

## BILINGUAL LITERATURE OF TANZANIA AS A SPECIFIC INTER-LITERARY COMMUNITY

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Modern literary theory has created a variety of approaches to describe dynamic processes emerging in a literary field. This may be especially significant in the case of relatively young literary traditions, characterized by rather high level of dynamics.

Among various theories of significance is a theory launched in the last quarter of the last century by a Slovakian scholar of comparative literature, Dionýz Ďurišin (1929-1997), who came up with the theory of the so-called specific inter-literary communities. The works of Ďurišin and other scholars, mainly from East European countries (such as Joseph Grmela, Libuša Vajdova, Irina Nikiforova, Yuri Azarov, and others) were published in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s in a variety of collections<sup>1</sup>. The key points of Ďurišin's theory, as formulated by Yuri Azarov, read as follows:

Already in the early 1980s Dionýz Ďurišin proposes -- and since that time he was gradually perfecting it -- the methodology that allows to investigate the literary process on the level of over--national literary conglomerates, the 'unions' of particular literatures, which have been developing, due to specific historical and cultural reasons, in tight interaction over a more or less long time span. [...] For a comparison, let us remember that many previous theoretical works were using 'national literature' as the main and dominating structural unit. [...] However, the creators of this new theory study national literatures only as components of higher order complexes, which they call specific inter--literary communities; these communities, in the long run, result in one 'final' community, which, according to D. Ďurišin, is the community of the world literature". (Azarov 2002:18)

In other words, if certain literatures emerge in a specific location on common historical and cultural ground and co--exist for a tangible period of time, in spite of all the

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differences -- social, cultural, religious, etc. – in the course of time and in the process of their interaction they will start developing a certain common ‘trajectory’ of development, shaped by specific cultural and historical circumstances. In this interaction, Ďurišin facets out three main aspects (he calls them functions): differentiating, integrative and complementary (see Azarov 2002:19). The differentiating function can manifest itself at various stages in the development of such a community, but it mostly operates either at the early stages, when literatures comprising this community are ‘immature’ enough to show more differences than similarities, or at a rather advanced stage, when these literatures, developing together, in the course of this development have evolved to such an extent that they need again to develop separately. The integrative function comes into play when the literatures comprising the community start to reveal more and more vivid signs of coming closer to each other -- in terms of language, generic forms, artistic and aesthetic principles, thematic concerns, societal approaches, etc. Finally, the complementary function permeates the entire process of interaction of these literatures, allowing them to borrow ‘lacking’ genres and forms from one another and thus stimulating the development of these literatures and their subsequent integration.

How applicable is Ďurišin’s theory of specific inter--literary communities to the literatures of East Africa, particularly those of Kenya and Tanzania? I will try to show that it is not only applicable, but even renders certain advantages in terms of investigating the specificity of development of these literatures. This I will try to illustrate using the example of Tanzanian literature, which, as the analysis below will attempt to demonstrate, may serve as an illustrative example of an inter-literary community.

Literature of the United Republic of Tanzania, which has already for a few decades been attracting attention of literary scholars, has traditionally been viewed in only one capacity – as one of the few literary systems in Africa successfully developing in an indigenous African language. It was conventionally thought that whereas in other literatures of the region the leading role has been assumed by the European languages, inherited from the former colonizing countries (mostly, of course, English), in Tanzanian literature this role is taken by the national language of Swahili. Literature in this language, which has been actively developing in Tanzania since 1940s, develops the traditions of classical ancient Swahili writing (this especially applies to poetry), at the same time successfully adopting modern literary genres and means.

However, more careful study demonstrates, that the term ‘national literature’, actively used in comparative literary studies, is hardly applicable to Tanzanian writing. First of all, ‘national literature’ is really supposed to develop in the national language, i.e. the one that happens to be the mother tongue for the majority of the population – but the thing is that such a definition is only timidly applicable to Swahili. For about seventy percent of Tanzanians it is a second or even a third language, and its present position as the main medium of interethnic interaction has primarily been stipulated by its historic role of “lingua franca” in the East African region, as well as the language policy of post-colonial Tanzanian government. On top of that, Swahili shares the “linguistic landscape” in present-day Tanzania with the language of the former metropolitan power, - that is, English.

