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Cross-Cultural Inventions in Drama on the Basis of the Novel in Prose, or World Literature before World Literature: The Case of Fortunatus

In 1767 German author and critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing launched his beautifully written polemics against French drama: he called it frightful, vain, all too rational and idealist, focused on rules and norms only. Lessing wished to ban this kind of drama from the German stage, which was still in its infancy (Lessing, of course, called it “barbarian”): indeed, during its brief period of existence, the Hamburg national theater, Lessing’s theater of reference at which he himself was employed as a critic, played 70 French, 40 German, 5 Italian, and 4 English dramas, plus a Dutch text.¹ Though Lessing (like Moses Mendelssohn and Friedrich Nicolai) himself aimed to direct German theater toward the English – according to him, in retrospect Shakespeare beat Voltaire – German literature and theater history thereafter stressed the influence of French drama up to the 1760s and credited the discovery of Shakespeare on the German stage to Lessing and his contemporaries.² Lessing’s polemic led to an unintended effect: the forgetting of the relevance of English theater and drama in the early modern German context.³

It goes without saying that ascriptions like these suffer from the dominance of “the national” in histories of theater and literature as well as from – so to

1 J. G. Robertson. *Lessing’s Dramatic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939, pp. 44–47; G. E. Lessing. *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, edited by Klaus L. Berghahn. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981, pp. 622–630.

2 On the new fascination for English drama from the 1740s, see Renata Häublein. *Die Entdeckung Shakespeares auf der deutschen Bühne des 18. Jahrhunderts: Adaptation und Wirkung der Vermittlung auf dem Theater*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005 (Theatron, 46), pp. 12–27.

3 On the early modern German Shakespeare reception (which, of course, happened through adapted Shakespeare texts without the author’s name on any of the dramas), Simon Williams. *Shakespeare on the German Stage*. Vol. II: 1586–1914. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; Anthony B. Dawson. “International Shakespeare.” *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, edited by Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 174–193, p. 176; Kareen Klein. “Paris, Romeo and Julieta: Seventeenth-Century German Shakespeare.” *Shakespeare and His Collaborators over the Centuries*, edited by Pavel Drábek, Klára Kolinská and Matthew Nicholls. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, pp. 85–105.

speak – colonial perspectives, as though one culture could possibly shape another one.⁴ Furthermore, in the early modern period the “national” did not even exist in the way it was understood centuries later. Yet, developing this sketch further might underline the importance of models of agency, circulation, and net structures, which are relatively new to theater and drama history but known in other areas of literary and cultural history.⁵ These models can help to contest the hitherto dominant narratives and may indeed prove them wrong or half-correct. Focusing on cross-cultural inventions on stage, I will look at English-speaking drama and theater in the Holy Roman Empire – not attempting simply to replace the ascriptions to “the French” by ascriptions to “the English” but in order to explore in detail the occurrence of English drama and theater, and its overlaps with German drama and theater.

In contrast to German literary history, which claims that Shakespeare and his contemporaries were not or only little known in the Holy Roman Empire, current research has yielded insights into the activities of English wandering actors’ groups in the region. In the 1590s Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel first saw English comedians in Denmark. The dramatist Thomas Sackville came to Heinrich Julius’ seat, Wolfenbüttel, in 1592 in order to work at his court. The duke himself wrote plays inspired by the English and had his dramas played by the English troupes.⁶ Furthermore, Jacob Ayser, a famous Nuremberg author of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, combined the *Meistersang* tradition with elements he found through English comedians, and adapted English dramas such as Thomas Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* (1582–1592) into German *Knittelvers*.⁷

Among the texts that present the performances of the English wandering actors’ groups – some of them expand on religious (*Der verlorene Sohn*, *Esther*, *Susanna*, *Daniel in der Löwengrube*), some on political topics (*The Jew of*

4 Cf. Roger Lüdeke and Virginia Richter (eds.). *Theater im Aufbruch: Das europäische Theater der Frühen Neuzeit*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2008 (Theatron, 53).

5 See, for instance, Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann. “Beyond Comparison: ‘histoire croisée’ and the challenge of reflexivity.” *History and Theory*, vol. 45, 2006, pp. 30–50. On adaptations in theater and drama history see the project “DramaNet: Early Modern European Drama and the Cultural Net” funded by the European Research Council and headed by Joachim Küpper as well the corresponding project “Global Theatre Histories” funded by the German Research Foundation and headed by Christopher Balme (<http://gth.hypotheses.org>. Accessed 13 February 2018).

