature

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- ▶ (**normative:** and this system is ridiculously unfair to peripheral writers)

Rivalry among nations arises from the fact that their political, economic, military, diplomatic, and geographical histories are not only different but also unequal. Literary resources, which are always stamped with the seal of the nation, are therefore unequal as well, and unequally distributed among nations.

Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 39.

translation in the system

Translation is the major prize and weapon in international literary competition, an instrument whose use and purpose differ depending on the position of the translator with respect to the text translated—that is, on the relation between what are commonly called “source” and “target” languages. (Casanova, 135)

Discussion

- ▶ handout (2): the language Olympics
- ▶ data source: the [UNESCO Index Translationum](#)

observations

- ▶ most widely-spoken languages are not the most translated to/from
- ▶ continental European languages are prolific as hosts (targets)
 - ▶ including even relatively “small” languages
- ▶ source languages reflect a long-standing prestige hierarchy
- ▶ English is on another scale as spoken language and source
 - ▶ but it is a poor host, comparatively

Sapiro's analysis of French literature in the US

Paris was where the twentieth century was.

Gertrude Stein, *Paris France* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1940), 11.

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I shall try to explain the loss of the transnational literary capital of French literature...as the consequence of the changing power relations between the French and American publishing fields.... In this situation...it can also be asked what kind of works have a chance to be translated.

Sapiro, 321.

Sapiro glossary

field a domain of social relations, conceived of as a game played for specific rewards like money, prestige, or power

symbolic capital status or prestige, regarded as a resource which accumulates

temporal capital money

transnational literary field the game of “world literature”; the system of competitive relations among authors, publishers, etc. that crosses national boundaries and in principle encompasses relations within them

transnational literary capital status in the transnational literary field, regarded as a resource held by individuals, firms, nations, and languages

poles

The world market of translation's pole of small-scale production is much more culturally diversified than its pole of large-scale production, where English is overrepresented. (324)

pole of large-scale production sector of the cultural field specializing in mass production and (typically) big, rapid sales

pole of small-scale production sector specializing in lower yields and (typically) aiming for prestige or long-term success at the expense of immediate sales

know thy data: Sapiro discussion

- ▶ What different kinds of evidence does Sapiro use to support her claims about the status of French literature in the US?

know thy data: Sapiro discussion

- ▶ What different kinds of evidence does Sapiro use to support her claims about the status of French literature in the US?
- ▶ quantitative
 - ▶ translated titles by genre, publisher (French and US)
 - ▶ translated authors by gender, nationality, period (classic/contemporary)
 - ▶ publisher characteristics (335)
- ▶ qualitative
 - ▶ interviews: “if we’re not insanely in love” (333)
 - ▶ judgments: “innovative authors such as Pascal Quignard” (336)
- ▶ and...

networks again

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directed graph graph in which edges are given by *ordered* pairs of vertices (and paths must follow edge direction)

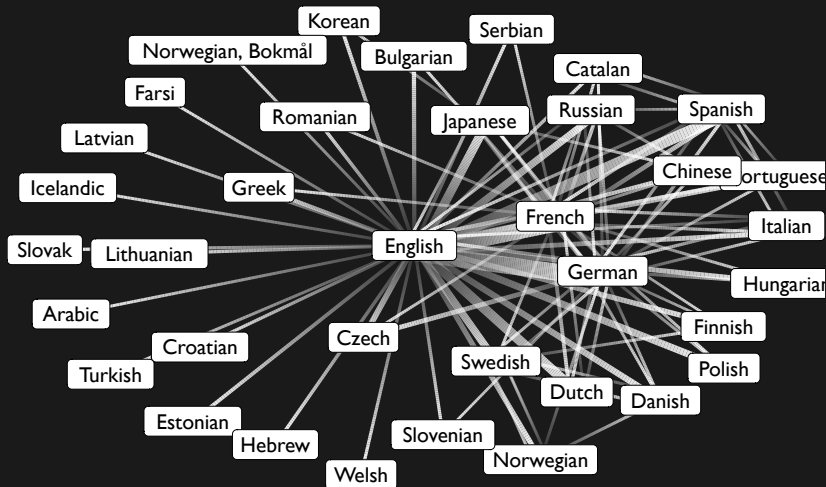
path in a directed graph, a sequence of edges in which the ending vertex of one edge is the starting vertex of the next

in-degree the total number of edges directed into a vertex

out-degree the total number of edges directed from a vertex

weighted (in/out)degree the sum of the weights of edges connected to a vertex

```
ggraph(tx_net, layout="stress") +  
  geom_edge_parallel(aes(width=weight, alpha=..index..)) +  
  geom_node_label(aes(label=name))
```

