universität
wien

DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

„The Danger of the Single Story:
The Role of Postcolonial Literature in the English
Language Classroom“

Verfasserin

Claudia Wobovnik

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, 2014

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:	A 190 299 344
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt:	UF Psychologie und Philosophie, UF Englisch
Betreuerin:	Assoz.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Susanne Reichl

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I wish to thank my family for their support, trust, and commitment. I am profoundly indebted to my parents, for making all this possible. Thank you for your unconditional love and support in all matters. Thank you for making my dreams come true. My sisters Tini and Karo, for their encouragement, moral support, critical comments, and most insightful conversations, for the joy and happiness you bring to my life.

Furthermore, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my partner Marvin, for his patience and understanding, and for sharpening my critical mind in our seemingly endless discussions. Thank you for relentlessly listing to my monologues about literature, teaching, and postcolonial studies. Also for providing me space, both literally and metaphorically. Thank you for bringing so much love to my life.

I would like to thank the professors I met during my study at the University of Vienna, all of who have contributed to make me what I am today. I would also like to thank the professors at the University of Klagenfurt, where I spent the last phase of my study, and where I met Prof. Werner Delanoy.

My special thanks go to my supervisor Assoz.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Susanne Reichl, for her support and guidance with this thesis. Without her critical suggestions and encouraging thoughts this paper would not have been such a wonderful experience.

Thank you.

