

STUDI GERMANICI

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The Writer Who Refused to Sign His Work: The Case of B. Traven

Massimo Salgaro

In 2016, the TV series *The Young Pope*, directed by Paolo Sorrentino, received rave reviews from critics. The charming young pope, played by Jude Law, had a complicated relationship with his faith and demanded never to be seen or even photographed or interviewed. This countercultural communication strategy, implemented in the series in the context of a contemporary, social-media-dominated world, gave *The Young Pope's* church an enigmatic air that it appeared to have lost.

The Pope as imagined by Sorrentino is an extreme case, but we are generally inclined to believe that all artists, celebrities, and other public figures want to identify openly and publicly with their work or actions, even in the literary field. Can we imagine, then, a writer who, despite selling millions of copies – up to thirty-two million, including translations into more than thirty languages¹ – decides not to reveal his identity? An author who prefers not to publicise his work and refuses the posed photos that typically appear on the back covers of many books? An author who reveals neither his nationality nor the language in which his works were originally written or who refuses to sign letters in his own handwriting so as not to leave material for graphological analysis?² All these characteristics apply to a real-life

1 Karl Siegfried Guthke, *B. Traven: Biographie eines Rätsels*, Diogenes, Zürich 1990, p. 28.

2 This title is to be understood literally because the author was not in the habit of signing his letters. He explained it as a fear of forgery: «If I do not sign this letter personally, like all my letters, it is for security reasons. As things have developed, there is a danger that Mr. Schilling from Bochum might forge my signature, which is not known to him so far, in order to clear himself». «Wenn ich diesen Brief, wie alle meine Briefe, nicht persönlich unterschreibe, so geschieht dies aus Sicherheitsgründen. Wie die Dinge sich entwickelt haben, besteht die Gefahr, daß der Herr Schilling aus Bochum meine Unterschrift, die ihm bisher nicht bekannt ist, vielleicht fälschen würde, um sich reinzuwaschen» (*ibid.*, p. 88). All the quotations in English are my translations from the original German.

author whose biography is so bizarre as to seem fictional: B. Traven, «the greatest literary mystery of this century»³.

In order to realise his design of annihilation and concealment of his own identity and authorship as a writer, Traven had to invent many parallel identities, which included such pseudonyms as Ret Marut, Traven Torsvan, and Hal Croves. B. Traven, of course, was also a pseudonym. Traven's invention of his own autobiography has had numerous consequences. First, it created an aura of legend or myth around his work. Director John Huston, who filmed one of Traven's novels, *Der Schatz der Sierra Madre* (*The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*), put it succinctly: «Traven has worked very hard at being mysterious... in a world where too much is known about too many»⁴. Second, it unleashed a search for the 'real' Traven among a myriad of journalists, literary critics, investigators, or simply avid readers. Reading their accounts and listening to interviews raises the question of whether Traven's real work is the invention of his own autobiography or the permeability between fiction and reality that characterises his works and his many lives. In this case, one can only start with the biography.

This unconventional author's biography needs to be told in an unusual way, starting from the end. On March 26, 1969, Traven Torsvan Croves died in Mexico City. According to documents in his possession, he was born in Chicago on May 3, 1890, the son of Burton Torsvan and Dorothy Croves de Torsvan. His death confirmed that B. Traven and Traven Torsvan were the same person but the mystery surrounding his identity was far from unravelled⁵. Even a statement by his widow after Traven's death – that he should have shed light on his life – was, in fact, a mystification of it⁶.

The story of B. Traven in Mexico began in 1924 when he arrived in the Gulf of Mexico, registering as B. Traven Torsvan. The writer's surname was thus registered as his middle name at the Mexican registry office. In his new abode, Traven hired himself out as a tutor or worked in the cotton harvest or oil fields. Traven nevertheless managed to be productive as a writer and sent an essay *Wie Götter entstehen* (*How Gods Come into Being*) and the novel *Die Baumwollpflücker* (*The Cotton Pickers*) to the Berlin «Vorwärts» magazine in January

3 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

4 Jan-Christoph Hauschild, *B. Traven: Die unbekanntesten Jahre*, Edition Voldemere-Springer, Zürich-Wien 2012, p. 20.

5 Jan-Christoph Hauschild, *Das Phantom: Die fünf Leben des B. Traven*, Edition Tiamat, Berlin 2018, p. 10.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 233.

1925⁷. He had already begun inventing an autobiography at this point because, in his letters to the magazine, he described living in an isolated bungalow in the bush. Communication between author and publisher was also hampered by distance (letters between them took about three weeks to reach their destination). Nevertheless, his productivity was impressive. In addition to *Die Baumwollpflücker*, he completed two other novels in 1925, *Die Brücke im Dschungel* (*The Bridge in the Jungle*) and *Das Totenschiff* (*The Death Ship*). In those novels, Traven manifested elements that would come to characterise his writing: his concern for the underdog and his criticism of the exploitation by the capitalist system. At the same time, he emphasized that all his novels were anchored in true facts⁸.

Despite his success, Traven refused to provide the publisher with photos of himself and declared that he harboured no desire for success. As Hauschild wrote, «he achieves the rare feat of establishing fame without biography. In the literati's struggle for attention, he is the only one in his epoch who achieves this through the path of negation»⁹. Ever since the publication of Traven's novels, criticism that this child prodigy of German literature was «not a great stylist» has never ceased¹⁰. Traven unnecessarily exaggerated his satire on American-European civilization in his novels and likewise glorified the natural paradise of indigenous people in Central America, in both cases demonstrating a lack of psychological sophistication and a tendency toward romanticism. Actually, Traven, who was also a keen photographer, made several trips to Chiapas to observe the indigenous peoples. In his book *Land des Frühlings* (*Land of Spring*) (1926), he described Chiapas agrarian reform and struggles against the Catholic Church, as well as literacy and health campaigns.

His interest in the «proletarians of the world» was also expressed in his proletarian concept of authorship: «The typesetter who typesets my book is just as important for culture as I am, and therefore one should not be more concerned about my person, about my private person, than about the person of the typesetter»¹¹. Traven professed

7 *Ibid.*, p. 18-19.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 42: «Ihm gelingt das seltene Kunststück, Ruhm ohne Biographie zu begründen. Im Kampf der Literaten um Aufmerksamkeit ist er in seiner Epoche der einzige, der dies über den Weg der Negation erreicht».