In this ‘linguistic neighborhood’, however, English occupies obviously secondary position as compared to Swahili, the latter covering practically all the spheres of life. The language of the former metropolitan power finds its most active employment in the sphere of higher education. But exactly this sphere served in 1960s – 1970s as the birthplace for Tanzanian English language literature, whose very existence was until recently doubted by authoritative scholars (see Ohly 1990:105). Tanzanian English language literature was initially born in the walls of Makerere University in Uganda, the cradle of English language literature in East Africa. In the process of its formation, it was relying on the rich tradition of Anglophone literature in the neighboring countries, such as Uganda and Kenya, which allowed Tanzanian writing in English to acquire a rather ‘high starting position’ – suffice it to say that its development started from such a complicated form as parabolic novel (Peter Palangyo’s *Dying In The Sun*, 1969). Also, owing to this tight relationship with other Anglophone literatures of East Africa, English language literature in Tanzania was initially developing faster than Tanzanian writing in Swahili. The latter was, for the entire decade of 1960s, developing mainly its smaller generic forms, such as short story, novella and one-act drama, as well as renovating traditional genres of Swahili poetry, such as *tenzi* and *mashairi* (works of Mathias Mnyampala, Amri Abedi, etc.). For the above reasons, already in the 1970s Tanzanian Anglophone literature formed into a smaller, but artistically highly potential strata of East African literature in English.

In view of the above, the term ‘national literature’ appears even less fitting for the definition of Tanzanian literary reality – for this literature, as it turns out, is developing in

at least two languages, none of which, in fact, could be considered as truly national. Moreover, the two branches of this literature were born and developed in different literary contexts: Tanzanian Anglophone literature emerged as a part of the community of English-language literatures of East Africa, whereas Tanzanian literature in Swahili appeared as a part of East African literature in Swahili. However, Tanzanian literary reality, specific as it is, still urges for at least a very general definition. For that purpose, we will try first to define several traits, common for both branches – English and Swahili – of modern Tanzanian literature.

First, both branches of Tanzanian literature were born and raised in common historical and cultural environment. Initially characterized by different levels of artistic advancement, these literatures are based in one and the same social reality and developing in the borders of one and the same nation. We also can not avoid speaking about the influence of “extra-literary” factors, namely, ideological: the concept of *ujamaa*, which for more than two decades (1960s – 1980s) was the official doctrine of Tanzanian government, stipulated a common ideological orientation for the two branches of Tanzanian writing. The same ideological orientation assisted, in the mentioned historical period, to create a specific “over-ethnic” mentality of Tanzanians – belonging to different ethnic communities, they at the same time identified themselves primarily as the members of one “Tanzanian nation”. Finally, both Anglo- and Swahili-oriented Tanzanian authors were based on the same literary traditions, being equally familiar with, on the one hand, with classical and modern literature in Swahili, and on the other – with modern and classical European literature.

All the above-listed factors were posed in the works of Dionýz Ďurišin and his colleagues as the defining criteria of an inter-literary community – “the community of literatures, created in different languages, but by one people in one national space” (Ďurišin 1987:1) (all translations not otherwise noted are mine – MG). It appears that exactly this concept gives the fullest definition of the present-day state of the majority of African literatures, and Tanzanian literature is no exception. At that, certain features of this inter-literary community allows us to qualify it as “specific”. To illustrate and prove this, it appears advisable to dwell briefly on certain aspects of development and co-existence of the two named branches of Tanzanian literature.

Since these two branches were developing in the same cultural and historical environment, and were created by one and the same people in one and the same socio-political reality, the two of them, although belonging to two different literary contexts (or literary systems, according to Ďurišín's terminology), were not developing as two isolated or separated "microcosms". From the very first stages of their emergence and development these two branches reveal first hidden, and later increasingly obvious interaction. However, because of the specificity of the linguistic and social situation in the country, this interaction acquires specific forms, different from those, which were noted by scholars as typical for the development of other inter-literary communities (e.g., those of Eastern and Western Europe, South America, and others).