Table of Contents

1. Birds and Tortoise 1

2. Postcolonial Studies and Literature 4

2.1. Postcolonialism 4

2.2. The Problem of the 'post' in Postcolonial Theory 9

2.2.1. *When* is postcolonial? 9

2.2.2. *Where* is the postcolonial? 12

2.2.3. *Who* is the postcolonial? 12

2.3. Towards planetary perspectives on english writings? Transcultural World Literature 15

2.4. African Postcolonial Literature 20

2.4.1. The Domination of Physical Space 24

2.4.2. The Reformation of the Natives' Minds 26

2.5. Textual Strategies of Postcolonial Literature 31

2.5.1. Glossing 33

2.5.2. Untranslated Words 34

2.5.3. Interlanguage 34

2.5.4. Syntactic Fusion 35

2.5.5. Code-switching and Vernacular Translation 36

3. Literature in the EFL/ESL Classroom 38

3.1. Literature and Language Teaching 38

3.2. The Many Faces of Reader-Response in the Language Classroom 41

3.3. Dialogic Literary Didactics 49

3.3.1. Understanding and Resistance 51

3.3.2. Literary Text and Task 53

3.4. A Note to Contextual Knowledge 53

4. Postcolonial Literature in the EFL Classroom 57

4.1. The Danger of the Single Story 57

4.2. Rationale: Postcolonial Literature in the EFL/ESL Classroom 59

4.3. Culture and Language 65

4.4. Language Learning, Postcolonial Literature, and the Language Learner's Identity 67

4.5. The Potentials of Postcolonial Literature for EFL/ESL Teaching and Learning 72

5. Postcolonial Intersections: The Potentials of Postcolonial Literature for EFL/ESL Teaching and Learning 75

5.1. *The Critique of Western Universalism* 77

5.2. Cultural Identity 82

5.3. Hybridity 86

5.4. Ethnicity, Race and Racism 92

5.5. The Question of Place 96

5.6. Language 97

5.7. Decolonisation, Emancipation, and Education 100

5.8. The Critique of the Intolerance towards Indigenous Life and Faith 102

5.9. The Critique of the Western Idea of Progress 103

5.10. Tolerance, Fairness, and Openness 106

5.11. The Complexities of Societal Change 107

5.12. The Critique of the Western Dominance in Native Historiography 110

5.13. Feminism 113

6. (Inter-) Cultural Learning 120

6.1. The (Inter-) Cultural Challenge 120

6.2. The Dimension of (Inter-) Cultural Learning in EF/ESL Teaching and Learning 122

6.3. The Text: (Inter-) Cultural Learning Criteria 126

6.4. Structuring (Inter-) Cultural Learning Processes: Dialogic Model 130

6.4.1. Evocation 134

6.4.2. Interpretation 136

7. Conclusion and Outlook 141

7.1. What we can learn from the Tortoise 141

7.2. Off to New Shores: Towards a Postcolonial Pedagogy 144

8. Bibliography 153

German Abstract 166

Curriculum Vitae 167

1. Birds and Tortoise

Once upon a time there was a Tortoise…
When it heard of a feast in the sky, it lulled the birds and sneaked its way to the feast in disguise of a bird, where it allayed its ravenous hunger and shovelled down the food all by itself. The birds went angry by Tortoise's ungratefulness and took back the feathers they had lent Tortoise to fly to the sky. There was no alternative to get back to earth but to jump down – before Tortoise sent message to its wife to put all the cushions out for a soft landing. The messenger, too angry for Tortoise's rude behaviour, however told the wife to bring out all the hard things. When Tortoise landed on earth, its shell shattered into thousand pieces… (see Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 95-99).

This folk tale, the origin of which is disputed, symbolically tells the story of colonialism. It entails questions of trust, honesty, dialogue, support, disguise, treachery, greed, anger, neglect, revenge, defeat. In the end, birds and Tortoise are enemies. But who is to blame? The birds for their betrayal? The Tortoise for its trickery? The messenger for its revenge? The story of colonisation and colonialism is indeed a complex tale, which involves so many difficult questions, and if we seek clear answers, the project is foredoomed to failure. A critical investigation into the dynamics of (post-) colonialism requires more than assigning roles of good and evil. Thus, in order to grasp the complexity of this relationship, an approach needs to be displayed that exceeds one sided perspectives of coloniser and colonised – at one time the birds may turn out to be the colonised, at another, it is Tortoise. To gain a thorough understanding of human life, one must learn to see the world from many perspectives. Postcolonial literary texts deal with biased accounts of life and offer ways in which to challenge binary constructions of reality that limit the flourishing of diversity and plurality. Postcolonial literary texts invite its readers to leave their comfort zones and explore conflicting and challenging perspectives which aim at disrupting gridlocked perceptions. Postcolonial literature addresses issues of power imbalance, may it be epistemically, ethically, or ontologically, and contributes to the development towards a critical understanding of the complex dynamics in human life. This diploma thesis is aimed at encouraging language and literature teachers to embrace the manifold pedagogical potentials of postcolonial literature and incorporate them in their teaching, for I truly believe that postcolonial literary texts play a decisive role in the education of one's students to become culturally-sensitive and critical subjects, for who cultural diversity signifies the

enrichment of human life. Building on issues explored within postcolonial criticism, such as race, ethnicity, cultural identity, and hybridity, it will be argued in chapter 4 that postcolonial literary productions offer an invaluable source for an education that truly aims at tolerance and open-mindedness. In essence, this means that the inclusion of postcolonial literary texts can decisively contribute to a better and reflective understanding of the complexity of human beings and thus engender a holistic perception of human life.