10 Guthke, *B. Traven: Biographie eines Rätsels*, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

11 Hauschild, *Das Phantom: Die fünf Leben des B. Traven*, *op. cit.*, p. 60-61: «Der Setzer, der mein Buch setzt, ist genau so wichtig für die Kultur wie ich, und darum sollte man sich um meine Person, um meine Privatperson nicht mehr kümmern,

a philosophy of namelessness, a rejection of the art of authority and the principle of personality. It is the position of a social anarchist and perhaps the best answer to Bertolt Brecht's *Questions of a Reading Worker* that question the bourgeois cult of the ego:

Workers should not worship authorities, neither kings nor generals nor presidents nor artists nor aviators who cross oceans. Every person has the duty to serve mankind to the best of his ability, to make life easier for them, to bring them joy, and to direct their thoughts toward greater goals. I fulfil my duties to humanity as I always have, as a labourer, as a sailor, as an explorer, as a home teacher on distant farms, and now as a writer. I do not feel like a person who wants to be in the bright light. I feel nameless and inglorious as a worker within humanity, like any worker who does his part to take humanity a step further. I feel like one grain of the sand that makes up the earth. My works are important, my person is unimportant, just as the person of the shoemaker who considers it his duty to make good and well-fitting shoes is unimportant¹².

Critics voiced the suspicion that there was also a certain amount of calculation involved: the Traven myth had been staged as a promotional strategy¹³.

In the years immediately following its publication, *Das Totenschiff* was translated into the major European languages, including Polish, Croatian, Serbian, and Hungarian. In 1933, Traven contacted the Knopf publishing house in New York with whom he reached an agreement under strict conditions: a ban on any advertising that included information concerning his life, origin, and whereabouts. Traven wanted to be considered an American and sent the publisher

als um die Person des Setzers» (translations of the cited texts are by Massimo Salgaro and Wendell Ricketts).

12 Guthke, *B. Traven: Biographie eines Rätsels, op. cit.*, p. 51: «Die Arbeiter sollen keine Autoritäten verehren, weder Könige noch Generäle noch Präsidenten noch Künstler noch Ozeanflieger. Jeder Mensch hat die Pflicht der Menschheit nach seinen besten Kräften und Fähigkeiten zu dienen, ihnen das Leben zu erleichtern, ihnen Freude zu bringen und ihre Gedanken auf große Ziele zu richten. Ich erfülle meine Pflichten gegenüber der Menschheit, wie ich es immer getan habe, als Arbeiter, als Seemann, als Forschungsreisender, als Hauslehrer in weltentlegenden Farmen und jetzt als Schreiber. Ich fühle mich nicht als eine Person, die im breiten Licht stehen will. Ich fühle mich als Arbeiter innerhalb der Menschheit namenlos und ruhmlos wie jeder Arbeiter, der seinen Teil dazu beiträgt, die Menschheit einen Schritt weiter zu bringen. Ich fühle mich wie ein Körnchen im Sande, aus dem die Erde besteht. Meine Werke sind wichtig, meine Person ist unwichtig, genau so unwichtig wie die Person des Schuhmachers unwichtig ist, der es als seine Pflicht ansieht, gute und passende Schuhe für die Menschen anzufertigen».

13 *Ibid.*, p. 483.

his English «original version» of the novel, which appeared to the editor Bernard Smith to be a verbatim transcription of the German version. This novel, like *Der Schatz der Sierra Madre* (*The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*) (1935) and *Die Brücke im Dschungel* (*The Bridge in the Jungle*) which followed, was rewritten by the editor. The novel *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* was made into a film by John Huston in 1949 with Humphrey Bogart in the role of the protagonist. As Traven's 'agent', Hal Croves monitored the filming on Traven's behalf, but, in fact, Croves was Traven himself hiding behind another alias.

After its publication, German writers and journalists made comparisons between *Das Totenschiff* and articles in the journal «Der Ziegelbrenner» and found similarities in both style and content¹⁴. In both publications, Traven (as Marut) described the effects of capitalist exploitation of the labour force¹⁵. Other journalists also expressed suspicion that the author of *Das Totenschiff* was a German¹⁶. The Mexican journalist Luis Mario Cayetano Spota showed that B. Traven and Traven Torsvan were the same person by tailing him and taking pictures of him, which were published on August 7, 1948 in «Mañana: La Revista de México»¹⁷. On May 16, 1957 Traven Torsvan married Rosa Elena Luján Rodríguez and lived with her in Mexico City without ever telling her his true origins before 1924. But here we open the previous chapter of Traven's biography. As previously noted, several people recognised the style of «Der Ziegelbrenner» in Traven's novels. The magazine was founded in 1917 by an actor and journalist who called himself Ret Marut. Under the pseudonym Richard Maurhut, Marut had also published an anti-war novella, *An das Fräulein von S.*, and, in 1914, a novel entitled *Die Anamitsche Fürstin* or *Das Vermächtnis des Inders*, and thirteen issues of the «Der Ziegelbrenner» appeared between September 1, 1917 and December 21, 1921. In *Die Anamitsche Fürstin*, the story followed a young French engineer to Indochina and, as with his other novels, Marut claimed that the book was based on his own experiences in Indochina in 1899¹⁸.

The anchoring of stories in biographical reality was common for both Marut and Traven. Both claimed to have travelled the world at

14 Hauschild, *Das Phantom: Die fünf Leben des B. Traven*, op. cit., p. 63.

15 Michael Taussig, *The Stories Things Tell and Why They Tell Them*, in «E-Flux Journal», 36 (2012), <<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/36/61256/the-stories-things-tell-and-why-they-tell-them/>> (date of access: 25 June 2022).

16 Hauschild, *Das Phantom: Die fünf Leben des B. Traven*, op. cit., p. 95 and 132.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 170-181.

18 James Goldwasser, *Ret Marut: The Early B. Traven*, in «The Germanic Review», 68 (1993), p. 133-142: 135.

an early age, Traven as a sailor, Marut as a kitchen boy, actor, and dancer. In 1925, Traven, as Marut, invented experience as an oil man, farm worker, cacao worker, factory worker, tomato and orange picker, muleteer, hunter, and trader among the indigenous tribes in the Sierra de Madre¹⁹. Starting with his earliest novels, Marut mixed ethnographic fiction and realistic presentations with a didactic impulse. During the editorship of «Der Ziegelbrenner», his girlfriend Elfriede Zielke gave birth to a daughter whom he abandoned and who had no further contact with him. When the Republic was proclaimed in 1919, Marut was elected to the Propaganda Committee. That same year, he figured in the Bavarian *Räterepublik* as a censor and authored a plan for state ownership of the press. When the *Räterepublik* was brutally suppressed, Marut narrowly escaped execution²⁰.