Various research (e.g., see the introductory part of the article) almost unanimously name translation, in its various functions and types, as one of the main modes of interaction between different literary branches. For example, Ďurišín in one of his articles (1987:15) outlines the intermediary, "co-creative" and primarily – informative functions of translation. But in case of interaction between two branches of Tanzanian literature, the informative functions of translation was rather low, primarily because of the literary bilingualism of Tanzanian authors.

Principally, modern Tanzanian writers could be divided into two categories – those writing predominantly in Swahili (they are the majority) and those writing predominantly in English (their number is limited). However, during early and even later periods of their writing many of them utilize the "opposite" language, apparently deeming it more suitable for the implementation of their artistic tasks.

For example, it appears as obvious that for the Anglophone Tanzanian writers it was difficult to master "at once" all the artistic qualities and opportunities of the European language and "imported" system of genres (novel, novella, short story). At the same time, a simple desire to test their writing abilities was inevitably pushing these writers towards popular literature, whose main language was that of Swahili. Maybe because of that the first writing attempts of the future-to-be Anglophone Tanzanian authors, done in the early 1960s, were made in popular genres and in written in Swahili. With the growth of their acquaintance with English and the generic system offered by the language, and their increasing desire to create more complicated texts these authors started to experience certain disappointment with the abilities of Swahili as the language of modern creative writing, and gradually were turning to English and its

immanent system of genres, primarily the novel, directed at a more educated and “differentiated” (as put by Āurišin) audience. But in the case of an Anglophone Tanzanian writer, if the social reality compels him/her to enter again the field of, say, popular literature, this writer easily changes the genre, the audience and the language. An illustrative example may be found in the creative activity of Agoro Anduru (1948-1992), who became famous in 1980s as the author of several collections of social-critical stories written in English. At the same time, he is known to the Swahili language audience as the author of a popular novella *Kukosa radhi* (Lacking a blessing, 1983), that follows the genre of a sentimental-didactic melodrama, characteristic for Swahili popular literature.

Likewise, some of Tanzanian writers, who chose as their main field Swahili literature, at a certain point, attempting to create more “high-level” texts, appeal to the English language. The late 1960s in the history of Tanzanian Anglophone writing were marked with another (along with Palangyo’s *Dying in the Sun* – see above) notable text – *Village in Uhuru* (1969), a novel by Gabriel Ruhumbika. This novel may be deemed as the first in Tanzanian literature successful attempt to reflect critically post-colonial reality of the country – and apparently, at that time the level of Swahili writing was not providing the author with adequate opportunities of combining an African language with “European” genre of the novel; thus, he decided to turn to English as the language more ‘adapted’ to the needs of the genre. It would be important to note that these “sorties” of Tanzanian authors over the borders of Swahili writing were tangibly enriching their artistic experience and skills; an example of this may be found in Ruhumbika’s next book *Parapanda* (The sound of a horn, 1974) – a collection of Swahili novellas, where he adapts the acquired skills of portrayal and structuring to African-language texts (see also Gromov 2011).

This bilingualism of Tanzanian authors may be caused, on the one hand, by their “mandatory” belonging to cultural and literary traditions of the Swahili language, on the other hand – to the fact that due to their higher education they were well conversant with those of European (English) language. This latter fact served as one of the main reasons for the birth of modern Tanzanian literature as such – according to Āurišin, younger modern literatures usually emerge as a result of profound contacts with a “more differentiated” literary system, and such contacts are hardly possible without the acquisition of the language (although, as may be seen, sometimes translation plays a very prominent role). The ultimate choice of the language comes usually at the bidding

of the author himself – but in the case of Tanzanian authors it appears natural that the majority of them chose comprehensive-to-all (and “state-backed”) Swahili, and not “elitist” English.