The project of the inclusion of postcolonial literary texts in EFL/ESL teaching and learning, however, requires some preliminary steps if language teachers wish to benefit from the potentials postcolonial literature offers its readers. Thus, the theoretical engagement with postcolonial criticism and literature in chapter 2 is regarded a necessary precondition for the understanding of postcolonial concerns discussed in chapter 5. As will become clear in chapter 2, the body of postcolonial theory is a huge compilation of different, sometimes conflicting ideas and understandings of the nature of postcolonialism as well as the objects of study of the postcolonial discourse. This heterogeneity constitutes the starting point to delve into an interdisciplinary project, a dialogue between issues raised within and outside postcolonial criticism, to grasp the complexity of human nature, and to understand contemporary processes and dynamics in a globalised world. Postcolonial perspectives encourage critical ways of knowing as they point to issues of marginalisation, power-struggle, and ideology. Postcolonial theory originated from a vast body of critique of and resistance to cultural imperialism, colonialism, notions of superiority, supremacy, and the way in which eurocentric discourses constructed misrepresentations of ‘the Other’ and operated against – or closed off – indigenous ways of being and knowing. The postcolonial challenge of essentialist notions of human life gave rise to previously suppressed and silenced knowledge and paved the way to looking at the world from multiple perspectives in a dialectic and dialogic way. Yet, postcolonial criticism is not only a body of critique of Western norms and values; postcolonial perspectives offer ways of counter-hegemonic, liberating practices, which are all the more valuable in the face of the contemporary neo-colonial power-relations, which do not only affect people of former colonies but humanity as a whole. Against the background of the prevailing ‘postcoloniality’, issues discussed within postcolonial theory and literature appear to have a new actuality, which makes the call for the inclusion of postcolonial literature in EFL/ESL teaching and learning even more relevant. Certainly, this thesis cannot cover all concerns and

issues raised within postcolonial criticism, given the vast diversity within this field of study. Therefore, this thesis does not, and indeed, cannot claim to be any kind of a mastery of all theoretical areas; rather it should be read as an attempt to engage with different positions and texts to make postcolonial theory and literature 'digestible' and, to some extent, also attractive for the English language classroom. As I will argue in chapter 3, the teaching of postcolonial literary texts does not really need an entirely new methodology or literary didactics; however, it requires a certain stance or attitude towards the teaching of literature. More precisely, it will be argued that one's own understanding of literature, reading, and the role of the reader will most certainly influence the way in which literature will be dealt with in class. The power with which teachers can influence students in their attitude towards literature must not be underestimated in this connection, which is why language teachers need to reflect on their own beliefs about reading on a constant basis. Very often, it is the attitude of the teacher which will decide upon the success or failure of literature sessions in language teaching. For this reason, chapter 3 is dedicated to the reflection of reader-response approaches to literature, a strand within literary criticism, which I find most promising in the study of literary didactics. In this respect, a dialogic engagement with literature is regarded as one of the most suitable theoretical frameworks to really gain from the potentials postcolonial texts can offer. In essence, it is argued that the reading of a literary text is not only aimed at understanding, but at a change in one's perspective. Similarly, I would argue that the reading of postcolonial literature is not only about the appreciation of a different culture, but about a change or at least a deeper understanding of one's own cultural environment and the way in which one's cultural presuppositions influence how we perceive of cultural difference and diversity. Thus, the moment of reflection and interpretation within the process of (inter-) cultural learning discussed in chapter 6, is given, apart from the equal significant process of evocation, an important role, too.

In sum, the issue of inclusion and exclusion is not only a question of acceptance, a polite nod in the direction of the literary production of some counter-discourses, but includes questions of power which need to be addressed. In essence, it will be argued that an education which truly aims at tolerance, respect, freedom, and the appreciation of diversity cannot ignore the rich and unique body of postcolonial literature, especially in the face of the political and cultural dimension of the English language. This project entails theoretical as well as practical questions concerning the implementation of

postcolonial literature in the EFL/ESL classroom, touching upon issues in contemporary literary didactics, the notion of (inter-) cultural education, as well as hermeneutic oriented didactic approaches of dialogical learning.

2. Postcolonial Studies and Literature

2.1. Postcolonialism

The terrain of postcolonial theory and criticism is a very much discussed and highly contested field of study with various disciplines informing each other, both critically and collaboratively. As Rizvi, Lingard, and Lavia (with reference to Stuart Hall's article "When was 'the post-colonail'? Thinking at the Limit") put it, "postcolonialism has become 'a sign for desire for some and equally for others, a signifier of danger'" (249). It would be presumptuous to present one single definition of postcolonialism that can amount for all the facets postcolonial criticism is composed of. In fact, such a task may prove to be elusive. This should by no means sound like a lame excuse – on the contrary, it pays tribute to the complexity of postcolonial studies and points to the manifold nature, the multi-dimensionality that lies at the very heart of postcolonialism. Thus, the following chapter should be regarded as a starting point to explore the rich discourse of postcolonial studies. It might pose more questions than it provides answers, but this again only underlines the complexity of a field as rich in theoretical and intellectual, as well as creative production, as postcolonial criticism.