After the *Räterepublik* was put down, Marut was forced to take «Der Ziegelbrenner» underground. On August 19, 1923, he fled to London where he was arrested in November for violating the obligation to register as a foreigner. During interrogations, he gave contradictory information about his identity. Despite this, Marut was released from deportation custody and, on April 19, he travelled to Lisbon and from there to Tenerife.

And here another chapter of his life began²¹. During interrogations in London, Marut had given his real name as Albert Otto Maximilian Feige and claimed to have been born in Świebodzin, Poland, in 1882. Feige's father was a brickmaker (*Ziegelbrenner*), which was also the name of the magazine Marut edited during the First World War. When he left his family of origin, he went to Magdeburg where he worked as a blacksmith and in the trade union called the Deutscher Metallarbeiter Verband. Given his political views and his commitment to 'anarcho-socialism', Feige must have been considered a troublemaker by his comrades in Magdeburg²². He gave two lectures in Autumn 1905 – one on «Bourgeois and socialist Newspapers» and one on «Socialism and Anarchism». Feige was also active in the Social Democratic Association, especially in the area of culture. Interestingly, he was appointed librarian of the Altstadt Association in February 1905. The next stage of his life took him to Gelsenkirchen

19 Hauschild, *B. Traven: Die unbekanntten Jahre*, op. cit., p. 33.

20 Guthke, *B. Traven: Biographie eines Rätsels*, op. cit., p. 223.

21 Hauschild, *B. Traven: Die unbekanntten Jahre*, op. cit., p. 277 ff.

22 Jörg Thuncke, *Revolutionäre Ungeduld oder die Geschichte einer Illusion. Die Rolle des Anarchisten Ret Marut während der Münchener Räterepublik 1918/19*, Edition Refugium, Nottingham 2021, p. 4.

where he worked at the «Metallarbeiter-Zeitung»²³. In his work as a trade unionist, he organised cultural evenings, which was the start of his acting career. During his years in the theatre, Marut matured politically and became a fervent socialist. On 9 October 1907, Feige announced in the «Metallarbeiter-Zeitung» that he was looking for his replacement. Shortly afterwards, he disappeared, and the path began that led to Ret Marut and later to the successful author B. Traven.

The mystery of Ret Marut remains unsolved: «Who was B. Traven? Among the proposed answers have been the son of a Norwegian fisherman; Jack London; Charles Trefny, an American theology student; Arthur Cravan, the pugilist and Dadaist nephew of Oscar Wilde; and an illegitimate child of Kaiser Wilhelm I»²⁴. And many open questions about his life are still debated among Travenologists²⁵: Who financed the «Ziegelbrenner»? Where did Marut learn economics and politics? Who were his political frames of reference? And, above all, why did he conceal his identity for his entire life?²⁶

Most of the studies on the author concern his biography and his novels, and less attention has been paid to his work as an essayist and a journalist. I would like to focus on three essays that represent three phases of his life: The texts in the «Metallarbeiter-Zeitung»²⁷, the texts in «Der Ziegelbrenner», and the essay *Land des Frühlings*. Even before the question of authorship of these texts is addressed, close-reading provides useful information regarding possible similarities in style and content.

As Hauschild suggests²⁸, the texts in the «Metallarbeiter-Zeitung» stem undoubtedly from Feige. In an article dated October 24, 1906²⁹, Feige brought attention to the efforts of trade unionists at the Küppersbusch company, which had resulted in overtime pay for the workers.

23 Hauschild, *B. Traven: Die unbekanntten Jahre*, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

24 Goldwasser, *Ret Marut: The Early B. Traven*, *op. cit.*; Guthke, *B. Traven: Biographie eines Rätsels*, *op. cit.*, p. 121 ff.

25 Hauschild, *B. Traven: Die unbekanntten Jahre*, *op. cit.*, p. 36 ff.; Karl S. Guthke, *Jan-Christoph Hauschild, B. Traven – Die unbekanntten Jahre*, in «Arbitrium», 31.2 (2013), p. 244-253: 246.

26 In 1926, Traven wrote that the only biography of a writer should be his works: «Die Biographie eines schöpferischen Menschen ist ganz und gar unwichtig. Wenn der Mensch in seinen Werken nicht zu erkennen ist, dann ist entweder der Mensch nichts wert oder seine Werke sind nichts wert. Darum sollte der schöpferische Mensch keine andere Biographie haben als seine Werke» (Hauschild, *B. Traven: Die unbekanntten Jahre*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.)

27 *Ibid.*, p. 133.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 160.

29 «Metall-Arbeiter Zeitung», 47, 24 October 1906, p. 381.

In another article³⁰, he explained how Meister Jakob van Rissenbeck pulled an iron bar from the wagon and struck one of the strikers on the head with all his might. This act of brutality offered him the occasion to speak about the ‘nobility’ of capitalists:

In our beloved fatherland every businessman, even if he employs only one man, counts himself among the so-called ‘better’ people. Sometimes, however, such entrepreneurs founder in their attempts to imitate better manners when they stand before a ‘high gentleman’ because their cloak of repugnant hypocrisy and sycophancy only conceals their own crude dispositions³¹.

In an article written some weeks later³², Feige listed the most essential achievements of the plumbers’ and fitters’ strike that began on May 22³³. Among them was the reduction of the daily work shift to 9-1/2 hours; an hour less on Saturdays; two hours less on the eves of Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas, though the day was to be paid in full; 25% extra pay for overtime; and 50% extra pay for night work. This article again gave him the opportunity to expose the oppression of workers:

Without a strike, the workers would not only have achieved nothing, they would have had their working conditions imposed upon them, the recognition of which would have made them blush with shame. The masters have not yet been able to bring themselves to regard the assistants as equal operators in the trade and to negotiate with them accordingly. They simply still believe – with their medieval world view it is not otherwise conceivable – that the assistant is a mere work animal and must unconditionally submit to all the demands of the master³⁴.

30 «Metall-Arbeiter Zeitung», 35, 31 August 1907.

31 *Ibid.*: «In unserem geliebten Vaterland zählt sich jeder Unternehmer, und wenn er nur einen Mann beschäftigt, zu den sogenannten ‘besseren’ Leuten. Manchmal leiden die Betreffenden mit ihrer Nachäffung besserer Umgangsformen allerdings schweren Schiffbruch, denn ihre ureigene rohe Gesinnung können Sie nur unter dem Deckmantel einer widrigen Heuchelei und Kriecherei verbergen, sobald sie vor einem ‘hohen Herrn’ stehen».

