Diffuse Consecration: How Modes of Authorship Shape Literary Prizes

1. Preamble & Methods

The Nobel Prize demands that we think about authorship. By authorship, we mean the fact of being an author, in both a textual and a worldly sense, as is now widely reflected upon in both general literary theory and specific case studies of literary practice (e.g. Boes, Braun & Spiers 2020; Pender 2017; Chris & Gerstner 2013; Gallop 2011; Braun 2008; McGann 1992). The impetus for this stems directly from Alfred Nobel's will, the opaque terms of which refer to the 'ideal direction' that the laureate must have indicated either in or through their work. The will's terms cleave closely to the idea of a set of principles that might define a person's character or outlook on the world. Such deliberate incursion into stipulating how literature should be in the world, what values should underpin it, makes particularly evident the fact that, in the very act of celebrating literary achievement, society is also celebrating a certain model of how to be a human who writes. At stake in this award is a highly public articulation of the personal attitudes and values literary work is able to convey and find echoed in the world around it as part of an ongoing set of human relationships sustaining society.

When the Romanian-German author Herta Müller won the Nobel Prize in 2009, reactions to what people thought was being rewarded ranged from bemusement through cynicism to celebration. As has been documented elsewhere (Haines & Marven 2013), the Anglophone world ran through various forms of blank incomprehension at how the award could be made to someone it had never heard of, but not without pointing by way of explanation to the political desire to reward someone representing the Eastern bloc on the twentieth anniversary of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Responses across German-speaking Europe, by contrast, were enthusiastic, not just because the work and experiences of one of their own was gaining global recognition, but also because an entire literary culture was being validated. Nicolas Rothwell, writing in *The Australian*, assesses the divergence in reactions occasioned by the 2009 Nobel award to be the result of two fundamentally opposed literary cultures which, between them, make up a good part of the global field of literary production: '[It] foregrounds the divide between the literary climate

of the West, where celebrity and sales define success, and the realm of mid-European letters, where high themes and poetic language still hold sway.' (Rothwell 2009)

This article takes the divergent responses to Herta Müller's Nobel award as its starting point for re-evaluating how major literary prizes intersect with the wider social construction of authorship and how we can effectively study this. Although discourse on and around Müller provides the case study, her case is not in itself remarkable. It is commonly understood that controversy or other forms of global disagreement about the laureate in any one year is an integral part of the Prize's long-running cultural importance (most recently: Cheuk 2021). Less well understood, however, is the extent to which the act of consecration, so publicly performed each year at the Prize announcement and running through the extended global media coverage and formal ceremony that follow in its wake, determines the subsequent authorship of its laureates – and whether their authorship might not also determine the original award and, with that, the act of consecration itself. Similarly, how do different cultural expectations regarding authorship affect the way global literary prizes are viewed in different parts of the world. Whose 'ideal direction' are we ultimately talking about, that of the Prize or the author, and how much agency does any one particular instance of consecration exert?

The term 'consecration' is taken directly from the work of Pierre Bourdieu who, writing on processes of canonization, points to its fundamentally diffuse nature:

> One might, in combining different methods, try to follow the process of consecration in the diversity of its forms and its manifestations (inauguration of statues or commemorative plaques, attribution of street names, creation of commemorative societies, introduction into university courses and so forth), to observe the fluctuations in the stock of different authors (through the sales figures of books or through the articles written about them), to untangle the logic of struggles for their rehabilitation, etc. And not the least contribution of such a labour would be to make explicit the process of conscious or unconscious inculcation which leads us to accept the established hierarchy as self-evident. (Bourdieu 1996: p. 225)

Exactly how consecration unfolds has since been the subject of many studies working at both micro and macro levels, including a dedicated special issue of *Poetics* in 2016. The editor of that special issue differentiates between 'consecration' and 'legitimation', with the former being individual instances of recognition as they happen and the latter a cumulative consensus arrived at within the field regarding longer-term artistic value (Lizé 2016: p.1). Both concepts are implied in the passage from Bourdieu, above, which effectively moves from individual instances of consecration to an entrenched artistic hierarchy within the field that all those individual instances are sustaining. Yet while Bourdieu points to the multiple forms consecration can take and allows for further modulation of value over time and space as well as the 'symbolic alchemy involving the collaboration, with the same conviction but very unequal profits, of a whole set of agents engaged in the field of production', each individual instance of consecration – the award of a major literary prize, for example – is taken as absolute: a clear manifestation of consecratory agency on the part of the awarding body (Bourdieu 1996: p.170).

This absolute understanding of consecration as a bounded and integral, if multiply repeatable, act feeds into models that tend towards simplification, whereby only a final classification counts, with little room left for cultural difference in different parts of the world. Bourdieu himself talks about his field theory as akin to a game with 'winners' and 'losers' (1996), and major literary prizes such as the Nobel are routinely reported on in the media in terms akin to Olympic or other sporting achievements (English 2005, Braun 2014). In literary scholarship too it is still common to refer to a rather narrow set of consecratory acts when justifying studying a particular author and, in so doing, couch them as individual achievements with significant impact. Recent sociological approaches to literary studies in the vein of Howard Becker (2008/1983) and Bruno Latour (2005), by contrast, have tried to bring more finesse to conceptual models of how art worlds and/or socio-cultural networks are structured by dynamic interrelations and collaborations. This has entailed, on the one hand, expanding the kinds of sites studied for instances of consecration (Sapiro 2016, Hodkinson & Schofield 2020) and, on the other, using a broader set of techniques than traditional literary studies allows (Childress et all 2016, Pouly 2016, Felski & Muecke 2020). In both cases, the emphasis is on looking again at the key constellations within a particular act of consecration or otherwise extrapolating in a more differentiated manner between individual instances of creating literary value and a perceived larger sociological trend.