Thus, the informational function of translation in the case of interaction between the two branches of Tanzanian literature is decreased, since “the reader (alias the author – MG) can get acquainted with the original version of a foreign book” (Đurišin 1987:56). However, continuing the quotation, we may state that “this decrease is compensated with the growth of other functions of translation” (ibid), among which the most prominent one becomes the so-called “co-creative” function of translation. In our case, it is manifested in the fact that, when a high-level literary work is translated into Swahili, it becomes obvious for the translator (who is most frequently himself a writer), as well as for the reader, that this language is quite “suitable” for large-scale modern literary forms. It must also be noticed that full-fledged translation of foreign literary works into Swahili emerged only in the early 1970s—previous attempts, including Nyerere’s famous Swahili versions of Shakespearean plays, were in fact more or less lax renditions. Thus, in an inter-literary community, whose languages are initially on the uneven level of development, the translation acquires a new function – it marks the emerging ability of an initially less developed language to solve high-scale artistic tasks. In that sense – and in relation to the phenomenon of literary bilingualism – the exchange between the two branches of Tanzanian literature is highly contributed by authorial and authorized translation, when one and the same text starts to function simultaneously in two different literary contexts, bringing them closer and demonstrating the “hidden abilities” of both languages. To give just a few examples –as one of the founding works of Tanzanian literature we may deem Ebrahim Hussein’s play *Kinjeketile* (1970), originally written in Swahili and translated into English by the author himself; one of the most popular Swahili novels of the late 1970s was *Kizazi hiki* (This generation, 1978), originally published in 1977 in English under the title *The Wicked Walk*. It is also obvious that these works were perceived (and functioning) differently in different literary contexts – Mkufya’s novel, translated into Swahili, was transformed from a socio-critical account into a popular didactic melodrama; psychological accent in the English version of *Kinjeketile* in its Swahili translation was lowered in favour of the heroization of characters, which made it a popular piece at school drama festivals, and so on.

It appears that creative activity of English- and Swahili-language writers in Tanzania demonstrates all the types of typological convergences defined by Ďurišin – from socio-typological (both branches are orientated to one and the same socio-cultural reality) to psycho-typological (most of these authors in this or that way bear the mentality of post-colonial intellectuals). Moreover, these convergences become even “narrower” in space, when two branches of Tanzanian literature converge in the works of one author, who writes in both languages. In this case, of key importance becomes the notion of “double belonging”, developed by Dionýz Ďurišin, that explains the presence of one and the same author in one or more literary contexts. In this case, these authors can hardly be characterized by a well-established definition of “bi-literary” writers (1, 248), because they do not belong to two national literatures, but to two branches of one (although, on a wider scale, to two different regional literary systems, namely Afro- and Euro-language literatures of east Africa). Here we encounter rather a so-called “asymmetric double belonging”, when one and the same author belongs to a higher extent to one specific literary branch, and, in spite of his bilingualism, gives preference to one specific literary language.

We must note that the example of Tanzania once more confirms the validity of Ďurišin’s call to abandon the principle of binary links between literatures (1987:11) – in the discussed case we see an obvious interaction of at least several components. Both branches of Tanzanian literature, tightly interrelated, are also directly linked to the Anglophone literatures of other countries in the region, and indirectly – to other literatures of Africa. In this case we may notice a substantial increase in the informational and mediating function of translation, which enables East African readers and authors to get acquainted with the works of African authors who write in other European and African languages; a vivid example of this – Mariama Bâ’s *Une si longue lettre* (1979), whose English and Swahili translations were published in East Africa with an interval of a few years, and which produced a considerable following among East African writers – suffice in to recall *A letter to Mariama Bâ* by Wanjiku Kabira (2005).