32 «Metall-Arbeiter Zeitung», 36, 7 September 1907.

33 «Metall-Arbeiter Zeitung», 24, 15 June 1907.

34 «Metall-Arbeiter Zeitung», 36, 7 September 1907: «Ohne Streik hätten die Gehilfen nicht nur nichts erreicht, es wäre ihnen auch eine Arbeitsordnung aufgezwungen worden, bei deren Anerkennung ihnen die Schamröte hätte ins Gesicht steigen müssen. Die Gehilfen als gleichberechtigte Faktoren im Gewerbe anzusehen und demgemäß mit ihnen zu verhandeln, dazu haben sich die Meister bis heute noch nicht aufrufen können. Sie glauben halt immer noch – bei ihrer mittelalterlichen Weltanschauung ist es ja nicht anders denkbar –, der Gehilfe sei ein bloßes Arbeitstier und müßte sich bedingungslos allen Anforderungen des Meisters unterwerfen».

In an October 19, 1907 article in the «Metallarbeiter-Zeitung», Feige wrote regarding a speech given at a public meeting of electricians held at September 23 in which the development and future of the electrical industry were discussed. The speaker encouraged workers to join the Metalworkers' Federation in order to increase their influence over the regulation of work relationships and went on to say that his colleagues could very well gain influence on their economic circumstances if they acted in solidarity.

The texts that appeared in the «Metallarbeiter-Zeitung» were in many ways representative of B. Traven's other writings. Feige often placed himself at the centre of his writings, even quoting events from his own biography, despite his claim that an author's writings had nothing in common with his biography. One of the purposes of these personal asides was apparently to add credibility to his writings and to cloak them in a certain realism. Another of the traits that appeared in Feige's later writings is an interest in the underdog and the exploited. As a socialist, Feige was convinced that the trade union was a spokesman for the interests of workers exploited by the capitalist system. The criticism of capitalism was also one of the main aspects of Marut's activity at «Der Ziegelbrenner».

On September 1, 1917, the first issue of «Der Ziegelbrenner» appeared in Munich, where the actor Ret Marut, having arrived from Düsseldorf, had registered with the authorities November 10, 1915 as an American and 'stud.phil.' «Der Ziegelbrenner», with which Marut hurled his «criticism of conditions and unsavoury contemporaries», appeared in forty issues from September 1917 to December 1921. During the war, Marut succeeded in publishing a magazine that was consistently directed against the war and the war-mongering press. An example of this pacifistic attitude came in «The Blame», published on December 1, 1917: «Capitalism is to blame for this war. Journalism has made it possible. Now these two are brothers for eternity in need and death, in shame and danger. But humanity always foots the bill»³⁵.

«Der Ziegelbrenner» was built on such examples as Erich Mühsam's «Kain», Karl Kraus's «Fackel», and Franz Pfemfert's «Aktion». With his magazine, Marut had developed his distinctive voice: he had become an ardent anarchist-pacifist, who, steeped in the teachings of such philosophers as Gustav Landauer and Max Stirner, railed

35 Ret Marut, «Der Ziegelbrenner», 2, 1 December 1917, 32: «Schuld an diesem Kriege ist der Kapitalismus. Möglich gemacht hat ihn der Journalismus. Nun sind diese beiden für ewige Zeiten verbrüderet auf Not und Tod, auf Schande und Gefahr. Immer aber bezahlt die Menschheit die Rechnung».

against the war and its supporters. Stirner's influence was visible in the scientific-philosophical treatise, *Die Zerstörung unseres Welt-Systems durch die Markurve* (*The Destruction of our World System by the Markurve*), published on January 6, 1920³⁶. Although the magazine attracted great attention among the brickmakers in left-literary circles, it was unknown to the general public. Marut himself wrote on November 9, 1918: «The number of subscribers to «Der Ziegelbrenner» is so large (or so small) that a boy who attends the lowest grade of an elementary school for six months can comfortably perform all the arithmetic operations he has learned up to that point with this number»³⁷. The circulation of the magazine was about 2,000 copies³⁸.

Although most of the articles were not signed, Rolf Recknagel was convinced that most of the writing was done by Ret Marut³⁹. The chief editor had good reason not to sign these articles, which were politically inconvenient and therefore often affected by censorship. Marut argued briskly against the magazine's detractors, who attacked not only the content but the tone of the magazine (exaggeration, scolding, swearing, and cursing) and expressed his disregard for criticism. As early as the first issues of «Der Ziegelbrenner», Marut had begun to go off the deep end against the press: «You have to read this to find out how petty, how spiteful, how vicious, how vindictive, how vindictive, how conceited, how foppishly vain a considerable part of German journalists can be»⁴⁰.

In addition, under the title *Die Ausgeräucherten kriechen hervor* (*The Smoked Out Crawl Out*)⁴¹, Marut documented and commented on reactionary reviews of «Der Ziegelbrenner». Censorship during the war was surely one of the biggest problems «Der Ziegelbrenner» faced, and the publication of January 15, 1919 consisted of articles that were excluded from publication during the war⁴².

36 Ret Marut, «Der Ziegelbrenner», 20-21-22, 6 January 1920, p. 1.

37 Ret Marut, «Der Ziegelbrenner», 5-6-7, 9 November 1918, p. 108: «Die Zahl der Abonnenten des Die Ziegelbrenner ist so groß (oder so klein), daß ein Knabe, der sechs Monate lang die unterste Klasse einer Volksschule besucht, mit dieser Zahl bequem alle Rechen-Operationen vornehmen kann, die er bis dahin gelernt hat».

38 Hauschild, *Das Phantom: Die fünf Leben des B. Traven*, op. cit., p. 254.

39 Rolf Recknagel, *Nachwort*, in Ret Marut, *Der Ziegelbrenner*, Verlag Klaus Guhl, Berlin 1976, p. V.

40 Ret Marut, «Der Ziegelbrenner», 1/1, 1 September 1917, p. 8-9: «Das muß man lesen, um zu erfahren, wie kleinlich, wie boshaft, wie gehässig, wie übelnehmerisch, wie rachsüchtig, wie eingebildet, wie geckenhaft eitel ein erheblicher Teil deutscher Journalisten sein kann».