6 Volker Meid. *Die deutsche Literatur im Zeitalter des Barock: Vom Späthumanismus zur Frühaufklärung 1570–1740*. München: Beck, 2009 (Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, 5), p. 100.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Malta), present comedies, or carnival processions – at least two stand out: the Faust drama by Christopher Marlowe (debut performance 1589), and the *Fortunatus* drama by Thomas Dekker (debut performance 1599). They both show similar patterns of literary circulation: They are both created on the basis of German novels in prose – the *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* by Johann Spies (1587), and *Fortunatus* (1509) – which the English playwrights seem to have known through the first English translations and adaptations. Through wandering actors' companies the German novels in prose came back to the Holy Roman Empire in new dramatic versions, and re-inspired German seventeenth-century playwrights and authors to conceive of new versions of the theme – mostly in dramatic form but also in other genres. Taking the novels in prose together with the theater productions and dramatic adaptations they inspired, Faust and *Fortunatus* form large narrative complexes which consist of strong characters, recurring plots and scenes, and moral questions relevant to their audiences. These complexes seem to have been recognizable for centuries. Furthermore, the English troupes helped to professionalize the German stage.⁸ Unlike French and Italian groups the English ones soon used the German language and excelled in popularity. They introduced entertaining forms of play such as dancing, clowning (Johan/Jan Bousset occurred already in Heinrich Julius' plays, "Stockfisch" in John Spencer's group, "Pickelhering" in Robert Reynolds' group), pantomime, and obscene allusions, more natural ways of acting and communicating with their audience in visual and oral form (music, songs) compared to contemporary theater in the Holy Roman Empire. What is more: they addressed all social classes. The shift from didactic (religious) theater that was already ongoing increased through the English troupes and helped to fund a German-speaking theater in its own right, not just as a medium of the local authorities.

Due to the fame of Christopher Marlowe and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe we are relatively well informed about the history of the Faust novel and its adaptations, but we know less about *Fortunatus*. I will therefore focus on *Fortunatus*: I shall briefly present the German novel in prose, look at Dekker's drama, examine a version of the drama used by the wandering actors' groups, and shed some light on the reception of the *Fortunatus* theme around 1800.

⁸ Williams (see above); George W. Brandt and Wiebe Hogendoorn. *Theatre in Europe: A documentary history: German and Dutch theatre, 1600–1848*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993; Ralf Haekel. *Die Englischen Komödianten in Deutschland: Eine Einführung in die Ursprünge des Berufsschauspiels*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2004; Ralf Haekel. "Quellen zur Geschichte der Englischen Komödianten in Deutschland." *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 2004, pp. 180–185.

I The German Fortunatus

Conceived and written around 1490 and published anonymously in Augsburg in 1509, the German *Fortunatus* tells a family story.⁹ Three generations follow in turn. The first plot is rather short: Grandfather Theodorus becomes impoverished due to his luxurious lifestyle in his Cypriot hometown of Famagusta. Most of the original German story consists of the second plot: Fortunatus, the child of fortune, leaves Famagusta in order to conserve the remainder, and perhaps restore some of the family's wealth. The family tale turns into a travel book, an adventure tale, and a detective story: Fortunatus serves the duke of Flanders and a London merchant. In London he is accused of murder.¹⁰ The innocent young man flees into the Breton woods and encounters Fortuna, the virgin of fortune ("junkfrau gewaltig des glücks").¹¹ As far as her character is concerned, the novel is part of a larger pre-modern process in which the ancient goddess of fortune and fate was enthroned, incorporated into the Christian tradition, and subordinated to (Divine) providence.¹² Therefore in the German book fortune appears as a simple woman, and not threatening or evil as such.

This Christianized Fortuna offers six gifts from which Fortunatus is to choose: wisdom, abundance/riches [*Reichtum*], strength, health, beauty, and long life.¹³ Astonishingly, Fortunatus decides in favour of abundance. According to the moral norms of his time – the Seven Deadly Sins and their resulting commands – he would have had to be punished, but he learns how to use and hide his gift: a small purse, a device that can produce gold at any time and in uncountable amounts. Every year, he gives 400 golden coins to a poor bride – as the Virgin of Fortune had ordered. He returns to Famagusta, marries the daughter of a duke, fathers two sons, and travels to Egypt where he is given a

⁹ Manuel Braun. *Ehe, Liebe, Freundschaft. Semantik der Vergesellschaftung im frühneuhochdeutschen Prosaroman*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001.

¹⁰ John Flood. "Fortunatus in London." *Reisen und Welterfahrung in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, edited by Dietrich Huschenbett and John Margetts. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1991, pp. 240–263.

¹¹ *Fortunatus: Von Fortunato und seynem Seckel auch Wünschhütlein*. With a preface by Renate Noll-Wiemann. Hildesheim, New York: Olms, 1974 (Deutsche Volksbücher in Faksimiledrucken; series A, vol. 4), unpag. [Diiij verso].

¹² Walter Haug. "'O Fortuna': Eine historisch-semantische Skizze zur Einführung." *Fortuna*, edited by Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995 (Fortuna vitrea, 1), pp. 1–22; Haekel. *Die Englischen Komödianten* (see above), pp. 160–165.

¹³ *Fortunatus* (see above).

wishing hat that can make him invisible, allowing him to disappear and reappear in distant locations.