As a discourse of the minorities, the marginalised, the 'othered', postcolonial perspectives emerged as a counter-project (Gegenentwurf) to the dominant colonial discourse of representation, to undermine the colonial ideology and articulate standpoints (on history, race, culture, etc.) from the perspective of the formerly colonised. In this anti-colonial project, the destabilisation of the colonial master-slave logic and the centre-periphery matrix played a crucial role to form the basis of political and cultural agency.

Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (1978) constitutes a ground-breaking historical, political, and literary analysis and plays in regard to the dismantling of the hegemonic discourse that constructed 'the Orient' as the inferior Other, a crucial role. In applying Foucault's model of power and knowledge, Said identified the power relations which established the concept of the East or the Orient. It is the way in which the West made knowable the Orient, how the West transformed the East into an object of study that

granted power and authority over a most heterogenic terrain subsumed as 'the Orient'. Said's study is not just about the construction of the Orient, but the way in which the West constructed (constructs?) it as its Other. "As a system of representations, Orientalism is a discourse framed by political forces through which the west sought to understand and control its colonized populations" (Rizvi, Lingard, and Lavia 252).

Undoubtedly, Said's main achievement is the insight that binary oppositions established an imperial practice to secure power over the dominated or colonised. However, he has been criticised for promoting universalising categories himself, with the pronunciation of essential terms, such as 'the West' on the one hand, and 'the Orient' on the other. Homi Bhabha (see *The Location of Culture*, 1994), another ground-breaking postcolonial theorist, argued that the formation of identity is indeed more complex than suggested by Said. In contrast to Said, Bhabha's focus lies in the spaces between binary structures. Like the space of the stairwell between the attic and the cellar (see Green qtd. in Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 3f.), identity, too, is a space in-between, a space of interaction and negotiation. It is important to note that hybridity here does not mean the mixing of two separated entities to create something new, a third (separate) entity, which in turn can be traced back to its origins again. To stay with Bhabha's metaphor, the space between the attic and the cellar is a third space, a space in which cultural differences are negotiated and in which hybrid identities evolve:

> The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 4)

As an ambivalent and contradictory space (see Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 37), Bhabha's concept has been invaluable to the development of postcolonial critique, the dismantling of hegemonic structures, and the undermining of dominant discourses, as the third space provided the possibility for third perspectives to evolve. Also in terms of the appropriation of the master's language (see below) to create new ways of communication, Bhabha's concept was essential:

> It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 37)

Subversion and intervention is possible through hybrid identities which form ways of disrupting binary structures of identity set up by colonial discourses. "Hybridity shifts

power, questions discursive authority, and suggests, contrary to the implication of Said's concept of Orientalism, that colonial discourse is never wholly in the control of the colonizer" (Childs and Williams 136). Similar to Frantz Fanon, a Martinique-born philosopher and psychiatrist, Bhabha argues that the binary coloniser-colonised relationship falls short of accounting for the complexity that actually pervades it.

> If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the *production* of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions, then an important change of perspective occurs. The ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the uncertainty, that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention. (Bhabha, "Sings of Wonders" 154)

Said and Bhabha[1] are only two examples of postcolonial theorists who have both contributed to the dismantling of Western ideological structures that formed the structural basis of the colonisation of indigenous populations. With the analysis of the ways in which binary constructions work, both offered ways of resistance to the colonial discourse. The notion of hybridity, in particular, proved itself indispensible of the challenge of hegemonic discourses, even more so today in the face of shifted power-relations. Also, the concept of hybridity or hybriditisation has been important to account for the situation of diasporic people. However fruitful and important the concept of flexible identities has been, Bhabha has been criticised for the privileging and glorification of hybrid forms (see, for instance, Shohat 108f.). Still, Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and the third space have had considerable influence not only in postcolonial theory, but also in EFL teaching (see Kramsch 1993; Kostogriz 2002; Soja 1996). Similar to the postcolonial subject, the EFL learner is located between at least two cultures and two languages and has to find ways in which to negotiate these spheres (see also chapter 4).