41 Ret Marut, «Der Ziegelbrenner», 4, 27 July 1918, p. 85.

42 Ret Marut, «Der Ziegelbrenner», 9-14, 15 January 1919, p. 1-95.

After the Bavarian Republic was proclaimed on November 7, 1918, Marut distributed a January 30, 1919 pamphlet *Die Welt-Revolution beginnt* (*The World Revolution Begins*). Right after the pamphlet appeared, he wrote another article calling for freedom and the nationalization of the press. Under the title *My Demand*, he wrote:

The press is one of the most effective weapons of the revolutionary proletariat fighting for its power [...]. What the bourgeoisie and a large part of the proletariat understand by freedom of the press is not the right to express one's opinion freely, but rather the freedom to conduct a business. A business, however, that is an obstacle to the dissemination of truth...The nationalization of the press must be undertaken without delay⁴³.

After the proclamation of the Soviet Republic on April 7, 1919, Marut became a part of the propaganda committee of the Soviet government. In *Die Welt-Revolution beginnt* (*The World Revolution Begins*), he presented his individual anarchist position and took sides for the revolution.

Hello, you humans! [...] Hello! I do not belong to the Social Democratic Party, nor am I an independent socialist. I neither belong to the Spartacus group, nor am I a Bolshevik [...]. I cannot belong to any party because I see in every party affiliation a restriction of my personal freedom [and] because the obligation to a party program deprives me of the ability to devote myself to what I consider to be the highest and noblest goal on earth: to be allowed to be a human being!⁴⁴

As Jörg Thunecke has commented, these anarchist articles signed Ret Marut are reminiscent of the tone of his polemics as unionist Otto

43 Ret Marut, «Der Ziegelbrenner», 16-17, 10 March 1919, p. 26: «Die Presse ist eine der wirksamsten Waffen des revolutionären Proletariats, das um seine Macht kämpft [...]. Was das Bürgertum und ein großer Teil des Proletariats unter Presse-Freiheit versteht, ist nicht das Recht, seine Meinung frei äußern zu können, sondern diese Presse-Freiheit ist nichts anderes als Gewerbefreiheit. Eine Gewerbe jedoch, dass der Verbreitung der Wahrheit hinderlich ist [...]. Die Sozialisierung der Presse muss unverzüglich in Angriff genommen werden».

44 Ret Marut, «Der Ziegelbrenner», 15, 30 January 1919, p. 1: «Halloh, Ihr Menschen! [...] Halloh! Ich gehöre weder der Sozialdemokratischen Partei an, noch bin ich ein unabhängiger Sozialist. Ich gehöre weder der Spartacus-Gruppe an, noch bin ich ein Bolschewist [...]. Ich kann keiner Partei angehören, weil ich in jeder Partei-Zugehörigkeit eine Beschränkung meiner persönlichen Freiheit erblicke, weil die Verpflichtung auf ein Partei-Programm mir die Möglichkeit nimmt, mich zu dem zu entwickeln, was mir als das höchste und das edelste Ziel auf Erden gilt: Mensch sein zu dürfen!».

Feige⁴⁵. In addition to political articles, the periodical also contained reviews of books and theatre as well as literary texts and translations. The early issues, for example, included translations of texts by Percy Bysshe Shelley⁴⁶. Under the pseudonym Richard Maurhut, Marut also published, in 1916, the novella *An das Fräulein von S.* with J. Mermet Verlag. Irene Mermet, a former student at the Düsseldorf Hochschule für Bühnenkunst, was Marut's collaborator in Munich.

After the suppression of the Munich Soviet Republic, Marut was on the run and was obliged to leave Germany. In 1920, in one of the last issues (the 23rd) of «Der Ziegelbrenner», he published an essay, *Die kommunistische Anarchie in Mexiko (The Communist Anarchy in Mexico)*, in which he extolled the labour unions of South America and their struggle for a more just world. In that essay, he also indirectly offered a clue to the next stage of his personal wanderings. The last number of the «Der Ziegelbrenner» appeared on December 21, 1921.

Traven wrote *Land des Frühlings (The Land of Spring)* in Mexico (1928). It is divided into two parts: The first contains the records of his journey to Chiapas, the second, entitled *Reise im Land des Frühlings (Journey in the Land of Spring)*⁴⁷ contained a photo report of the trip⁴⁸. As elsewhere, these images were combined with subjective descriptions of his travel experiences⁴⁹, a strategy intended to corroborate the veracity of the writings. Paradoxically, the author who lied so much about his autobiography uses the photographs to lend credibility to his writings. For an author who wanted to hide his German roots his constant references to and comparisons with German realities⁵⁰ are equally strange.

Chiapas was, for Traven, a mythical place in which «the beginnings of human civilisation and culture must be sought»⁵¹. It was not only the cradle of Humankind, it is also the place where «a new species of men was born»⁵². In his descriptions, Traven voiced all the com-

45 Thuncke, *Revolutionäre Ungeduld oder die Geschichte einer Illusion*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

46 Ret Marut, «Der Ziegelbrenner», 4, 27 November 1918, p. 73-77. His in-depth knowledge of English led some Traven experts to question his Polish origins (Guthke – Hauschild, *B. Traven: Die unbekanntten Jahre*, *op. cit.*, p. 252).

47 B. Traven, *Land des Frühlings*, Büchergilde Gutenberg, Berlin 1928, p. 430.

48 Traven himself was the photographer; see Guthke, *B. Traven: Biographie eines Rätsels*, *op. cit.*, p. 289 ff.

49 Traven, *Land des Frühlings*, *op. cit.*, p. 52, 97, 123, 245, 323, 411.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 13, 26, 199.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 9: «Diese zähe Ausdauer im Bauen unter tropischer Sonnenglut und im ständigen Kampf mit einer höllischen Pest von Insekten und tropischen Pestilenzen erzeugt eine neue Art von Menschen. Wir sind ja hier so jung noch, behaftet noch mit allen Fehlern, Unzulänglichkeiten und Unarten der Jugend. Aber dafür sind wir

monplaces of his time with regard to the «noble savage» (*edle Wilde* in German). For example, some indigenous populations lived far from civilisation and were not corrupted by its thought and religion. Such figures were rather common in his fiction as well⁵³.

His romanticizing of Native American culture in comparison to white civilization is problematic from today's perspective⁵⁴. For instance, Traven wished indigenous Americans to remain 'Indian' in their souls⁵⁵, and he therefore condemned the brutalities perpetrated by colonialists and during the slave trade⁵⁶. In Chiapas he found a kind of original Communism that had developed in a utopian society⁵⁷.