The third and final plot in *Fortunatus* deals with Fortunatus' sons Ampedo and Andolosia, splitting the story into two sub-plots. Fortunatus survives into old age, which proves his moral integrity – he has shown that he can cope with a morally problematic gift. He leaves his purse and wishing hat to his sons, who compete for both. Ampedo, the lethargic one of the two, is fobbed off with a large sum of money by Andolosia, the greedy egoist. Andolosia aims for power and even greater wealth than his father had acquired. Traveling to England, he courts Agrippina, the daughter of the king, who, being an egoist herself (like her father), only wants his purse and hat. Andolosia is fooled by her, loses his gifts, is punished (horns grow on his head), manages to return to his normal form using a magic trick, wins back his gifts – and is arrested and killed by two dukes. In turn, the dukes are killed for their crime by the king, who then profits from Fortunatus' inheritance, namely the purse. The hat is lost. The story's moral is expressed in a very short final paragraph: Fortunatus should have chosen wisdom and not abundance, the text notes critically. By that, he would have enjoyed both wealth and peace amongst his offspring.

The text itself profits from the exotic it presents as well as from the fact that it admits some immorality and tests it in a fictional framework (concluded by moral remarks, of course). The result is a story of rise and fall, an allegory of fortune as well as the contrary, a dazzling amoral as well as moral tale that praises (Neostoic) moderation.¹⁴ Ethics and wealth go together, the novel in prose concludes, as though it is opting for a double accounting – a promising message for contemporaries who, within the Christian moral framework, aimed to explore different moral horizons.

The woodcuts that illustrate the story (like other novels in prose, e.g. an Augsburg printing of *Magelone*) will, of course, have helped its dissemination. Furthermore, Hans Sachs conceived of the story in dramatic form: his *Tragedia mit 22 personen, der Fortunatus mit dem wunschseckel* [...] (1553) follows the original closely, yet also introduces new personnel such as the “ehrnholdt.”¹⁵ Sachs begins and concludes the play with moralizing remarks. Fortunatus' father is called “Fortus”;¹⁶ the king of England is replaced by the king of Cyprus.

¹⁴ Jan-Dirk Müller. “Die Fortuna des Fortunatus: Zur Auflösung mittelalterlicher Sinndeutung des Sinnlosen.” *Fortuna*, edited by Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995 (Fortuna vitrea, 1), pp. 216–238.

¹⁵ Hans Sachs. “Tragedia mit 22 personen, der Fortunatus mit dem wunschseckel, und hat 5 actus.” *Hans Sachs*, edited by Adalbert von Keller, vol. 12. Stuttgart: Litterarischer Verein, 1879 (Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 140), p. 188.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

The novel in prose is rendered into the Nuremberg *Meistersang* verse with end-rhyme. Up to the end of the seventeenth century *Fortunatus* was translated into numerous languages, including English. The earliest English tradition to survive was published in London in 1582.

II Thomas Dekker's *Fortunatus*

When Thomas Dekker prominently took up the *Fortunatus* theme in his *Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus*, he already knew an English translation of the novel in prose and a dramatized English version that is no longer extant.¹⁷ Dekker (ca. 1590–1630) worked as a professional author for theater companies and was regarded as Ben Johnson's opponent.¹⁸ Apparently, Dekker led an eventful life, in which he spent some time in the debtor's prison. His work includes speeches, pamphlets, and approximately 40 dramas that he wrote himself or in the form of collective authorship. Dekker's *Fortunatus* drama itself was devised for theater impresario Philip Henslowe and the Admiral's Men, revised after a performance for Queen Elizabeth on 27 December 1599, and published in the revised version in 1600.

The text was designed as a morality play, centered around a "moral parable" with a panegyric note.¹⁹ Indeed, compared to the German text, Dekker's version is based on allegorical poetics presented with the help of alliterations, parallelism, and tautologies: the allegory of Fortune, conceived of as a divinity, fights with the divinities Vice and Virtue. Virtue wins. Furthermore, allegorical poetics are an instrument of politics and religion that is visible through the debut performance at court. The dramatic structure also differs from the German novel in prose: *Fortunatus* dies early in the comedy; its focus is on the Andelocia (the new Andolusia) plot set in England, while Ampedo is almost neglected. As far as the structure is concerned, Dekker adds a "prologue at Court" (a praise of true hearts and honesty) as well as a second prologue (introducing the play as "poore Art") and an "Epilogue at Court";²⁰ he combines

17 W. L. Halsteadt. "Surviving Original Materials in Dekker's 'Old Fortunatus'." *Notes and Queries*, Jan. 17, 1942, pp. 30 f.

18 Albrecht Classen. "Die Rezeption des deutschen 'Fortunatus' in England – Thomas Dekker und seine Dramatisierung des 'Volksbuchs'." *Neohelicon*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1994, pp. 289–311.