As far as postcolonial literary texts are concerned, the challenge of colonial ideologies, binary oppositions, and Western dominance became particularly strong in creative arts, as will be seen in the course of this paper. In *The Empire Writes Back* (1989, 2002), Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue that subversion as a strategic literary move was an important tool to challenge "the bases of European and British metaphysics" (32) which justified such hierarchical structures (coloniser-colonised, centre-periphery) in the first place. "Marginality […] became an unprecedented source of creative energy" (12).

---

[1] The third postcolonial critic, to complete Robert Young's Holy Trinity, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, will be encountered elsewhere in this diploma thesis.

Critics of postcolonial theory, such as Arif Dirlik (1992), Ella Shohat (1994), and Anne McClintock (1992), to name but a few, have 'accused' postcolonial analysis for somehow suggesting the definite end of colonialism, for taking colonialism as its basis of analysis, for producing totalising, universalising categories, for being trapped in its own terminology and thus, for being limited in its analysis, for its "ubiquitous academic marketability" (McClintock qtd. in Hall, "Thinking at the Limit" 243), and for being inadequate to account for today's complex transnational relations (see also Schulze-Engler's critique below). However, as will become clear, postcolonial criticism is by no means restricted to the challenge of an imperial centre. As has been observed correctly, the binary assumption of a colonial centre and its periphery can no longer fully account for the inequalities in times of globalisation. As Kenneth Surin (qtd. in Behdad 398) points out, in a globalised world "the exploiters are everywhere and so are the exploited" – the postcolonial world is a "confusing world, a world of crisscrossed economies, intersecting systems of meanings, and fragmented identities" (Roger Rouse qtd. in Behdad 398). In a globalised world, the lines of power cannot be captured along binary oppositions. "These 'lines' may have been simple once (were they?), but they certainly are so no longer" (Hall, "Thinking at the Limit" 244). Certainly, postcolonial theorists and writers have long stepped out of the peripheries and the anti-colonial struggle of the early days, and transcended dominator-dominated binaries to discuss and criticise contemporary unequal and uneven power-relations, "the flows and networks of power" (Rizvi, Lingard, and Lavia 354) that pervade our globalised world. Drawing on Ania Loomba, Rizvi, Lingard, and Lavia state that "it is harder now than ever to see our world as simply 'postcolonial'. Yet, it is more urgent than ever to think about the questions of domination and resistance raised by postcolonial studies" (254). A possible working definition for postcolonialism that accounts for the critique of European imperialism and its cultural, social, and political effects, as well as neo-colonial processes and their implications for contemporary societies is presented by Quayson (93) who argues that postcolonialism "involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies, as well as at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after-effects of empire". Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, too, argue that processes of globalisation and neo-colonialism can well be explained and analysed within postcolonial criticism as it the principles underlying globalisation and neo-colonialism

have been thoroughly studied in postcolonial theory (see 217)[2]. Whether hegemonic positions are secured through military, political, or economic powers, mass media or even the film industry (see Pawling 143), postcolonial criticism can provide advanced answers, especially when it comes to the interpretation of ideological constructions of globalisations, the challenge of cultural imperialism, and the analysis of strategies of resistance.