The above examples of the presence of one author in two or more literatures – through translation or utilization of an alternative language – may be considered as the most obvious, “surface” cases of inter-exchange between the two branches of modern Tanzanian literature. However, the further development of these branches gave birth to another type of interaction – that of mutual complementation, although in this case they were complementing each other as parts of one common literary system – that of



modern Tanzanian literature. This may be illustrated by an example of a genre, which initially was barely characteristic for African literatures and which emerges only as a “result of a long-time literary development” – the epic novel. At that, the literary factors that stimulate the birth of epic novel in different literatures often do not correlate with social factors – in quite a few cases, a literary system can not meet its own need of artistically reflecting a certain period in its society’s history simply because the literature itself has not yet reached a sufficient level of artistic development. Exactly this case can be noted in Tanzania, where the sharp turns of the country’s history were urging for its reflection in literary works already in the early 1970s. The problem, however, lay in the fact that at that time the level of Swahili literature offered as its most related genre a historical novella and the first, rather basic attempts of a historical novel. Nevertheless, the first attempt of creating a Tanzanian epic novel was made successfully in the English language – that was Hamza Sokko’s novel *The Gathering Storm* (1977).

In his novel Hamza Sokko relates the history of several generations in a peasant family from the town of Bulembe in Tanganyika over the period of roughly four decades – from early 1920s to the late 1960s. This period features the most crucial events of the country’s history in the last century – the change of the colonial mother country, Zanzibar revolution and country’s unification, the ujamaa years. Depicting the lives of the three sons in the family, the author thus paints a vast panoramic picture of the East African society and the changes that take place in it as a result of historical shakes. This leads the readers to notice that, in fact, the real main character of the novel is east Africa and its history; moreover, the historical excursions are made by the author almost on a documentary level. The novel is fully realistic, deprived of any magical or folk elements, which were very characteristic in the 1970s even for the emerging social novel in Swahili. The author’s aspiration to give the widest picture of various periods and groups in Tanzanian history and society stipulated the complex architectonics of the text – the readers can easily discern in it at least several “novels within a novel”, based on the stories of not only the main, but even some secondary characters. At the same time, the author, stretching ad maximum the novel time, equally narrows the space, striving to use the example of a provincial town for creating a small-scale model of Tanzanian society, a kind of “encyclopedia of types”. Even the language of the novel – somewhat dry, “documentary-style” – appears to be working towards this task; at that, the author demonstrates a good command of stylistics, namely, the rhythmic qualities of prose. Finally, for the first time in Tanzanian literature he introduces the open finale –

the novel ends at a sort of “logical pause”, assuming that the story will continue. As we noted above, the main story of the novel is the recent history of Tanzania – and therefore the author apparently feels unable to put any “full stop” or to give definitive answers to the questions raised in the novel. The main trait that distinguishes Sokko’s novel in Tanzanian prose (both in English and Swahili) of the 1970s is the obviousness of the authorial task – “to portray various epochs in the life of a people, different social layers, to show the life of the characters in its dynamics over a span of several decades”, which, according to Pavel Chicherin, are the main generic traits of an epic novel (Chicherin 1982:13).

Hamza Sokko’s novel went practically unnoticed by critics outside East Africa – but in Tanzanian literature it appeared to cause a more profound response. Its influence shows itself in the first species of historical novel in Swahili by Tanzanian author Adam Shafi Adam, Kenyan writer Peter Ngare and others. Finally, the year 1986 witnessed the appearance of the first epic novel in Swahili - Kajubi Mukajanga in his two-volume novel *Mpenzi* that covers the span from late colonial days to ujamaa years, also made a successful attempt “to portray various epochs in the life of a people”. Over the years that passed since the publication of Sokko’s novel, Swahili writing considerably raised its artistic abilities, and became quite capable of coping with such a large-scale prosaic form. But the fact that the first attempt to create a Tanzanian epic novel was made in the late seventies in the English language testifies, in our opinion, that a literary system in the process of its development strives to fill by any means those “generic vacuums” that emerge due to a specific traits of this system, such as, in this case, uneven development of its two branches. In the discussed example the domineering Swahili writing was not able, because of its lower level of literary advancement, to cope with an artistic task of a larger scale – and thus it “delegated” the implementation of this task to a smaller, but at the moment more advanced English-language branch of the country’s literature. This demonstrates the mutual complementarity of the two branches as parts of one literary system – one of these branches has generated and put “to public use” the literary forms that another was not able to create at the moment. The “trailing” branch in the course of its further development demonstrates the tendency towards typological approximation to a more “advanced” one – Swahili prose was able master the genre of an epic novel in a rather short time. Moreover, we can witness even a “reverse” process – genres and forms which were not present in the English language branch of Tanzanian prose, but already generated in its Swahili branch, were adapted

by the Anglophone writers, who started to utilize very actively the experience gained by their Swahili-writing colleagues. Such a situation may be illustrated by the example of popular literature in English that emerged in Tanzania in the early 1980s.