19 Sidney R. Homan, Jr. "'Doctor Faustus', Dekker's 'Old Fortunatus' and the morality plays." *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 4, 1965, pp. 497–505, 498 f.

20 Thomas Dekker. "The Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus." *The Dramatic works of Thomas Dekker*, edited by Fredson Bowers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953, The Prologue, p. 115, line 19.

prose with verse, songs, and music, and also introduces wit into the moral play: firstly, through parodic language; and secondly through the allegorical characters of “Eccho” and “Shaddow,” who follow Fortunatus and Andelocia, thereby uncovering “the truth.”

The story runs as follows: Poor old beggar Fortunatus meets the goddess Fortuna – an entirely different and, in fact, rather ancient and pagan Fortuna. She (as in the German book) offers the choice between “Wisdom, strength, health, beautie, long life, and riches,” and calls it a “deepe Lotterie.”²¹ Yet, the scenery differs markedly from the German one: Fortune is surrounded by a carter, a tailor, a monk, a shepherd, nymphs, and emperors, among them Frederick Barbarossa, Sultan Bayezid, and Henry V. Fortune presents them as her “underlings.”²² She reigns through the promise of the gifts she offers and considers herself the superior worldly power – a self-presentation that deviates from the German original in which the “virgin of fortune” appears in modest form. As in the German text, Fortunatus chooses riches; he travels, plants a tree for Vice and another one for Virtue (the first bears a lot of fruit, the latter only a little), steals the wishing hat from the Turkish sultan, and suddenly dies in the course of a satyr play, already in Act II, Scene ii. His son Andelocia inherits the purse, Ampedo the hat. The majority of the comedy deals with Andelocia, who courts Agrippina, daughter of the English king Athelstane who steals his purse and hat while Andelocia turns into a beast with horns. Virtue wants to save him, provided that he eat her bitter fruits. When he regains the hat, he is sent back to England, wins back the purse and hat but is imprisoned together with his brother. Ampedo, the only virtuous character in the comedy, dies of his injuries, and Andelocia is hanged by two criminals, similar to the German version.

In the playful allegorizing that ends the text, Athelstane becomes the minion of Fortune. She advises him not to misuse her gifts: “England shall ne’r be poore, if England striue, / Rather by virtue, then by wealth to thriue.”²³ It is, of course, Virtue who wins the competition with Vice. The published version, which is the result of the performance at court,²⁴ in its asides commands Virtue to address the queen and Fortune to address her kneeling.²⁵ Apparently, it is the queen who presides even over the divinities. The moral play has turned into a religious and political one, not only through its performance but also

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122, line 224 and p. 122, line 217.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 121, line 174.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 194, line 259 f.

²⁴ Classen, “Die Rezeption” (see above), pp. 301, 307.

²⁵ Dekker (see above), pp. 195 f., lines 308, 315.

through the way the subject is adapted to please authority: the queen who, in the doctrine of the Anglican Church of England, is its supreme head. This adaptation does not render the original more subtle; to the contrary, the outcome is simplified by the transfer into a new cultural, religious, and political context.

III The *Fortunatus* of the wandering actors' groups

When English wandering actors' groups brought *Fortunatus* back to the Holy Roman Empire, John Green's troupe performed the *Fortunatus* complex anew and at least twice: in 1608 in Graz, and in 1626 in Dresden.²⁶ The text, which aims to represent the *Fortunatus* version of the Green troupe, was printed in 1620 under the title *Comoedia von Fortunato und seinem Seckel und Wünschhütlein, darinnen erstlich drei verstorbenen Seelen als Geister, darnach die Tugend und Schande eingeführet werden* (written by an anonymous author).²⁷ Like most of these texts, this one too was written after the play (which itself was centered around a topic and focused on the actual performance; there are no written pre-prints of these plays).²⁸ The author seems to have been identified: Friedrich Menius, born 1593 or 1594 in Woldegk (Mecklenburg), a student at the University of Greifswald, later professor in Dorpat, director of a mine, and accused of heresy and bigamy.²⁹ Menius was the first translator of Shakespeare in Germany; impressed by Amos Comenius and Martin Opitz, he aimed to present up-to-date culture to his region.

Research has focused on the character of Fortuna and explored ways in which Dekker's and Menius' version instrumentalize the virgin/goddess.³⁰ Studies have assumed that Menius' text is a mere compilation from the Dekker drama and the German novel in prose (as well as of German versions of Dekker), with some refined aspects as far as style and presentation are con-

²⁶ Classen, "Die Rezeption" (see above), p. 310; Haekel, *Die Englischen Komödianten* (see above), pp. 111–113.

²⁷ [Friedrich Menius (?).] *Comoedia von Fortunato / seinem Seckel und / Wuenschhuetlein / Darinnen erstlich drey verstorbene Seelen als Geister / darnach die Tugend und Schwande eingefuehret werden. Spieltexte der Wanderbühne*, edited by Manfred Brauneck (Ausgaben deutscher Literatur des XV. bis XVIII. Jahrhunderts). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975, vol. II, pp. 190–267.