'Diffuse consecration' as deployed here has at its heart this turn towards greater conceptual understanding of how cultural value is created and sustained collaboratively, right from the first act of recognition, as well as how it changes over time.

Our conceptual framework accordingly builds on both the general cultural theorists referenced above and the particular investigation of consecration initiated in Lizé's 2016 edited collection. Our focus, however, is specifically on authorship. In a spirit similar to that of Donna Haraway (2016), we propose 'staying with the trouble' that Lizé's collection highlights in Bourdieu's work by returning to the diffuse nature of consecration. Our work attempts to think beyond the discrete individual and notions of singular agency, whether this is meant at the level of the person or the institution. At the centre of our discussion is a set of questions around consecration as an unbounded phenomenon: where, if anywhere (or everywhere), does it sit and how can we, as literary scholars and cultural analysts, trace it as it evolves in different cultural contexts? We – a literary historian and a discursive linguist – have followed Bourdieu's implicit advice and teamed up deliberately to merge our methods in pursuit of a holistic answer that helps open out practical ways of studying 'the process of conscious or unconscious inculcation' in respect of literary authorship as it moves around the world.

Herta Müller, who serves as our case study for this, has been multiply mediated from one cultural context to another: first from Romania to Germany, and then from the German-language into multiple other languages, though our focus here is on her mediation in UK and US English. The fact that she required conscious mediation even within her source-language context (for a Federal German readership to find their way into her Romanian-German experiences) makes her a particularly good case study for discussion of diffuse consecration and the different cultural attitudes that different modes of authorship reveal. Her career also exhibits a double caesura in scales of consecration: firstly when she moved to Germany, escaping the immediate threat to her life in 1987, and gradually becoming normalised within the German cultural context, and secondly when she won the Nobel Prize in 2009, gaining widespread international recognition for her authorship.

The methods we employ in what follows are all empirical and abductive (see Wodak 2004), studying consecration from different angles and with different datasets. The 'modes of authorship' outlined in the next section were arrived at through a longitudinal review of German literary history across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and up to the present

day (Braun 2022). While the resultant typology draws on the particularly German context of authorship, the four broad categories it invokes are sufficiently generic to be applicable to all literatures routinely included in debates about world literature. Cultural specificity is captured not in the overarching typology but rather in the particular combinations and the subtle changes in these combinations that can be discerned over time and space. Accordingly, we use the typology here to articulate the diffuse nature of seemingly discrete acts of consecration, whilst at the same time charting how the modes of authorship are differently combined in different consecratory contexts. This latter observation, which requires comparing different individual acts of consecration in the context of their cumulative effect, is made possible by applying analytical techniques typically used to examine how social actors (in this case, an author) are discursively constructed through verbal and visual semiotic elements. Overall, this allows us to follow an abductive and interdisciplinary process, juxtaposing empirical research and theoretical frameworks from different scholarly traditions. Working through the specific case study of Herta Müller, we assess how two different genres (in the sense of text types, see Bhatia 1993) related to literary production use both verbal and non-verbal measures to construct her authorship before and after her Nobel win and in German-speaking and Anglophone contexts. We present two illustrative analyses, the first examining paratextual material found on book covers and in front/end matter while the second analyses media articles using both corpus analysis and qualitative analysis of a smaller sample. The empirical nature of these semiotic and textual analyses complements the primarily literary analysis which has given rise to the theoretical concepts on which we draw, allowing ongoing abductive investigation of the modes of authorship outlined as our starting point below.

2. Conceptual Toolkit: Modes of Authorship

'Modes of authorship' refers to ways of being and/or perceiving an author. While French literary theory, through the seminal work of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault in the late 1960s, has given us ways of critiquing the very notion of authorship as a discrete agential activity, more recent work on the subject has sought to explain exactly how the individuals who do nevertheless persist within the writing process relate to their wider environs. Building on the work of Bourdieu, literary sociologist Jérôme Meizoz, for example, has offered considerable insight into the notion of authorial 'posture' (2007, 2011). While the

disciplines of Social Science in general and Linguistics in particular are very familiar with the idea of calculated forms of role play and self-presentation determining social interaction (most notably through the work of Erving Goffmann, 1959), Meizoz works out these ideas specifically in relation to literary authorship. His contribution to the broader debate is to provide a framework for thinking how a certain rhetorical position struck within a literary text can subsequently inform strategies and expectations around the kind of self-presentation that the author may manipulate in their own life. While fruitful for helping explain choices authors make around cultivating a public persona and providing a means of linking aesthetic innovation with changes in the broader cultural environment, the notion of posture is not wholly sufficient for our purposes. This is because it refers primarily to what the author consciously does in their writing and accompanying self-presentation, and not so directly to what other people do with the author - or indeed to the submerged assumptions and practices that may not be directly on anyone's radar but can prove influential when it comes to understanding how a society thinks about literature: that 'process of conscious or unconscious inculcation' to which Bourdieu refers.

If we are to understand consecration as inherently diffuse, we therefore also need to explore how attitudes accompany literature both consciously and subconsciously and from a very diverse range of actors. Representing literary writing as inherently valuable to a wider audience – whether as an author, a journalist, or a prize body - is a deliberate act of positioning that can be seen and reflected upon, but it also invokes something quite intangible that precedes and conditions the very valuing systems that claim to consecrate it. While the former deliberate act is encapsulated in the idea of a tangible model of authorship – think of the twentieth-century public intellectual, for example, as which many Nobel winners have functioned – the latter intangible value requires the idea of a mode: an attitudinal relationship to writing that unfolds both in the writing itself and in the way that writing is perceived by others. In this sense, authorship is co-created by multiple stakeholders and constantly subject to change

A mode of authorship, then, describes a certain attitude towards being an author in the world, whether on the part of that author or of the wider world that yields and validates their authorship. It can be inferred from close analysis of literary practices, whether these practices reside in the tangible structure of a literary text, are reconstructed through archival traces of relations across the literature network or are intangibly subject to

philosophical concepts or social conventions. It is not necessarily directly perceived by either an author or any other actor as significant in its own right. With respect to German literary history of the latter half of the twentieth century and up to the present moment, four modes suggest themselves: the celebratory, commemorative, satirical and the utopian. Drawing on Braun (2022), we summarise them briefly here and, as above, contend that they are readily applicable beyond the German-speaking cultural sphere.