As has been pointed out, postcolonial theory is by far not a coherent set of ideas but a vast compilation of different, sometimes conflicting approaches. It may be right to describe postcolonial theory in terms of its "dizzying multiplicity of positionalities" (Shohat 99); a more positive approach, however, would be to conceive of postcolonial criticism as a rich body of interdisciplinary theoretical work which is in constant dialogue with internal theoretical positions as well as critical theories raised outside postcolonial theory, with the discussions "sometimes [being] collaborative, sometimes highly critical" (Childs and Williams 21). In other words, postcolonial theory is an uneven phenomenon, both in its intellectual and creative production, as well as in its very substance. Although postcolonialism "cover[s] all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2), it nevertheless deals with "different empires, different needs, different strategies, different trajectories of expansion or contraction, different levels of territorial penetration, control and exploitation" (Childs and Williams 10 with reference to Edward Said). This unevenness is probably its greatest advantage, as it implies that postcolonialism is in constant flux, "always in the process of change, never consistent with itself" (Mishra and Hodge 44). Postcolonial theory constantly re-defines its borders and thus "allows for a wide range of applications, designating a constant interplay and slippage between the sense of a historical transition, a sociocultural location, and an epochal configuration" (Slemon qtd. in Quayson 94). This aspect of postcolonial theory is also stressed by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin who emphasise the "flexible boundaries of the post-colonial" (202) and argue that "[t]he revisions, extensions and proliferations of the contexts within which the idea of the post-colonial is deployed will doubtless continue" (201).

2.2. The Problem of the 'post' in Postcolonial Theory

[2] It should be noted that there is considerable disagreement as to the roots of globalisation, as well as the relationship between postcolonialism and globalisation (see, for instance, Schulze-Engler, 1999 or Davis et al., 2004).

There are ongoing debates about the nature of postcolonialism, its validity, as well its efficacy. In the many attempts to define the complex field of postcolonial studies, the following guiding questions raised by Childs and Williams will turn out to be helpful in roughly describing the framework within which postcolonial theory is discussed. Most generally, postcolonial studies is concerned with the social, cultural, and political consequences of colonialism and the way in which its effects have operated on post-independent societies. This seems to be an acceptable definition of postcolonial studies; however, at a closer look, questions arise as to the referentiality of the term 'postcolonial'. For this reason, postcolonial criticism needs to address its politics of location[3].

2.2.1. *When* is the postcolonial?

The 'post' can have at least two implications: Either it refers to an end or completion of a theory or event with the 'post' indicating that which comes afterwards, "a passage into a new period" (Shohat 101); or it can refer to the theoretical or intellectual transcendence or advance of the other term. The tension of these implications has been target of much criticism, all of which pointed to the ambiguity the term 'postcolonial' implies. Ella Shohat, for instance, points to the theoretical (as well as political) vagueness of the term 'postcolonial' which is caused by "[t]he unarticulated tension between the philosophical and the historical teleologies in the 'post-colonial'" (101f.). In essence, the author argues that it is not clear whether the term is intended to be chronological or epistemological. According to the former understanding, postcolonialism logically refers to a period in history after colonial imperialism. The implication of an ending, however, is difficult to maintain, as the colonial impact certainly did not end with the official declaration of independence. On the contrary, in the period following independence, "Western powers were still intent on maintaining maximum indirect control over erstwhile colonies, via political, cultural and above all economic channels […]" (Childs and Williams 5). Neo-colonialism is indeed a major issue which makes the assumption of an end almost tasteless. As Gayatri Spivak points out, "We live in a post-colonial neo-colonized world" (*The Post-Colonial Critic* 166). In essence, 'post' does not simply mean 'past'.

[3] Ella Shohat criticised that postcolonial scholars have somehow "not addressed the politics of location of the very term 'post-colonial'" (99) which is why Shohat identifies it as being "fraught with ambiguities" (ibid.).

Another problem with the periodisation is the "lack of historical specificity in the 'post' [which] leads to a collapsing of diverse chronologies" (Shohat 103), and thus to a totalising view. Because it is by far not clear when the post-colonial began, differentiation becomes difficult.

> It equates early independence won by settler-colonial states, in which Europeans formed their new nation-states in non-European territories at the expense of indigenous populations, with that of nation-states whose indigenous populations struggled for independence against Europe, but won it, for the most part, with the twentieth century collapse of European Empires. (Shohat 103f.)