The [indigenous Ch'ol] work the land together accompanied by music played on simple drums and flutes. Often, the working men sing along with the music. The work is then carried out exactly to the beat of the music, and it is very cheerful [...]. This communal economy of the Indians is in no way influenced by modern communism. The Indians, unless they are urban workers, have not heard of socialism, communism or Bolshevism. This communal economy is an ancient economic form of the Indians⁵⁸.

Traven condemned the capitalist exploitation that removed raw materials from Mexico to be processed elsewhere and assumed the «viewpoint of the modern proletariat»⁵⁹. Traven perceived the social

auch übersprudelnd voll von all der Spannkraft, der Unternehmungsfreude und dem unzerstörbaren leuchtenden Glauben der Jugend. Wir haben den unerschütterlichen Glauben der Jugend, daß alles möglich ist, und daß es nichts Unmögliches unter der Sonne gibt. Wir sind die Kommenden. Auf unserm Kontinent werden die Geschicke des nächsten Jahrtausends entschieden. Unser Kontinent ist die Wiege einer neuen Kultur».

53 Martin M. Kley, *Mexico and Weimar's Anti-Authoritarian Socialist Imagination: Storytelling, Working, and 'Unworking' in B. Traven*, in «Modern Language Studies», 41.2 (2012), p. 10-35: 20.

54 Guthke, *B. Traven: Biographie eines Rätsels*, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

55 Traven, *Land des Frühlings*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 292.

57 Hauschild, *Das Phantom: Die fünf Leben des B. Traven*, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

58 Traven, *Land des Frühlings*, *op. cit.*, p. 22-23: «Die Cholindianer bearbeiten das Land gemeinsam unter Musikbegleitung. Die Musik wird gespielt auf schlichten primitiven Trommeln und mit Flöten. Häufig fingen die arbeitenden Männer zur Musik. Die Arbeit wird dann genau im Takt der Musik verrichtet, und es geht sehr fröhlich dabei zu [...]. Diese Kommunewirtschaft der Indianer ist in keiner Weise von dem modernen Kommunismus beeinflusst. Die Indianer haben, soweit sie nicht städtische Arbeiter sind, von Sozialismus, Kommunismus oder Bolschewismus noch nichts gehört. Diese Gemeindegewirtschaft ist eine uralte Wirtschaftsform der Indianer».

59 Heidi Zogbaum, *B. Traven: A Vision of Mexico*, DE: Scholarly Resources, Wilmington 1992, p. 38.

structures of the Ch'ol as a commune that defied the egoism and authority of an Occidental way of thinking. Karl Guthke noted parallels between the anarchist Ret Marut and Traven's ethnological view of the people of Chiapas⁶⁰.

Indigenous people seem to be naturally inclined to join the trade unions and to oppose capitalism, as shown by the protagonist of his short story *Der Gross-Industrielle* (*The Big Industrialist*). Its protagonist is an indigenous artisan who endures the material insecurity of his job at the town's weekly market rather than work as an employee of an American businessman. Traven's book dealt not only with Mexico's exotic appeal to Europeans, but was also a timely, critical look at the social, economic, and political circumstances that linked developing and developed countries at that point in world history. *Land des Frühlings*⁶¹ is thus Traven's contribution to the political-philosophical knowledge of the present and the future of the whole planet. As Martin Kley observed, these figures expressed Traven's «anti-authoritarian socialism»⁶².

Traven's transfigured vision of the people of Chiapas did not prevent him from using all the racial and racist stereotypes typical of his time⁶³. The Indians appeared to him as 'primitive' people and race⁶⁴, and he remarked that Indians who were more 'civilized' were not unlike Mexicans, even in their dress and speech, so much so that they looked like people from Spain or Sicily⁶⁵. Ana-Isabel Aliaga-Buchenau commented that «Traven's most egregious misunderstanding in *Land des Frühlings* probably lies in his interpretation of *indigenismo*» which is the assimilation of the indigenous population into Mexican culture⁶⁶. Along the lines of twentieth-century racial theories, Traven believed that the lack of personal ambition of Indians was genetic. He thought that intermarriage and *indigenismo* would «safeguard against a relapse into capitalism»⁶⁷ even as it aimed at their cultural erasure and incorporation. Furthermore, Traven spoke of evolution and of the degeneration of races: «[A] declining race can be recognised by the fact that women have to dress up and get ready, that they try to

60 Guthke, *B. Traven: Biographie eines Rätsels*, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

61 Traven, *Land des Frühlings*, *op. cit.*

62 Kley, *Mexico and Weimar's Anti-Authoritarian Socialist Imagination*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

63 Hauschild, *Das Phantom: Die fünf Leben des B. Traven*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

64 Traven, *Land des Frühlings*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 344.

66 Ana-Isabel Aliaga-Buchenau, *An Anarcho-Syndicalist Perspective on the Mexican Revolution: B. Traven's «Land of Eternal Spring»*, in «The Latin Americanist», 62.1 (2018), p. 46-54: 52.

67 Zogbaum, *B. Traven: A Vision of Mexico*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

excite and sensually arouse men by all means»⁶⁸. The Indian race appeared to him to be on the rise because the men were masculine and the women feminine⁶⁹. Unfortunately, Traven left no shortage of hints of anti-Semitism⁷⁰, and his fears about the mixture of races is reprehensible⁷¹. Strangely enough, Traven had been interested in the Indians even before he moved to Mexico, and, as early as 1925, he published an article on the founding of the Aztec Empire in which he claimed that all the original inhabitants of the Americas were Indians and belonged to the same race⁷². Towards the end of his book, *Land des Frühlings*, Traven sketched a social utopia that vouched for his racial and socialist ideas:

Out of the resistance against Western European civilisation, for the first time in the history of mankind, the consciousness is formed that a political and economic unification of all the people of the earth is possible and feasible. The races will remain races for the time being, mixing only at the racial boundaries. But in place of the nations, in place of the federation of nations, will come the federation of races. The fact that all races, all people who believe themselves oppressed, have today already found common ground in the word Bolshevism, is strangely enough not thanks to Bolshevism, but to the representatives of big business who spread this word as a cry of terror⁷³.