The celebratory mode of authorship articulates both how authors themselves and the many other participants in a literature network value literary endeavour. It is structurally endemic to many of the mediators within the literature network: the very act of publishing a book displaying an author's name is itself an act of inherent celebration, for example. At this basic level, all engagement with the work of an author happens within the celebratory mode of authorship, regardless of whether that engagement is positive or negative.

The commemorative mode shares some of the normative, representational issues that are associated with the celebratory mode, but it is rendered distinct by the central role played by different attitudes to the past prevalent in any one setting and the way in which they will determine how this representation is connoted and for whom. Without being inherently more or less ethical or directed than the celebratory mode, there is a markedly greater likelihood that this mode of authorship will be invoked to frame ethical considerations within a culture's sense of self and be oriented towards specific publics.

Unlike the commemorative or the celebratory modes, the utopian mode is invoked not primarily to emulate or return to past models or events, but rather to uncover new, parallel paths through human history that allow us to think and act differently in the now. The divergent and contradictory nature of these paths in turn renders the single location of an originating author in one historical context an impossibility. The utopian mode is only possible as a form of equally weighted dialogue that by necessity disperses authority across the text and relativizes any one authorial stance.

Lastly, where the celebratory mode seeks to model an attitude of respect and shared heritage across diverse publics by focusing primarily on exemplary achievement and facilitating the attendant processes of celebrating the successful person, the satirical mode questions these very values and processes by exaggerating or otherwise undermining their reach. In this sense, in a simplifying matrix of all four modes, the satirical pairs as a

corrective of sorts to the celebratory mode, just as we saw the utopian mode qualifying the purview of the commemorative mode, to move from a retrospective, re-creative focus to that of a parallel present or alternative futures. Fig X visualises this, with natural correcting correlatives meeting on the diagonal, while those that are less likely to pair push away from each other on the vertical. Horizontal affinities (between commemorative and celebratory modes, and between utopian and satirical modes) are particularly strong and marked by a tie.
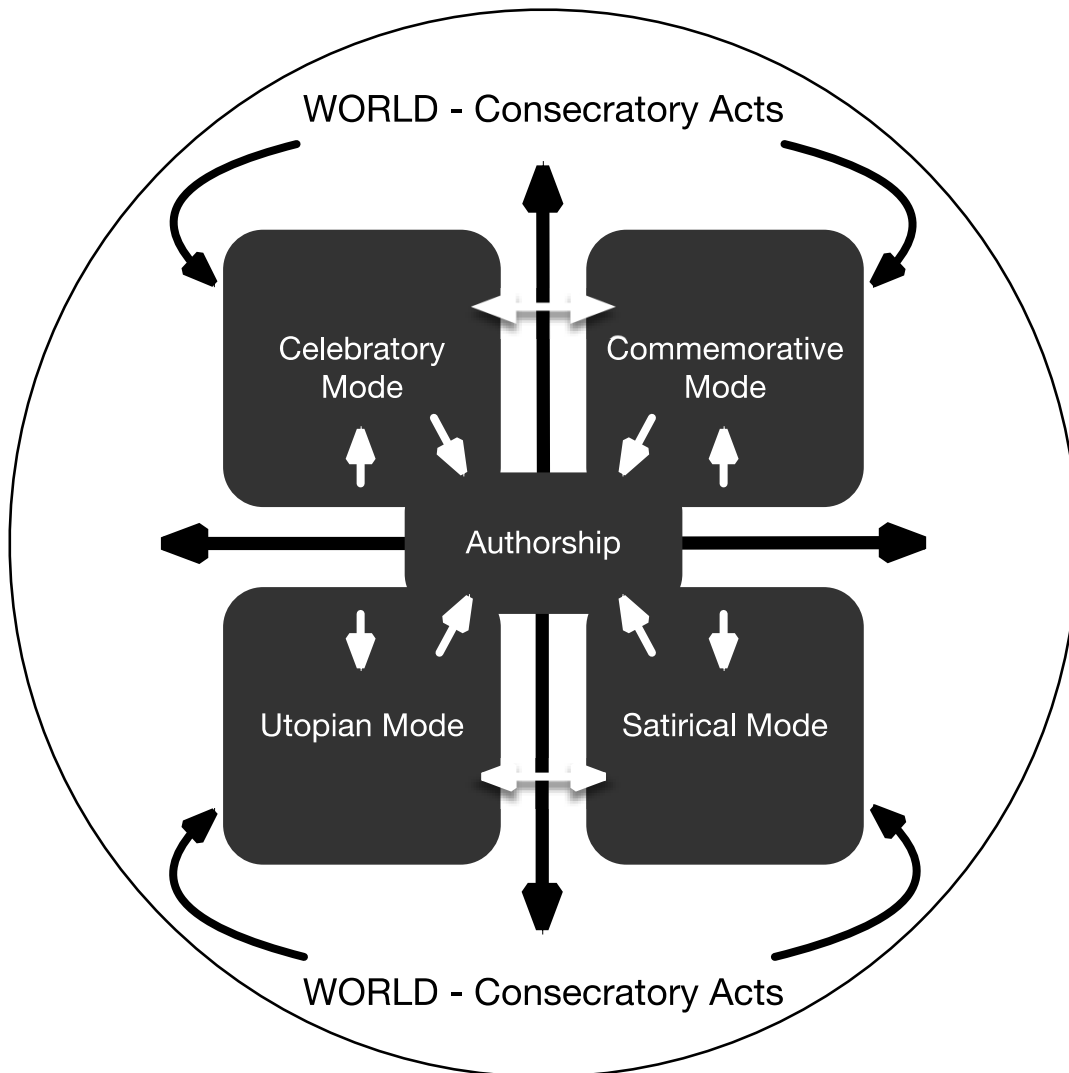