Closely connected is the question of when postcolonialism is actually going to end, a question raised by the Caribbean poet Lorna Goddison (referred to in Childs and Williams 7). Given the neo-colonial realities in the contemporary world, the answer has to be "Not (quite) yet" (ibid.). At first sight, this might seem a rather unsatisfying, even pessimistic conclusion, and critics of postcolonial studies indeed become more and more impatient and urge to move on and overcome 'the old struggle'. However, one cannot ignore the persistence of (neo-) colonial structures, "the modern theatre of neo-colonialist international relations" (Selmon qtd. in Childs and Williams 5) people are confronted with on a daily basis, especially against the background of globalisation. In this sense, postcoloniality really is far from over, in fact, it is now. Childs and Williams, thus, suggest conceiving of postcolonialism "as an anticipatory discourse, recognizing that the condition it names does not yet exist, but working nevertheless to bring that about" (7). Postcolonialism does not simply refer to a period in history; to use it to indicate to a certain chronology, clearly misses the political dimension of postcolonial literary production. Childs and Williams point to the paradox situation of this postcolonial 'situation', a state which constantly refers to something that is not yet achieved while at the same time reminding of the 'old influences' that are still at work in today's world: "There is a form of perverseness in taking the label 'post-' for a state which is not yet fully present, and linking it to something which has not fully disappeared, but in many ways that paradoxical in-betweenness precisely characterizes the post-colonial world" (Childs and Williams 7).

The second understanding of 'postcolonial' seems to be far more appealing, and clearly more useful to deal with postcolonial literary texts as a means of challenge of cultural hegemonies[4]. Here, the 'post' relates to the theoretical transcending of colonial parameters. In other words, postcolonialism can well be regarded as a process of anti-

[4] It should be noted that Hall argues that "the tension between the epistemological and chronological is not disabling but productive" ("Thinking at the Limit" 254).

colonial cultural practices. In this sense, postcolonialism is defined "as a shift in critical perspective, resulting in decentred or displaced views" (Döring 14). The focus is not so much on the chronological aspects of events, but rather on the development of a critique of colonial ideology, thus, the development of a postcolonial reading strategy. The crucial advantage of this functional understanding is that it is neither "limited nor limiting in time" (Döring 20) – its critical stance towards the construction and representation of cultures, for instance, is equally valid today, as it was in times when country after country gained their independence from colonial powers. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, too, stress the continued relevance of the postcolonial in arguing that "there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression" (2). In *The Empire Writes Back*, the authors have developed a critical approach to postcolonial literary writings from countries once part of the British Empire – although they claim the issues raised to be equally valid for countries colonised by other European powers as well (ibid., 1) – based on the political, anti-colonial agenda such literatures display. In other words, they claim that postcolonial literature developed a specific structure to position itself against the imperial centre, to reverse the power relations set up by colonial order, and to write back to the centre. Postcolonial literature "emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their difference from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial" (ibid., 2). And it is exactly this centre-periphery dichotomy that has been fiercely criticised, especially by transcultural theorists, who regard the imperial centre no longer relevant in a globalised, interconnected world (see also below). Writing back has become superfluous. Although there might be some justified arguments against the approach put forward by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, I would like to stress that although postcolonial literary texts follow the footsteps of early anti-colonialist writings, contemporary postcolonial literature has clearly moved on from a mere writing back mode to a critical approach, transcending the one-dimensional centre-periphery assumption, as will become clear in chapter 5. Contemporary postcolonial literatures have opened up new spaces and critically deal with shifted power relations such as neo-colonial discourses produced all over the world. "This is why postcolonialism matters and why it should matter to us, whenever we engage in English literary and cultural studies" (Döring 14)

2.2.2. *Where* is the postcolonial?