This utopia aimed to eliminate nations and private capitalism⁷⁴. Some years later, in 1951, Traven launched an irregularly published news bulletin, «BT Mitteilungen». For ten years, the publication sup-

68 Traven, *Land des Frühlings*, *op. cit.*, p. 142. Eine untergehende Rasse ist daran zu erkennen, daß die Frauen sich aufputzen und herrichten müssen, daß sie mit allen Mitteln der Mann zu reizen und sinnlich zu erregen suchen.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 144-145.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 200.

72 Guthke, *B. Traven: Biographie eines Rätsels*, *op. cit.*, p. 694-697.

73 Traven, *Land des Frühlings*, *op. cit.*, p. 349: «Aus der Abwehr gegen die westeuropäische Zivilisation bildet sich zum ersten Mal in der Geschichte der Menschheit das Bewußtsein, daß eine politische und wirtschaftliche Vereinigung aller Menschen der Erde möglich und durchführbar ist. Die Rassen werden vorerst Rassen bleiben, sich nur an den Rassengrenzen vermischen. Aber an Stelle der Nationen, an Stelle der Föderation von Nationen, wird die Föderation der Rassen treten. Daß alle Rassen, alle Menschen, die sich unterdrückt glauben, heute schon in dem Wort Bolschewismus eine Gemeinsamkeit gefunden haben, ist merkwürdigerweise nicht dem Bolschewismus zu danken, sondern den Vertretern des Großkapitals, die dieses Wort als Schreckruf verbreiten».

74 Traven's autobiographical writings, his essays, and his novels are an example of 'narrative deterritoriality'; Charlton Payne – Wolfgang Struck, *Somewhere Else: Legal Fictions, Capitalism, and Deterritoriality in B. Traven's «The Death Ship»*, in «Symplöke»,

plied selected information about Traven's life, work, and impact. As far as facts about the author were concerned, it was pure disinformation from the pen of Traven. As always, he used such pseudonyms as Leon Sormon and Fred Gaudat⁷⁵. In Issue No. 3, the editors asked, «Is Traven German?»⁷⁶; it was answered in the negative.

Overall, his nonfiction publications shared a common ideology and expressed socialist and anarchist positions. In terms of content, one of the touchstones of Traven's critique was the bourgeoisie and capitalism. Stylistically, this critique was expressed in heated and vitriolic tones. Another common feature is that they tended toward a stylistic mix in which economic-political treatises and ethnographic or philosophical observations were combined with accounts of travel or personal experiences. Such writing produced in Traven's readers a deliberate obscuring of distinctions between reality and fiction. Indeed, as we have pointed out, real facts were often bent to fit the author's fictional identities.

In terms of style and ideology, the attribution of these texts to the same author seems plausible. Most Travenologists have tended to attribute the essays described above to the same author. For them, Otto Feige, Ret Marut, and B. Traven are the same person. This hypothesis is, from the point of view of stylometry, a typical authorship-verification problem in which the goal is not to attribute an anonymous text to a candidate author, but rather to verify whether two texts were written by the same author. Stylometry also makes it possible to quantify the stylistic observations that the individual critic can make on a limited number of texts or parts of texts. It is a branch of digital humanities that studies the style of literary authors through software designed for this purpose. In German studies, stylometry has so far been applied to study Goethe's late style, Kleist's adherence

25.1 (2017), p. 125-140: 135. In different manners they show the 'fiction of identity' and attempts to overcome the nationalist thinking supported by capitalism. In his rejection of these narrative features – expressed through the absence of Gale's passport as well as in the novel's structure (in *Das Totenschiff*) – Traven called into question the dominant ways of understanding modern bureaucratic communities and civic belonging; Melina Marie Mandelbaum, *Administering Exclusion: Statelessness, Identity Papers and Narrative Strategy in B. Traven's «Das Totenschiff» (1926)*, in «Forum for Modern Language Studies», 57.2 (2021), p. 186-204: 193. Both his life and his writings make the rights of the homeless and vagrants their own and disrupt the logic of national citizenship.

⁷⁵ Hauschild, *Das Phantom: Die Fünf Leben des B. Traven*, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁷⁶ B. Traven, *BT Mitteilungen*, Guhl, Berlin 1978 (Nachdr. d. Ausg. 1951-1960), p. 1-36: 29.

to the stylistic canons of Romanticism or Classicism⁷⁷, and Musil's writings published anonymously during the war⁷⁸.

According to this methodology, the 'impostors' are intended as a group of writers who cannot be the authors of the texts in the corpus, but who could function as 'distractors' in terms of attribution⁷⁹. In recent years the impostor method has been useful in authorship verification studies because it places doubts on the attribution of two texts to the same author, even when an alternative candidate author – that is, the real one – is missing. The main limitation of this methodology is in its inability to suggest a possible author; thus, it never offers a certain answer but can only cast doubt on an attribution. Extensive research is currently dedicated to this method⁸⁰, and its success was assured by inclusion and implementation in the *stylo* package⁸¹, which stressed this aspect providing a probability of confirmed attribution that varied slightly at each repetition (due to an element of randomness in the procedure) as a result.

To test the efficiency of the impostors in the Traven case study, a corpus of essays and articles by Otto Feige, Ret Marut, and B. Traven, together with texts by their near-contemporaries Paul Ernst, Erich Mühsam, Robert Musil, and Ludwig Rubiner was created (see Table 1). Because Feige mainly wrote political pamphlets and ethnographies, the genre selection was limited to nonfiction texts. Ideally, the best impostors would have been journalists and essayists active in the same genres at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but no corpus provided access to this kind of material. It's also difficult to find authors who habitually combined genres as Traven did.

77 Fotis Jannidis – Gerhard Lauer, *Burrows's Delta and Its Use in German Literary History*, in *Distant Readings. Topologies of German Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Matt Erlin – Lynne Tatlock, Cambridge University Press, Rochester 2014, p. 29-54.

78 Simone Reborá – J. Berenike Herrmann – Gerhard Lauer – Massimo Salgaro, *Robert Musil, a War Journal, and Stylometry: Tackling the Issue of Short Texts in Authorship Attribution*, in «Digital Scholarship in the Humanities», 34.4 (2019), p. 582-605.

79 Moshe Koppel – Yaron Winter, *Determining If Two Documents Are Written by the Same Author*, in «Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology», 65.1 (2014), p. 178-187.

80 See e.g. Mike Kestemont – Enrique Manjavacas – Ilia Markov – Janek Bevendorff – Matti Wiegmann – Efstathios Stamatatos – Martin Potthast – Benno Stein, *Overview of the Cross-Domain Authorship Verification Task at PAN 2020*, in «CLEF 2020 Working Notes», 14 (2020), <http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2696/paper_264.pdf> (date of access: 25 June 2022).