The appearance of Anglophone popular writing in the country can be associated primarily with the major changes in that period in the country's socio-economic policy. On the social structure level they resulted in the birth of a new middle class, whose majority had a better command of English, and whose aesthetic demands were not satisfied neither by existing Anglophone writing (deemed as "elitist") nor by Swahili literature (as "schoolish" or "too simple"). A considerable role was also played by the fact that among this new Tanzanian middle class English has rapidly acquired a status of "prestigious" language. This gap between the lower-level popular writing in Swahili and the "elitist" and "high-breed" Anglophone literature was gradually filled with the growing number of popular books in English, targeting the newly born middle class audience. And, symptomatically, from the very beginning this brand of Tanzanian Anglophone literature revealed – even from the very first steps – considerable similarity with popular writing in Swahili. This similarity, however, appears logical – since those writers, who ventured to create popular English-language literature, were highly conversant with the market of popular prose in Swahili, and thus were heavily harvesting on it, using for their English texts well-established and well-tested elements and forms, adapting them for their new audience. They were appropriating nearly everything. On the level of generic forms, one of the main genres in Anglophone popular Tanzanian writing became Bildungsroman, already popular in Swahili writing for more than a decade. As for the plots, a story of chain marriages, popular in Swahili writing of the previous decades – see Mhina 1969, Kacharia, Mbomere 1972 – was recreated by Prince Kagwema (pen-name of Osija Mwanbungu) in his novel *Chausiku's Dozen* (1983).

On the level of stylistic and compositional elements, the Anglophone authors in many cases were using traditional for Swahili popular writing clichés of portraits, descriptions of events, certain motifs, twists of plots, compositional parts, such as authorial moralisation in the conclusion, frame stories, etc. Finally, the Anglophone authors were frequently including into their texts the samples of traditional Swahili genre "insha", which, despite the English translation, were easily recognised by the audience. Definitely, these authors were also including into their works the elements appropriated from Western popular literature – for example, erotic episodes, very uncharacteristic for

Swahili popular writing even up to now – but in general they maintained obvious orientation towards Swahili popular literature rather than its Western analogue. Further development of Anglophone popular writing in Tanzania confirmed the tendency towards the generic and typological levelling with its Swahili branch – the Anglophone authors started to actively adapt such genres as detective and didactic melodrama, which were among the main ones in Swahili popular writing already for more than a decade.

Such integration between the two branches of Tanzanian literature was growing in the course of their development, also acquiring new forms. For example, in the English-language collection of short stories titled *My dear bachelor* (1985) their author, a bilingual writer Henry Muhanika, consciously uses multiple allusions to the works of the Swahili classic Shaaban Robert, using them to create a grotesque picture of the mores of present-day Tanzania. The author apparently and rightly was assuming that these allusions will be understood and accepted by a wide reading public, since Shaaban's works are known to a wide majority of Tanzanians. Likewise, an Anglophone writer Tengio Urrio based his novel *The Girl from Uganda* (1993) on one of the most popular earlier Swahili novels – *Mwenda kwao* (1970) by Cathbert Omari, reproducing in a slightly modified form the plot and the problematics of the prototype. In the subsequent decades, the phenomenon of literary bilingualism and the integration between the two branches of Tanzanian writing have been strengthened by such writers as Bernard Mapalala and Elieshi Lema, whose works, such as Mapalala's *Death factory* (1996) and Lema's *Parched earth* (2001) tangibly harvest on the stylistic and compositional findings of Swahili literature of the previous periods.