²⁸ Haekel, *Die Englischen Komödianten* (see above), p. 100 f.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 117 f.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 117 f.

cerned.³¹ Taking up these findings but also contesting them, I will compare the three *Fortunatus* versions in order to explore the ways in which wandering actors' groups and writers like Menius dealt with their texts and cultures of reference, and how these texts were compiled into new dramatic material and, thereby, transformed.

Green's and Menius' *Comoedia* can be characterized as a combination of the German novel in prose and the play by Dekker, in that it takes up most of the Dekker plot in an abridged version, and uses the German-language material and the ways the relation between characters and the whole scenery are built up in the German text. The English prologues and the epilogue are omitted, as are the "underlings" of *Fortune* as well as some of the allegories, the *Shadow* character, the songs, and the parodies of language. Music, however, seems to have been part of the play (some characters explicitly refer to music); the character *Echo* is kept alive as well. The story shows poor and exhausted *Fortunatus* in the Breton woods, mired in a witty dialogue with *Echo* (similar to Dekker). Yet *Fortuna*, who appears without her entourage, resembles the one from the German version: *Fortunatus* praises her as a virgin (not a divinity as in Dekker; there is no talk about a lottery or the like); she warns him not to be scared. He explains that poverty brought him into the woods, and she offers her gifts – almost in the same words as in the German novel in prose, only in the more modern language of the seventeenth century:

Fortunate erschrick nitt / ich byn die junckfraw des glücks / und durch die einflussung des himels und der sternen / und der planeten So ist mir verlihen sechs tugendt / [...] Das ist weyßhait / Reichtumb / Stercke / Gesundheit / Schöne und langs Leben. Da erwöl dir ains under den sechssen und bedenck dich nit lang / wann die stund des glücks zu geben ist gar nach verschynen.³²

New characters are introduced to the play. Three ghosts (of dead souls) illustrate *Fortuna's* gifts, complaining about how they suffered by accepting them. Furthermore, *Pickelhering* plays between scenes and acts (with and without text), identifies with various characters, thereby fulfilling the role of the fool who uncovers truth through his acting, and is a reminiscence to contemporary English theater. For instance, *Pickelhering* shows up as *Fortunatus* is disappointed upon receiving the unimposing purse. The ten pieces of gold occur in both the German and English version. Yet, whereas in the German one *Fortuna* explains the purse, the tone of the English version alludes to the Elizabethan

³¹ *Spieltexte der Wanderbühne*, edited by Alfred Noe. Sechster Band: Kommentar zu Band I–V. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007, p. 16.

³² [Menius (?)], *Comoedia von Fortunato*, p. 47.

tradition of theater. Many scenes are omitted in text of Menius and the wandering actors' group. Act Two already takes up the Sultan plot, in which Fortunatus receives the wishing hat: "der hût ist mir lieber dann alle die klaynat so Ir. Goshen habt."³³

In the German version Fortunatus dies from mourning his dead wife and a resulting phthisis; the new text keeps up with Dekker's allegorical tone – it is Fortune who wants revenge for the misuse of her gifts and calls for Fortunatus' death. He hands his gifts over to his sons. Act Three presents Andolosia and Ampedo but focuses on the former (like Dekker). The Agrippina plot starts immediately. Act Four sees the divinities Virtue (with a fool's cap) and Vice competing with each other and planting trees (as in the English version). The scene introduces the theft of the purse and hat by Agrippina as well as the metamorphosis of Andolosia into a beast. He is – in the German and the Dekker text – cured by eating apples from the Tree of Virtue. In Act Five, the False Doctor episode follows, in which Andolosia applies the magic of the apples on Agrippina. He wins back his purse and hat; a comical interlude (differing from the reference texts) begins in which Andolosia travels back and forth to Fama-gusta, and creates and gets horns. The *Comoedia* ends as it started, as a combination of the German and the Dekker text: Andolosia is killed by the dukes, Ampedo burns the wishing hat, and dies of grief. Unlike the English original, the final triumph of virtue is omitted. Yet some of the political tendency of the Dekker drama is conserved: though the actors no longer kneel in front of Queen Elizabeth, it is the English king who rules a possibly virtuous world. In the *Comoedia*, the king and Agrippina kneel in front of Fortune, and ask her for goodwill and support for the kingdom against all enemies. Fortune promises gifts and glory (expressed in the form of laurel trees). The anonymous German *Fortunatus* deviates from this, as it ends with a brief moral appeal to reason.