81 Maciej Eder – Jan Rybicki – Mike Kestemont, *Stylometry with R: A Package for Computational Text Analysis*, in «The R Journal», 8.1 (2018), p. 107-121.

Therefore, two impostor-corpora were created by using the Mannheim⁸² and the Kolimo corpora⁸³. See Table 2 for more details. The Kolimo corpus offered a more coherent distinction between impostors, but included only fictional and narrative texts.

Author	Source	No. of texts	Total length
Otto Feige	«Metall-Arbeiter Zeitung» (1906-1907)	2	2,530 words
Ret Marut	«Der Ziegelbrenner» (1917-1921)	2	11,726 words
B. Traven	<i>Land des Frühlings</i> (1928)	2	14,656 words
Paul Ernst	<i>Theoretische Schriften</i> (1905-1931); <i>Ein Credo</i> (1935); <i>Tagebuch eines Dichters</i> (1934)	3	15,000 words
Erich Mühsam	<i>Die Psychologie der Erbtante</i> (1905); <i>Unpolitische Erinnerungen</i> (1926)	3	15,000 words
Robert Musil	Journal articles published between 1911 and 1919	3	15,000 words
Ludwig Rubiner	<i>Der Mensch in der Mitte</i> (1920)	3	15,000 words

Table 1. Corpus overview

Corpus	Source	No. of authors	No. of texts
Mannheimer Korpus Historischer Zeitungen und Zeitschriften	< http://repos.ids-mannheim.de/fedora/objects/clarin-ids:mkhz1.00000/datastreams/CMDI/content >	-	652
Kolimo	< https://jberenike.github.io/dig_res.html >	6,148	1,176

Table 2. Impostors corpora

The main idea behind the whole procedure was to verify whether impostors could produce high scores when compared to texts written by the same author (e.g., Feige with Feige) and low scores when comparing texts written by different authors (e.g., Traven with Rubiner). The analysis was performed in two phases. In the first, two attribution margins were defined – a margin of attribution acceptance, calculated by using the impostors to compare texts written by the same author (e.g., a section of text by Feige with a section of text by Feige) and a

82 *Mannheimer Korpus Historischer Zeitungen und Zeitschriften*, Institut für Deutsche Sprache Mannheim, Mannheim 2013, <<https://doi.org/10.34644/laudatio-dev-mi-U5D3MB7CArCQ9C6Cul>> (date of access: 25 June 2022).

83 Berenike Herrmann – Gerhard Lauer, *KOLIMO. A Corpus of Literary Modernism for Comparative Analysis*, 2017, <<https://kolimo.uni-goettingen.de/about>> (date of access: 25 June 2022).

margin-of-attribution-negation, calculated by using the impostors to compare texts written by different authors (e.g., a section of text by Traven with a section of text by Musil). Analyses were performed by combining the eleven distance measures available in the stylo package, twenty different selections of most frequent words (from 50 to 1,000 MFW), five culling percentages (0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%), and eight selections of the number of impostors (from five to forty). Computation was repeated twenty times for each condition with the two impostor corpora, resulting in a total of 352,000 analyses. Figure 1 shows these margins through the green (acceptance) and red (negation) boxes.

In the second phase, texts by Feige, Marut, and Traven were compared with each other using the impostors method (see the grey bars in Figure 1). If a grey bar corresponds to a green bar, the possibility that the two authors were the same person is confirmed. If the grey bar corresponds to a red bar, such a possibility is negated.

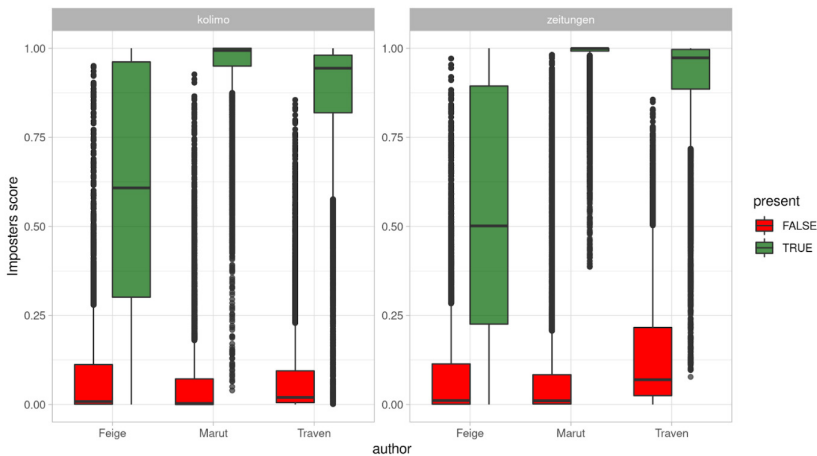


Figure 1. Testing Results

Overall, the results show the following:

- the impostors strongly negate that Feige and Marut are the same person;
- the impostors are generally inconclusive in the comparison between Feige and Traven, with a slight tendency towards negating their correspondence;
- the impostors slightly negate that Marut and Traven are the same person.

These preliminary results show that the writings of Otto Feige don't have a clear stylistic fingerprint as other writings of Ret Marut and B. Traven do. Several reasons could exist for this. First, the writings of Otto Feige were rather short, and one of the requirements of stylometric analysis is that texts have a minimum length of 5,000 characters. Second, the texts might not have been written by the same writer or the young Otto Feige's texts were revised or rewritten by an older journalist, which makes their stylometric 'signal' quite weak. A possible answer to these limitations could be a stylometric study of the author's narrative texts, which will be the subject of follow-up research.

The fundamental question of whether the texts attributed to the three authors, Marut, Feige, and Traven, were written by the same hand remains unanswered. The doubts some critics have expressed regarding the identity of these authors may also be correct⁸⁴. In this exploratory analysis, however, our objective was a more methodologically-focused analysis: While the first part of the essay presents documents and theses regarding the identity of the writer, the second offers an example of close reading of non-fiction texts attributed to him. In addition, in the third part, the paper shows that stylometric analysis can contribute to answering such questions through the integration of stylistic analysis and the results of archival analyses and journalistic discoveries; in other words, that «the greatest literary mystery of the twentieth century» remains a mystery that contributes to scholarly fascination with the writings of Otto Feige, B. Traven, and Ret Marut.

84 Guthke, *Jan-Christoph Hauschild, B. Traven: Die unbekanntenen Jahre*, *op. cit.*, p. 252.