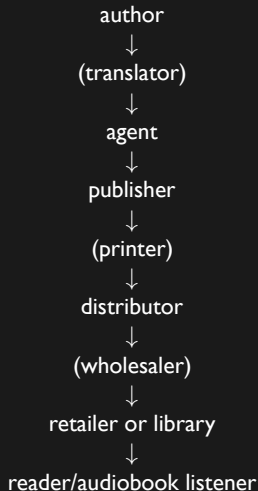


Total literature translations, 1990–2005. Source: *Index Translationum*.

networks as fields

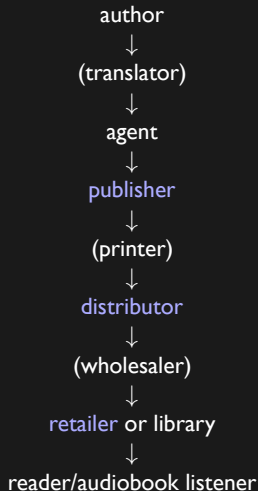
The configuration of relations between American publishers according to the number of authors they share can be visualized...Sharing a translated French author is taken here as an indicator of...proximity of position in the field. (338)

aside: what is a publisher?



After John B. Thompson, *Book Wars: The Digital Revolution in Publishing* (Cambridge: Polity, 2021), 457, fig 12.5 (“Book supply chain for mainstream publishers”).

aside: what is a publisher?



After John B. Thompson, *Book Wars: The Digital Revolution in Publishing* (Cambridge: Polity, 2021), 457, fig 12.5 (“Book supply chain for mainstream publishers”).

conglomerate large publishing corporation formed through merger of many small ones; U.S. publishing is dominated by “Big Five”

imprint publishing brand (may be relatively independent subsidiary of a large corp.)

university press non-profit publisher associated (often loosely) with a university

small press publisher with small-scale operations; there are many
list in publishing, the books published by a publisher

duality (redux)

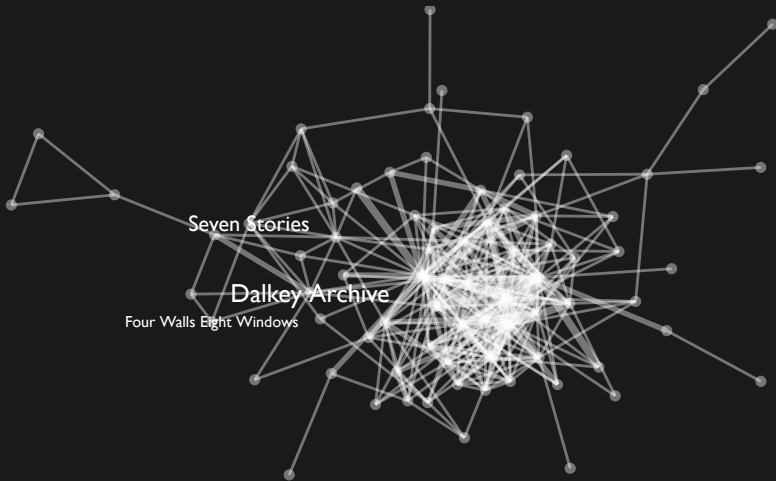
Persons who are actors in one picture...are with equal legitimacy viewed as connections in the dual picture...and conversely for groups.

Ronald L. Breiger, "The Duality of Persons and Groups," *Social Forces* 53, no. 2 (December 1974): 184, [jstor.org/stable/2576011](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2576011).

- ▶ in the person graph, two people are connected by the memberships they share
- ▶ in the group graph, two groups are connected by the members they share
- ▶ the more shared persons/groups, the stronger the connection between groups/persons
- ▶ in this case: publishers' lists are the groups

- ▶ use bibliography of translations from French published in U.S.
- ▶ create affiliation matrix of French-language authors and U.S. publishers
- ▶ compute projected graph of publishers

author	title	publisher	year
Ernaux, Annie	Cleaned out	Dalkey Archive	1990
Ernaux, Annie	A woman's story	Four Walls Eight Windows	1991
Ernaux, Annie	A frozen woman	Seven Stories	1996
Ernaux, Annie	Exteriors	Seven Stories	1996



U.S. publishers of French-language writers, 1990–2003. Cf. Sapiro, fig. 3. Ernaux's publishers are labeled, as an illustration.

next

- ▶ work on projects!
- ▶ come in prepared to talk about an example for 5 minutes
 - ▶ submit one page or less for paper handouts on Canvas