Fig X. Relations of affinity and influence: between modes, and between authorship and the wider world

The product of significant two-way interaction between an individual and the wider world, literary authorship, when viewed as the product of the interactions between these modes, can be grasped as both a textual and an inherently social phenomenon in the spirit

of both Bourdieu and Meizoz, but with significant constitutive power for the way we grasp the worlds, real and imagined, around us. This has considerable significance for the way acts of consecration unfold, because, by definition, the act of valuing literature is embedded in literary value, which is in turn expressed through the attitudinal modes of authorship (as illustrated by the long arrows emanating outwards from authorship and inputting in from the wider world in Fig X). Rather like primary colours, these modes are sufficiently distinct to cover off very marked differences in the practice of authorship, but they combine and interact with one another in any one particular manifestation of authorship to produce multiple shades of difference and development over time and in different parts of the world. Acts of consecration capture individual manifestations within this movement through time and space. There is not space to delve into the finer points and characteristics of these modes here; the salient detail for this argument is that modes equate to fundamental attitudes towards writing and being a writer and they can condition both what an author is doing and how that author is perceived by others. Most importantly, with regard to the question of diffuse consecration, the modes fundamentally reject any simple location of agency in any part of what is in effect an author-world continuum.

3. Discourse data set 1: paratextual construction of Herta Müller's authorship

In this section, we discuss one place where authorship is routinely constructed using both visual and verbal means, namely book covers and the accompanying paratextual front and end matter around the literary content in a published work. This genre is particularly relevant because it is both physically very close to the author's rhetorical position within the text and yet usually constructed by others. The dominant mode(s) of authorship attending to the work are therefore particularly visibly co-created by others here. With regard to consecration, the appearance of a literary work as a published book with a reputable publisher is of course an act of consecration in itself. Any further relevant acts of consecration that pertain to the author and/or this particular work – prizes won or support offered by literary institutions – will also be foregrounded on the material object. Similarly, the inherently extended nature of authorship – which includes the work done by designers, translators, typesetters and so on – will be explicitly acknowledged. The diffuse nature of consecration discussed above thus meets directly with a diffuse practice of authorship that

relies on subtle shadings in the way modes of authorship are combined, even as the system as a whole is working to convey a singular image of the author as celebrated creator of the literary work.

In order to elucidate how the modes of authorship map on to different contexts of consecration, we discuss two titles, taken at a point when Herta Müller was beginning to be well established, first in the German context and then in the international context: her 1997 *Heute wär ich mir lieber nicht begegnet* (Rowohlt) and her 2009 *Atemschaukel* (Hanser). Both were subsequently translated into US and UK English. *Heute wär ich mir lieber nicht begegnet* (henceforth referred to as *Heute*) was translated into English by Michael Hulse and Philip Boehm and published in hardback as *The Appointment* in 2001 by the US Metropolitan Books (a subsidiary of Henry Holt and an imprint of MacMillan). A paperback version followed in 2002, published by MacMillan's paperback subsidiary, Picador*. Atemschaukel* appeared immediately before the Nobel Prize announcement in hardback with Hanser in Germany. The 2011 paperback version significantly post-dates the announcement. The text was translated into English by Anthea Bell as *The Hunger Angel* and published in the UK by Portobello Books in hardback in 2012, before being released in paperback in 2013. The US hardback and paperback versions of the text have similar publication dates, and were published by the same imprints as *The Appointment*.

In 1997, Müller, who had fled persecution in Romania to move to West Germany a decade earlier, was only beginning to be more widely known in Germany. The paratextual material of *Heute* indicates in several ways an attempt on the part of the publisher to bring Müller's distinctively Romanian experiences to a German audience and, in so doing, embed her writing in the context of contemporary German literature. This prefigures in a German setting what would happen at the end of the next decade on the global, Anglophone-dominated market after her Nobel win. Directly invoking the commemorative mode of authorship, the cover of both the hardback and the paperback uses a ghostly green image of a horse captured at the centre of a desolate street scene with indications of pre-modern architecture. On the back, an anonymized review from the regional newspaper, *Kölnische Rundschau*, explicitly discusses (in celebratory mode) her literary achievements in the context of contemporary German literature, while the brief summary offered of the text draws out the author's distinctive presentation of a specifically Romanian experience. The importance of Müller's personal experience and the insight that the reader may gain

through engaging with her authentic text is emphasized both by the large portion of her author bio that covers her personal suffering under the Romanian regime, and the author photograph that is looking directly at the reader and seems to demand some form of interaction. Both of these features point towards the commemorative mode of authorship, which is geared towards capturing an authentic experiences of loss.

The American edition uses a very similar author biography to the German editions. Now, however, the portrait accompanying the biography looks considerably more severe, strongly invoking the commemorative mode. This, coupled with the fact that the biography is printed in two different places in the back matter, emphasises the author's personal suffering to an even greater extent than was the case in the German paratextual mediation. However, the author's international literary biography is also accorded greater space. The significance of having won the 1994 IMPAC award is significantly played up in the American edition, which features references to *The Land of Green Plums* on the front and back of the cover, while the IMPAC award is referenced on both inside flaps and the biography in the back matter. With the author's name also visibly larger on the American dustjacket and second title page and her biography included twice over, the importance of the author's celebrated person seems to grow as the different instances of international consecration are invoked. This indicates the comparatively greater importance accorded the celebratory mode in Anglophone constructions of Müller's authorship than in the German context, where the authenticity inherent in the commemorative mode predominated.