The above examples illustrate the tendency towards the bilateral complementation of the two branches of Tanzanian literature – or, using Āurišin's terminology, their mutual complementary function, which he discerns as one of the key factors in the development of an inter-literary community. In its own turn, this complementarity appears as being stipulated by a long-time interaction between these two branches. This interaction on its different stages varied in its intensity, was taking various forms – from combining the two literary traditions in the works of one author (owing to his bilingualism) to various kinds of translation and including the elements of “two or more literary systems in a kind of symbiotic relationship” into one text, and the reading of one and the same literary work in two different literary contexts. This process

of interaction and inter-complementation resulted in the tendency towards the typological rapprochement and leveling, and finally – to the emergence of historical and literary whole. Over the three decades of its existence Tanzanian writing has made its way to the “community of literatures, featuring different stages of development, but objectively bound together by their orientation towards common social, political and cultural problems of the country”, which is the type of inter-literary community most characteristic for the present-day sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, while the orientation of the two branches of Tanzanian writing “towards common social, political and cultural problems of the country” is preserved all along their path of development”, the differences in their level of artistic advancement are considerably leveled in the process of their interaction. This interaction is characterized by such essential traits as its immediacy (most of the authors, because of belonging to both traditions, do not need any form of “literary mediation”), and substantial intensity (although varying at different stages of this interaction). This intensity, in its own turn, is largely stipulated by the rapid accelerated development of Tanzanian literature – and all these factors were marked by Dionýz Ďurišin as the founding traits of a specific inter-literary community. Thus, we can ascribe Tanzanian literature to this category.

In conclusion, we would like to share some observations, that go slightly beyond the relatively narrow topic of this paper, – but they appear to confirm additionally the usability of the theory, developed by Dionýz Ďurišin and his colleagues, for studying the complicated and multi-faceted phenomena of modern literary process in their dynamics. In the text above we tried to use this theory for the purpose of revealing the nature of Tanzanian literature as an inter-literary community, acknowledging at that its tight links with larger literary systems – English and Swahili literatures of East African region. In view of this, we dare assume that theoretical categories of Ďurišin and his colleagues may as well be used successfully for characterizing of this larger literary body.

In fact, a closer look at modern East African literary system one can rather easily notice its, so to speak, discrete character – both politico-geographically (literatures of specific countries, such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania) and language-wise (the regional literature is developing in English as well as in Swahili and some other indigenous languages). At the same time the “weight” of various languages in the literature of different countries of the region also varies – e.g., in Kenyan literature English is the leading language, and Swahili occupies the second position, while in Tanzanian

literature we see the reverse situation; in Ugandan writing, also predominantly Anglophone, the second position belongs not to Swahili, but Luganda. And, same as in Tanzanian writing, Euro- and Afro-language branches of these literatures demonstrate tight and growing interaction. And this interaction is characterized by the same processes that were detected in Tanzanian literature (although with varied intensity) – mutual influence, complementing, and tendency towards typological convergence. In other words, modern East African literatures can also be described as specific inter-literary communities, and the regional literature can be qualified as an inter-literary community of a higher level, or “centrism”, in Ďurišin’s terminology, with all the various and complicated types of interactions intrinsic to it.

As Dionýz Ďurišin wrote in in one of his works, “specific communities of literatures usually reflect specific relations between communities of people” (Ďurišin 1987:11). The history of East Africa gives a vivid example of such specific relations; and it is significant that as these relations between human communities are studied in historical perspective, in the same way theoretical concepts, developed by Ďurišin and his colleagues, allows to study not only synchronic, but also diachronic relations in the most complicated literary conglomerates, opening new opportunities for theoreticians and historians of literature.

<sup>1</sup> These collections include *Teória medziliterárneho procesu* (Theory of inter-literary process, 1985), *Osobitné medziliterárne spoločenstvá 1* (Specific inter-literary communities 1, 1987), *Systematika medziliterárneho procesu* (Systematics of inter-literary process, 1988), and *Vzaimodeystviye literatur v mirovom literaturnom protsesse* (Interaction of literatures in the world literary process, 2002).

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