Clearly, the Fortunatus example shows the extent to which texts and theater "components" circulate and differ. The wandering actors' groups and/or Menius take up what they find in different contexts and present a combination into which new elements are added, resulting in a new rendering of what was found. Elements such as Pickelhering stem from the performance practice of the wandering actors' groups and seem to have pleased the audience. It may have been a credit to the English groups that they got away with their praise of English royalty. The wandering actors' groups' version is not a mere compilation, however, but an artistic piece in its own right: it is written under the

33 [Menius (?)], *Comoedia von Fortunato*, p. 112.

influence of the performance – with the German novel in prose on the writer’s desk.

Astonishingly enough, there is a second *Fortunatus* adaptation from around the same time that has largely been forgotten. The so-called *Kasseler Fortunatusdrama* shows the multiple ways in which German novels in prose traveled, thereby crossing English culture. The *Kasseler Fortunatusdrama* relies on Hans Sachs’ version but carries it further (the character of Ampedo, for instance, is turned into a comical figure, an Ethiopian alludes to the miraculous, the king becomes Cypriot, etc.), and also introduces some elements of Dekker (e.g. the scene in which Andolosia appears as a doctor).³⁴ The text is conserved in manuscript only, and may indeed have served as a script for the stage (as remarks like “Fortus solo” and the early introduction of characters show).³⁵ Menius’ version is not known to this playwright, who may, instead, have written in the context of English theater at the Kassel court, very likely in the decade from 1610 to 1620.³⁶ English troupes visited the Kassel court with its famous Ottoneum theater. Robert Browne conducted the troupe until 1607, and, until approximately 1613, various groups performed here.³⁷ Yet there is no exact evidence about the origin of the *Kasseler Fortunatusdrama*. It remains a small but telling enigma on the border between English and German drama. Again, adaptations like the ones discussed simplify the originals in that they moralize them. Still, the adaptations also shed some light on the production of early modern drama and theater – without which *Fortunatus* might have been entirely forgotten. Updates are a valuable cultural technique, especially on the stage, where no performance will be like another.

IV Fortunati of the 1800s

Fortunatus’ story did not end here. Like ancient legends, the medieval *Fortunatus* narrative spread around the globe, though it seems to have been turned

³⁴ Paul Harms. *Die deutschen Fortunatus-Dramen und ein Kasseler Dichter des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Hamburg, Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1892, p. 54.

³⁵ 8° Ms. theatr. 4. Landesbibliothek Kassel (http://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/image/1296566484811/133/LOG_0007. Accessed 13 February 2018.); Paul Harms, *Die deutschen Fortunatus-Dramen*; see also Heinrich Schleichert. *Landgraf Moritz der Gelehrte von Hessen-Kassel und das deutsche Theater*. Diss. Marburg 1924 (<http://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/image/1422951884036/125>. Accessed 13 February 2018.), pp. 55–57.

³⁶ Harms, *Die deutschen Fortunatus-Dramen*, pp. 89–91.

³⁷ Meid, *Die deutsche Literatur im Zeitalter des Barock*, pp. 330 f.

into *gesunkenes Kulturgut* in the eighteenth century when French theater and Italian opera became more popular. In Germany, there was talk of an opera called *Tragödia von des Fortunati Wunschhute und Seckel mit dem Intermedio von dem alten Proculo*, performed in Dresden in 1678.³⁸ Romantic authors reinvented the story and its circulation began again – yet rather in a national context. One Fortunatus event followed another. In 1802 Clemens Brentano wrote a letter to Achim von Arnim, mentioning a plan to write a new romantic version of the novel in prose. He identifies Fortunatus with Arnim, the fortune-seeking companion and airy Ariel. In 1806, Fouqué inspired Adalbert Chamisso to consider a drama called *Fortunati Glücksekel und Wunschütlein. Ein Spiel* which was published only as a fragment in 1895. Chamisso reinvents the story taking up forms typical around 1800 (such as the antiphon), and turning Andollosia into a Romantic hero: seeking his own Fortune, Andollosia struggles with his father's gifts, saves them, but renounces his beloved yet all too greedy Agrippina, whom he sends to a convent. Apparently fascinated by the Fortunatus story, Chamisso includes the motive of the purse again in his *Peter Schlemihl's wundersame Geschichte* (1814).

From 1814 to 1816, Ludwig Uhland, acquainted with Chamisso's interest in Fortunatus and, very likely, with a French version of the novel in prose,³⁹ conceived the narrative poem *Fortunat und seine Söhne* based on an Augsburg version of the German novel in prose. Uhland was fascinated by Fortunatus yet despised the prosaic tone of the German novel; in his poem he reflects on the literary worth of the Fortunatus topic. He stresses the harmonious end of his *Fortunat* but also the never-ending power of the empress Fortuna, who becomes almost synonymous with Providence. As though every Romantic author was aiming for his own Fortunatus version, Ludwig Tieck wrote *Fortunat. Ein Märchenlustspiel in zwei Teilen* in 1815, dedicated to the government minister Rehberg in Hanover. The latter is said to have enjoyed the play, and to have inspired the tribunal scene that frames the text. On the one hand, the plot follows the German novel in prose; on the other hand, Tieck explicitly takes up Shakespearean or Elizabethan dramatic forms such as masks and allegories, complemented by the tribunal scene in which Fortune has to defend herself. In addition to this, Tieck demonstrated some historical interest in the Fortunatus complex. He republished Menius' version of Fortunatus in his collection *Deutsches Theater* (volume II, 1817) – he was apparently able to get hold of a copy – and presented it as an anonymous German “folk play,” ignoring its English