The 2009 hardback version of *Atemschaukel*, by contrast, gives almost no space to mediating Müller's personal experiences, and the visual images used are not designed to encourage any form of empathetic author-reader dialogue. Instead, with the front cover side-on image of a man appearing to hover between life and death and the back cover taken up with a passage from the text, which is glossed as a publishing 'event', the text appears caught in its own celebratory moment, confident enough to assume the German reader's interest as a given. The commemorative mode of the content is visually rendered secondary to the celebratory mode of the text's assertion of its authorship. Likewise, Müller's literary credentials as a prize-winning author (though not yet a Nobel laureate) now dominate her author biography on the back flap, which is not even accompanied by a photograph: a presumption now that her name alone is enough to signal her literary value. Other indicators affirm her celebrated position: the back cover finishes with quotations from top

journalists (now named) from two of the leading German broadsheets, while the inside flap includes analysis from the Swiss broadsheet, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. Authorial thanks are expressed to both the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* and the *Robert-Bosch-Stiftung*, indicating Müller's increasing ability to draw on significant German stakeholder support for her writing.

The German mediation of Müller as an established author immediately prior to her winning the Nobel Prize would therefore appear to have fallen into line with the international Anglophone approach that, right from the offset, tended towards a heightened, explicit celebration of her literary value alongside her socio-political significance. The UK English-language paperback edition of *The Hunger Angel* includes several additional pages of front matter that is given over to a mixture of named reviewers, other named Anglophone writers, and quotations from leading international papers and magazines. All of this underscores both the dominant celebratory mode and the distinctly diffuse consecration that now define Müller's internationally-recognised authorship. The multiple agencies that surround her Anglophone authorship create a sense of entering into the text through a series of institutional performances and collaborations that have been orchestrated for the reader's benefit. This performative element is particularly underscored by the UK hardback cover, which places an image of the text, open on its title page, at the heart of a sumptuously photographed recreation of a mid-20th century suitcase with personal effects. This sends out a signal that the text might function as some form of historical docu-fiction. This genre is popular in twenty-first-century UK TV and film, weaving together the celebratory and the commemorative modes to significant commercial success but also with substantive power to determine broader public discourse on matters of cultural importance.

The different emphases that can be discerned in the way the commemorative and celebratory modes are combined as we move through time and between the German, US, and UK contexts point to different inherent expectations about literary authorship and its wider value for society. This first, necessarily brief, analysis of the paratextual material would appear to lend weight to Rothwell's description of a fundamental cultural difference between the way the (Anglophone) West and Central European nations value authors, as subtly different kinds of authorship emerge from the respective book covers and front and end matter. Consolidation within the European book market over the period between the

publication of the two works discussed may partly explain why the 2009 German paratextual material more closely mirrors the Anglophone constructions of Müller's authorship: a stronger drive towards commercialisation in general across the sector has had an impact on cover design and marketing practices. Even within the Anglophone context, however, there remain distinct differences in the extent to which different audiences are encouraged to partake in the celebratory mode and how other modes of authorship are mixed into broader public debates when it comes to a significant act of consecration. These can be further explored with reference to wider media discourse around Müller's Nobel win in different Anglophone settings.

4. Discourse data set 2. English-language media texts about Herta Müller's Nobel win

Herta Müller's Nobel Prize win was widely reported and discussed, with news database *Nexis* returning 524 English-language results that mention Herta Müller and the Nobel Prize from the date of the announcement (8th October 2009) to the same date the following year, with 210 of these in newspapers (as opposed to newswires, blogs, industry journals and the like) [1]. This is a somewhat greater number of articles than those about Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio's win the previous year, which appeared 334 times (153 of those in newspapers), but fewer than the following year's winner Mario Vargas Llosa, appearing 893 times (331 in newspapers). In exploring the dataset of articles about Müller, our aim is to establish how the modes of authorship outlined above and originally established via a survey of German literary history, are realised linguistically in media texts.

We draw on the categories of discursive construction, or discourse strategies, established in Reisigl & Wodak (2016), and in particular on the strategies of nomination and predication. These are associated with the following questions, respectively: 'How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?' and 'What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social

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[1] The distribution of the articles across the date range is as follows (number of articles in parentheses): 8th Oct 2009 (7); 9th Oct 2009 (46); 10th Oct 2009 (10); 11th Oct 2009 (7); Later in Oct 2009 (35); Nov 2009 (20); Dec 2009 (36); Jan 2010 (10); Feb 2010 (8); Mar-Sep 2010 (10); 1st-6th Oct 2010 (3); 7th Oct 2010 (5); 8th Oct 2010 (13)

actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?' (p. 32). A wide variety of linguistic devices can be used for these strategies, including (but not limited to) labels with particular connotative meanings, metaphors and metonymies, evaluative attributions via adjectives or predicates, allusions and many others (see Reisigl & Wodak 2016, p. 33, for a more comprehensive list).

Our aim in analysing this dataset is not to present an exhaustive account of all the different ways in which all the articles about Müller's prize win construct her as an author, but rather to present a series of illustrations linking particular forms of nomination and predication with specific modes of authorship. For this purpose, we first 'cleaned' the data, for instance removing any metadata (such as the name of the newspaper), harmonising the spellings of *Müller/Muller/Mueller*, and removing verbatim duplicate articles, and then analysed the remaining 203 newspaper texts using the #LancsBox corpus tool. This allowed us to find out which words occurred with a statistically higher probability, so called keywords, in the texts about Herta Müller's Nobel Prize win versus a corpus of general news texts drawn from the British National Corpus 2014 Baby+ (Brezina et al. 2021). The BNC2014 Baby+ contains around one million words of news texts from the UK drawn from mass (tabloid), regional and serious (broadsheet) newspapers. Table X, below, shows the frequencies of the top 50 keywords in the Müller news corpus. These words are statistically overrepresented in the texts about Müller, which means they can give an idea of what these texts are about, and what particular words are used to construct Müller and her Nobel prize win. The table also shows the Log Ratio, a statistical measure which shows how much evidence there is that a word is overrepresented and by how much. We do not claim here that these words are necessarily surprising to scholars familiar with Müller and reportage on the Nobel prize; rather, we link specific groups of words with different modes of authorship, in order to provide empirical support, not based purely on intuition, for our claims about how the different modes of authorship are linguistically realised in the texts under investigation. The keyword analysis also allows us to gain some information about a larger body of texts than would be possible through a purely qualitative approach, following Reisigl and Wodak's (2016) principle of methodological triangulation.