³⁸ John C. Ransmeier. “Uhland's Fortunat and the Histoire de Fortunatus et de Ses Enfants Author(s).” *PMLA*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1910, pp. 355–366, p. 357.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

theatrical context and canonizing only the text. This misunderstanding is not a forgery like James MacPherson's *Ossian*, but shows the extent to which the Romantics were interested in *Fortunatus* and aimed to canonize original cultural material in the German tongue. Two years later, Franz Grillparzer, himself rather a post-Romantic Austrian author, concluded this series with his *Fortunatus Wunschhütlein. Ein Lustspielplan*. In addition to this, a new Romanticist translation of Dekker was published in 1819 by the Berlin publishers Voss: *Fortunatus und seine Söhne. Eine Zauber-Tragödie*, translated by Friedrich Wilhelm Valentin Schmidt, professor of English and French and strongly influenced by the Romantic tendencies of his time. It is typical of Romanticism to canonize forerunners, and thereby to allow long-lasting historical misunderstandings. Yet Romanticism also gave back to *Fortunatus* (like many other texts that were rediscovered around 1800) some of the ambivalence that is characteristic of the German novel in prose.

A similar *Fortunatus* series occurred in England. A chapbook on *The Right Pleasant and Diverting History of Fortunatus and his Two Sons* was printed in 1740 (reprinted 1752).⁴⁰ Around 1800, there were several new *Fortunatus*: Fascinated by Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, Charles Lamb read the collection *Old English Plays* by C. W. Dilke (1814), which also reprints Dekker's *Old Fortunatus*. In 1819 *Fortunatus and his Sons*, an adaptation of the topic that ends with the happy marriage of Andelosia and Agrippina, was performed in Covent Garden with music composed by Henry R. Bishop. William Hazlitt in his *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* (1819) praises *Old Fortunatus* as a lively and funny piece, typical of its era. Decades later, Edward Litt Laman Blanchard (1821–1889), a bohemian who wrote for the Drury Lane Theater and the *Daily Telegraph*, developed his *Little King Pippin. Harlequin Fortunatus and the magic purse and wishing hat. Grand comic Christmas Pantomime* (1875?). The story of *Fortunatus* is extinguished. Only his character and gifts remain. A similar version of *Fortunatus* had been presented in yet another adaptation at the Melbourne Opera on 27 December 1875 by Alberto Zelman (1832–1907), an Italian-born composer and since 1870 conductor of the Australian Opera Company as well as of the Melbourne “Liedertafel Harmonia,” a meeting point of German emigrants during the Gold Rush era. On the *Fortunatus* theme, Zelman had worked together with Henry Bracy (born Samuel Thomas Dunn, 1846–1917), a Welsh tenor who specialized in comical French operas in Australia. In the English-speaking context, too, *Fortunatus* caught Romanticists' attention because of its miraculous content and allegorical poet-

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

ics, as well as through the ways the narrative engages with seduction by a higher being. The Romantic reception apparently inspired then-current popular artists to transfer *Fortunatus* to comedy and opera; *Fortunatus* remained a popular subject until the end of the nineteenth century.

Conclusions

Though there are different strands of circulation in the Holy Roman Empire and in England, they cross over. Apparently, the different *Fortunatus* result from cross-fertilization: until 1800 from cross-fertilization between Germany and England, later within the countries themselves and other literary contexts. Taking these observations together, we can see that *Fortunatus* has occupied an intercultural space and constituted a network of texts: as German culture is historically fragmented anyway, *Fortunatus* was known in deviating versions (Augsburg vs. Frankfurt). *Fortunatus* became floating material that spread into different genres. Character and plot migrated widely through woodcuts and the chapbook from Europe to Australia – as a European and global character, as a European and global plot. The ways in which aspects of *Fortunatus* have been taken up are typical of the relevant cultural context, e.g. it is typical of Dekker to introduce a concrete religious and political (Anglican) context into his play – and for Romanticism to take a step back to allegorical presentations, and introduce intimate relations such as the friendship with the minister Rehberg into the text. These updates show that it is not possible to trace all aspects of the *Fortunatus* stories back to their original; there are also individual inventions.

One may surely agree with ecological approaches in the world literature debate: it is mainly larger languages and popular topics such as *Fortunatus* that tend to survive in the history of literature, theater, and drama.⁴¹ The fact that the *Fortunatus* complex was kept alive for quite a long time and was being reinvented in the Romantic period is to a large extent due to its intercultural reception, the main strand of which is English. As much as English troupes professionalized theater and drama, circulating texts like *Fortunatus* also played an important role in that shift. *Fortunatus* may be one of the best early modern examples of David Damrosch's claim that world literature is a "mode of circulation and reading."⁴² It is typical of the early modern period that the

⁴¹ Alexander Beecroft. *An Ecology of World Literature. From Antiquity to the Present Day*. London, New York: Verso, 2015, pp. 280–282.

⁴² David Damrosch. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 5. See *Companion to Comparative Literature, World Literatures, and Comparative Cultural Studies*, edited by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Tutun Mukherjee. Bangalore et al.:

original text, in turn, is dissolved in this process. The value of a literary work, the concepts of authorship and *belles lettres*, were not yet invented, not to mention “world literature” as a frame of reference for contemporary texts. Yet taking into account the widespread reception of *Fortunatus* – the chapbook also reached the Netherlands, France, Denmark, and many other European countries – the *Fortunatus* complex can be viewed as European or world literature before the invention of World Literature.

This type of world literature before World Literature was genuinely inspired by its often illiterate audience; it drifted toward a poetics of perception that included all people who might be able to afford to watch a performance.⁴³ Its aim was to please, educate, and share a narrative complex that helped the rethinking of basic moral convictions and attitudes. English wandering actors’ groups allowed their German audience to recognize the importance of a wider European cultural heritage, and profited from this themselves. Characters like Faust and *Fortunatus* were apparently known so well that they could compete with biblical characters. It was different with French drama and theater – as Lessing correctly notes: Firstly, the *Fortunatus* story as well as *Faust* is based on relatively current histories and not on Antiquity (as was the case with adaptations from the French). Secondly, the means of distribution of English early modern theater and drama went back to the pre-print era: woodcuts and wandering actors’ groups (differently than the French texts, which are often based on printed books). Thirdly, the mental and literary background of these dramas was composed of morals, religion, and politics, the quarrel between religion and science, vice and virtue; the French texts move more toward issues of civic and civilized behavior, the impact of reason, and the role of religion in a developing secular world. The rich popular tradition of theater and drama, however, was moved backstage and only came into view through the rediscovery of Shakespeare in Lessing’s time.

Another shift happened in the nineteenth century and around 1900, when *Fortunatus* seems to have been forgotten and turned into *gesunkenes Kultur-*

Foundation Books, 2013; *Approaches to World Literature*, edited by Joachim Küpper. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013; Thomas O. Beebee. “Introduction: Departures, Emanations, Intersections.” *German Literature as World Literature*, edited by Thomas O. Beebee, New York et al.: Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 1–22; *Figuren des Globalen: Weltbezug und Welterzeugung in Literatur, Kunst und Medien*, edited by Christian Moser and Linda Simonis. Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2014 (Global Poetics: Literatur- und kulturwissenschaftliche Studien zur Globalisierung, 1).

⁴³ The democratic claim of World Literature is stressed by Caroline Levine, B. Venkat Mani. “What Counts as World Literature?” *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 74, no. 2, 2013, pp. 141–149.

gut.⁴⁴ The reason for this may have been the ever-changing economic conditions, morals, and mentalities as well as an increase in similar, yet different character types: there may have been too many new and specific Fortunati, also in more elaborate and contemporary outlooks. Industrialization prompted authors to produce endless series of “industry novels,” with their character-type of the pre-capitalist factory owner; the professionalization of the financial market demanded novels like *L’Argent* by Émile Zola; and stories on the degeneration of merchant families (e.g. Thomas Mann’s *Buddenbrooks*), and of the American Dream (e.g. F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Great Gatsby*) dominated the sphere that had been occupied by the Fortunatus complex. Building on this assumption differentiation and complexity, spatiality, context, and untranslatability come into play.⁴⁵ Fortunatus was conceived in an era that still built on an almost identical set of morals as well as on (Christian) religion. Though the character of Fortunatus and the actions in which he was involved had been depicted in differing ways, the character-type fitted in across different early modern regions and countries. In the modern world, the challenges of the new Fortunatorum as well as their beliefs, morals, and aims had drifted apart, so one character-type and one plot could not cover them all. As a consequence, the floating of the Fortunatus material was restricted to its cultural context and could not be transferred so easily. Although prediction is not the aim of studies like this one, speculation might be allowed: it may well be that through the ongoing processes of internationalization and globalization in the economic and cultural sphere, theater and drama will bring Fortunatus back one day, updated and turned into a cosmopolitical jetsetter who has substituted his magic sack for a credit card and his wishing hat for a drone.

44 Mariano Siskind. “The Globalization of the Novel and the Novelization of the Global: A Critique of World Literature.” *Comparative Literature*, vol. 62, no. 4, 2010, pp. 336–360.

45 Emily Apter. *Against World Literature. On the Politics of Untranslatability*. London, New York: Verso, 2013.