No	Keyword	ƒ1	ƒ2	Log Ratio	No	Keyword	ƒ1	ƒ2	Log Ratio
1	herta	307	0	12.14	26	chromosomes	35	0	9.01
2	llosa	185	0	11.41	27	kronor	34	0	8.97
3	müller	617	2	11.15	28	vargas	200	3	8.94
4	müller's	141	0	11.02	29	ada	33	0	8.93
5	nobel	791	4	10.51	30	yonath	32	0	8.88
6	securitate	96	0	10.47	31	banat	30	0	8.79
7	englund	87	0	10.32	32	dispossessed	59	1	8.76
8	romanian-born	82	0	10.24	33	roth	58	1	8.74
9	ceausescu	71	0	10.03	34	$1.4	29	0	8.74
10	ceausescu's	70	0	10.01	35	orhan	27	0	8.64
11	u.s.	127	1	9.87	36	frankness	53	1	8.61
12	ostrom	59	0	9.76	37	marquez	52	1	8.58
13	nicolae	55	0	9.66	38	clezio	26	0	8.58
14	translated	106	1	9.61	39	engdahl	26	0	8.58
15	mr.	105	1	9.60	40	tanase	25	0	8.53
16	german-speaking	52	0	9.58	41	llosa's	25	0	8.53
17	ms.	51	0	9.55	42	nadirs	25	0	8.53
18	laureates	48	0	9.47	43	jelinek	25	0	8.53
19	atemschaukel	43	0	9.31	44	pinter	25	0	8.53
20	booker	39	0	9.17	45	szostak	24	0	8.47
21	plums	77	1	9.15	46	nobels	24	0	8.47
22	niederungen	36	0	9.05	47	lessing	24	0	8.47
23	pamuk	35	0	9.01	48	dictatorship	95	2	8.45
24	romania's	35	0	9.01	49	peruvian	47	1	8.44
25	greider	35	0	9.01	50	honored	23	0	8.40

Table X: Keyword frequency in corpus of news texts about Müller's Nobel Prize win (target corpus ƒ1) compared with news texts in BNC2014 Baby+ corpus (reference corpus ƒ2) and log ratio

By virtue of the chosen search terms used to create the target corpus (herta + müller/mueller/muller + nobel + prize), it is not surprising that many of the keywords relate to Müller herself (*Herta, Müller, Müller's*) or to the prize in general (*honored, Nobel, laureates, Nobels* – the latter being a more colloquial term for the award of the Nobel Prize found in a number of headlines). The articles are also about other Nobel Prize recipients, including the names, research areas and nationalities of those receiving Nobel Prizes in other years or disciplines (*Vargas, Llosa('s), Clezio, Ostrom, Orhan, Pamuk, Ada, Yonath,*

Greider, chromosomes, Peruvian, Marquez, Jelinek, Pinter, Szostak, Lessing), and the mechanics of the prize itself (*$1.4, kronor* – referring to the prize money) and one writer who was in the running but was ultimately not selected (*Roth*). All these words are largely related to the celebratory mode of authorship: they introduce the focus of the articles (Herta Müller and other prize-winners) and announce and discuss the award of the prize. The invocation of Philip Roth, and the geographical designation *US*, as an author who could have (or should have, in the view of some of the Anglophone journalists and commentators) won points to nationalist traditions and tussles within the celebratory mode. A number of articles reflect on why Müller was relatively unknown outside of Germany (and even outside of the literary world within Germany). There is a particular focus on how many (or few) of her books have been *translated* into English. This last point encourages us to interrogate implicit linguistic hierarchies within the celebratory mode, as well as the accompanying political and economic power structures that have placed Anglophone and non-Anglophone literatures in an agonistic position, both in respect of the Nobel Prize and of the field of translated literature more broadly (Sapiro 2010). Notably, throughout the dataset the question of why English-language authors find it so hard to win the Nobel Prize is clearly present, reflecting the live nature of such debate, with comparisons to the *Booker* prize. The Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy (*Englund*) at the time is quoted as saying it is 'easier to relate to European literature' if you are European while the previous secretary (*Engdahl*) describes Americans as 'too sensitive to trends in their own mass culture.'.

Another group of keywords relates to Müller's biography (*Securitate, Romanian-born, Nicolae, Ceaucescu, German-speaking, Romania's, dictatorship, Banat*) and the titles, themes or contents of her novels (*Atemschaukel, Plums, Niderungen, Nadirs, Tanase, dispossessed* and *frankness* – due to a widely quoted statement from the prize committee who said that Müller's work, 'with the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose, depicts the landscape of the dispossessed'). Here we see both the celebratory and commemorative modes at work: Müller's credentials as a prolific author who is qualified to write about her own traumatic past are established, and this in turn provides an opportunity to reflect on her own and Europe's difficult twentieth-century history.

Alongside this corpus-based analysis, we chose four articles from the overall dataset which provide a sufficient variety of discourse strategies to let us illustrate how the authorial modes are realised linguistically in the data. These are taken from major

publications based in different parts of the Anglophone world, but which are also likely to attract a wider international readership. Our consideration of the international reach of these comparatively highbrow publications reflects Pascale Casanova's notion of an 'international literary field' in which consecration takes place and world authors are inherently constructed (Casanova 2007, Boes, Braun & Spiers 2020). The details of the chosen articles are given in Table X. We found these four to be particularly suitable because between them they contained extended discussion of Müller's life and works, the role of the Nobel prize in the broader literary field, and critique and reflection. This is in contrast to many of the articles which were short, factual reports listing the prize winners, or round-ups of the literary events of the month or year. Picking an article written many months after the announcement allowed us to illustrate how, in this case at least, time served as an additional agent of diffusion for consecration and led to a greater range of modes.

Source (Geographical base)	Date	Author	Headline
The Times (UK)	09 Oct 2009	Roger Boyes	Censored, attacked, exiled: Nobel prize for writer who defied dictator
The New York Times (US)	09 Oct 2009	Motoko Rich & Nicholas Kulish	German Who Writes of Exile Wins Nobel
The Australian (Australia)	13 Oct 2009	Nicolas Rothwell	Nobel recognition of a field of suffering
The Nation (US)	20 May 2010	Lorna Scott Fox	Eyes Wide Open: For Herta Müller, writing is not a matter of trusting, but rather of the honesty of the deceit

Table X: Articles chosen to illustrate linguistic realisations of modes of authorship

In the remainder of this section, we will present a number of illustrative examples from these four articles and show how they relate to the modes of authorship outlined above. The three articles that appeared on or shortly after the announcement all have similar opening paragraphs which nevertheless construct Müller and her past in somewhat different ways (emphasis added):

(1) Herta Müller, **a fierce critic of the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his secret police state**, was awarded

the Nobel Prize for Literature yesterday – almost 20 years after the leader met his end at the hands of a firing squad. (*Times*)

(2) Herta Muller, the **Romanian-born German novelist and essayist** who writes of the oppression of dictatorship in her native country and the unmoored existence of **the political exile**, won the 2009 Nobel Prize in Literature on Thursday. (*NY Times*)

(3) The award last Thursday of this year's Nobel prize for literature to **Romanian-born German novelist** Herta Muller thrusts **a European master** into the world spotlight. It also foregrounds the divide between the literary climate of the West, where celebrity and sales define success, and the realm of mid-European letters, where high themes and poetic language still hold sway. (*Australian*)

In each case, Müller's nationality is made salient, though Boyes (*Times*) saves discussion of Müller's biography for the second paragraph and instead chooses to foreground Müller's political activism, including the nomination 'a fierce critic'. Rothwell (*Australian*), writing a few days after the announcement and already referenced in the introduction to this article, uses geographical designations that may not immediately resonate with readers based in the Anglophone Northern Hemisphere: 'the West' (presumably referring to the UK and US, in particular) and 'the realm of mid-European letters' (perhaps Germany and Sweden, among others) are compared to make a point not about Müller's political activism or biography, but about different literary and publishing traditions that seem to create a gulf of understanding about who is chosen to receive the Nobel Prize and why.

In extract 4, Scott Fox (*Nation*), writing around 8 months after the announcement, takes a similar tack in her opening paragraph, but comes to a somewhat different conclusion:

(4) The 2009 Nobel Prize for Literature, in which bets were on Amos Oz or Philip Roth, shocked the world—again. The cries of 'Jean-Marie Le what?' greeting Le Clézio's 2008 selection were replaced in Britain and

the United States by a chorus of '**Herta who**?' and '**Not another unknown European!**' Well, for once our stupefaction is not simply a consequence of our notorious Anglocentrism. Fully five of Herta Müller's more than twenty works of fiction, poetry and essays had already been translated into English, against a mere three into French. (*Nation*)

While a number of the articles in the wider corpus discuss how little of Müller's work has been translated, Scott Fox seems to suggest that five works is plenty for Anglophone monoglots to have encountered Müller's work. Scott Fox is doing some careful positioning work here: she ascribes the viewpoint that Nobel Prize winners often lead to 'stupefaction' not to specific sources, but to 'cries' and 'a chorus' of unnamed and unknown Anglophones.

Across these four opening paragraphs, three of the four authorial modes can be discerned. All four articles invoke the celebratory mode by reporting on Müller's Nobel win, with (3) even explicitly constructing Müller as 'a European master'. The commemorative mode is then realised by the links made with Müller's biography and activism: her own strong normative stance as a 'fierce critic' (1) and 'political exile' (2) being foregrounded to show that her literary and biographical lives are inextricably linked. Extract (4), however, clearly displays satirical elements, and while the targets of Scott Fox's satire appear to be Anglophone readers rather than Müller herself, the imagined voices she brings into the conversation may be seen to suggest that Müller is not the kind of author the Anglophone world wishes to succeed in gaining the Nobel Prize. This is significant, because it also amounts to a fundamental questioning of the 'Western' celebratory mode, doing exactly what Bourdieu himself had hoped for in his own ruminations on the benefits of studying consecration using a mixed-methods approach: 'to make explicit the process of conscious or unconscious inculcation which leads us to accept the established hierarchy as self-evident.'

This weaving together of modes via nomination and predication strategies continues, as shown in the following extract, the second paragraph in Scott Fox's article :

(5) […] the choice of an **uncomfortable, marginal author** like Müller, writing about **life under the dictatorship she escaped from in 1987**, bears a message **that's significant for the United States and Britain**, countries that sailed relatively complacently through the storms of the past century. It recalls how recently most of Europe was a vortex of violence to rival the exotic places we prefer to read about in works of translation, if we must read them at all. To award the prize to **a still-young veteran of European totalitarianism**, whose work further shows the continuity of its structures and effects, is **a radical choice**. It **does not exactly celebrate** the liberal-democratic victory over communism, because there's no happy end to the story. (*Nation*)

Müller's award is presented as unusual because it mixes modes in a way that does not celebrate the dominance of Western cultural norms. The Nobel's individual instance of consecration inherently introduces the celebratory mode to the kind of authorship Müller can represent, as indeed does her own posture of believing in the power of literature and language. At the same time, Müller's biographical positioning, the literary aesthetics pursued in her texts, and the very act of awarding the Nobel to this author are all presented in the full text of this article as driven by an attitude of calling attention to a traumatic past, bridging uncomfortable gaps that gel awkwardly with where Western society likes to think it is now. On the one hand, then, and in partial counter to the straightforwardly celebratory act of consecration, the article draws out the extent to which the commemorative mode drives both Müller's literary aesthetics and the way other people construe her literary significance. On the other, and in addition to the above, salient satirical strategies are used to make the Western literary field question its own assumptions and undercut the inbuilt move towards self-celebration that accompanies the Prize's act of consecration. The passage of time is likely to have contributed to this shift in the modes of authorship attached to the act of consecration, when the need to report (and celebrate) the event is no longer present, and the author needs to build an argument that makes the article interesting to readers many months after the events it describes.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the articles mostly report on a Nobel win and try to contextualise 'another unknown European' for an Anglophone audience, the utopian mode is not particularly strongly realised in these articles. However, particularly in Scott Fox's

more reflective, retrospective piece, Müller's own beliefs and the lessons readers might learn from her escape from and continued critical stance towards dictatorships, from her existence between nations and ethnicities as neither 'fully' German nor Romanian in the eyes of her readers, may be said to offer some guidance on how to act morally:

> (6) **Better**, perhaps, to embody concepts, to materialize emotions and magically turn the flux of discursive realities into a cache of objects, achieving what her narrator only imagines: 'Instead of these thoughts we're constantly mulling over, **it would be better to have the actual things inside your head**, so you could reach in and touch them.' The care for looking and touching situates this author, if anywhere, among the dispossessed and the exiles, down in the poetic realm of the concrete particular, which is the only real source of universality. It's a lonely writing of vigilance that **reminds us to keep our eyes wide open**. (*Nation*)

There is deontic force – which calls the reader to action and to behave in particular ways – in the above extract (6) from the end of Scott Fox's article and it equates well with a nascent utopian mode that has been identified elsewhere in Müller's own literary writing (Braun 2022; McMurtry 2018).

5. Key Findings & Significance for Future Research

The datasets analysed in this article in conjunction with the conceptual typology of modes of authorship encourage a reassessment of what exactly consecration is and where it happens. The book jackets and accompanying paratextual material demonstrated how individual prize awards, along with other instances of consecration, are incorporated into both the material and metaphorical construction of literary authorship. This in turn feeds into iterative discourse on literary value, including the comparative significance of literary prizes, as was made explicit in the different ways the celebratory mode combined with other modes in different contexts and over time in the paratextual material. The newspaper articles dealing with Müller's Nobel win also demonstrated how not just the significance of an individual consecratory act, but the very question of what is being consecrated at all and with what authority, shifts with the passage of time. These insights complement the work undertaken by Lizé and others (2016), where the approach taken was to differentiate between consecration and legitimation. Rather than attempting to identify a point where a bounded

individual act becomes part of a more diffuse, longer-term process, we posit that any act of consecration is inherently diffuse and always part of a larger, shifting and co-creative process. Furthermore, when we consider the different ways in which consecration needs to be understood as diffuse, we also need to realise that we are dealing not just with multiple different instances of human agency, but also, qua Latour (2005), with independent features of the natural and physical world. Chronological and geographical dispersal have agential influence, and this influence becomes tangible when we look at consecration through the lens of modes of authorship and their variation over time and space.

Accordingly, when the award of the Nobel Prize is seen as part of an iterative process of legitimation, the extent to which the Prize is itself inflected by the underlying modes of authorship as they persist in different parts of the world becomes evident. Even though public discussion of the Nobel Prize might ostensibly revolve around the literary content that is being rewarded in any one year, actual literary analysis is not at the centre of either dataset that we analysed. Rather, the newspaper dataset shows that what causes productive disruption (and thus media content) in the broader literary prize sector is a combination of modes of authorship that is unexpected or otherwise challenging. Scott Fox's article reflects extensively on this and, in so doing, shows a marked shift in mode towards the satirical and the utopian in the way she encourages readers to understand Müller's position as a Nobel laureate as well as reflect on their own cultural position and assumptions as a result. Fresh consideration of Müller's disruptive cultural positioning has since influenced academic constructions of her authorship (McMurtry 2018, Bauer 2020, Haines 2020). The paratextual material meanwhile shows how messaging around literary authorship, including the significance of individual literary awards, is mainstreamed for different markets through subtle changes to the way different modes are combined in this material. Both datasets are thoroughly imbricated with one another, with the paratextual material drawing on media discourse and the media discourse reflecting on the physical availability and economic success of the author's work in different regions.

These findings question the presumed individual consecratory power of prizes like the Nobel which has to date underpinned scholarship in this area, including the very idea of a capitalist / neoliberal 'economy of prestige' (English 2005). While the award of the Nobel Prize triggered production mechanisms within both datasets, the Prize is itself reliant for its own validity on the way the different modes of authorship coalesce around the individual it

has singled out both before and after the award. This is where the 'ideal direction' it professes to reward is actually created, and that direction shifts as the modes themselves shift and align differently in different interpretative contexts. As such, the modes of authorship ultimately have considerably more consecratory power within the longer-term process of legitimation, and this power is predicated on a highly diffuse and interdependent model of influence. The modes of authorship are themselves examples of Bourdieu's 'conscious and unconscious inculcation' and we can study them as both salient and inferred in the relevant datasets. This article has explored two ways of doing this, combining a literary historical approach to an author's wider social significance with that of critical discourse studies. Future work on the social significance of authors in general and literary prizes in particular could explore how to work at both a more granular level of detail and with larger corpora. In this piece, we hope to have pointed a way forward for understanding how seemingly immeasurable and intangible aspects of cultural value can in fact be anchored in the words and actions of everyone who reads and writes on the subject.

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