Equally valid in the critical investigation into the terminology and referentiality of postcolonialism, is the question of the 'where' the postcolonial is, "the question of its spatial location" (Childs and Williams 10). According to Childs and Williams, there is again a straightforward answer to the question of where the postcolonial is: Geographically, it refers to "those areas formerly under the control of the European colonialist powers" (ibid.). However, given "the extreme unevenness" (Childs and Williams 10 with reference to Edward Said) of (post-) colonialism, it is difficult to remain within the confines of the geographically defined areas, as the postcolonial has long affected parts of the world which one would not consider postcolonial at all. For instance, Britain has experienced a wave of mass immigration from former colonies since their independence, creating the possibility of a symbolic "internal colonization" (ibid., 11), or colonisation from within (see also below). Another complication to the discussion of the naming of the where, is the fact of the uneven distribution of decolonised spaces (Spivak referred to in Childs and Williams 10). In other words, some formerly colonised spaces may today seem less postcolonial than others, so that it is difficult to lump them together into a single category.

2.2.3. *Who* is the postcolonial?

Closely connected to the questions of the 'when' and 'where', is the problem of 'who' the adjective 'postcolonial' applies to. In essence, similar to the question of whether we should not better leave the postcolonial framework with its loaded terminology to move on to a more neutral discussion of today's problems, the critique of how long a people remains (must remain) 'postcolonial' is equally relevant to the discussion of the significance of postcolonial theory for contemporary issues. In the face of the considerations of neo-colonialism raised in the sections above, this question can be answered alike, in arguing, in accordance with Childs and Williams (12), that if the postcolonial is now, if the process of decolonisation has not been yet completed, how can people living in postcolonial territories be considered not being postcolonial?

Also, the obvious answer to the question of who the postcolonial is, namely that it refers to the people living in former colonies, reveals itself as more complicated when taking into account the unevenness of postcolonialism. In fact, postcolonialism has fiercely been criticised for being a universalising construct (see Shohat 103) as it "collapses very different national-racial formations – the United States, Australia, and

Canada, on the one hand, and Nigeria, Jamaica, and India, on the other – as equally 'post-colonial'" (ibid., 102).

In times of postcolonial migration, especially when people from former colonies migrated to the 'imperial centre', the motherland[5], the question of the *who* became even more relevant, as the assumed centre-periphery, coloniser-colonised relationship became, once more, obsolete. Both, Homi Bhabha and Edwaid Said stressed that the postcolonial history is as much an issue and integral part of the identity of the former colonisers as of the former colonies. "The Western metropole must confront its postcolonial history, told by its influx of postwar migrants and refugees, as an indigenous or native narrative *internal to its national identity*" (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 6) which becomes evident when the assumed centre becomes confronted with this part of their history in terms of postcolonial migration. The question of referentiality is further complicated against the background that many people of the postcolonial diaspora experienced forced displacement, including radical displacement through slavery, forced movement of refugees, as well as socially forced displacement as a consequence of the scattered economic situations in post-independent countries. Against the psychological disruption and new forms of racism such forms of displacements can cause, postcolonial critics warn against the hasty assumption that the diasporic, hybrid subject is "the decolonized subject *par excellence*" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 218; similarly argued in Childs and Williams 12f.) just because their in-betweeness transcends the fixity and one-dimensionality of colonial logics of identity. This notion is indeed difficult, as it conveys the sense of some liberated subject, who is the diasporic subject, and the 'rest', the "ex-colonised 'subjects-in-place'" to whom the notion of liberation is not accessible (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 219).

The question of (postcolonial) identity is indeed one of the major concerns within postcolonial theory and literature. As Childs and Williams claim, "The problem of unsettled or unsettling identities […] is an issue at the heart of post-colonialism" (13). In essence, the question of postcolonial identity is more concerned with coping and negotiation of unsettled, disrupted identities than the definition of them:

---

[5] See Louise Bennet's poem *Colonization in Reverse* (1966) in which she deals with the social consequences and implications for the former imperial centre, the motherland, when it is suddenly overwhelmed by a migration wave of its former colony. In the poem, the ironic image of reversed colonisation is constructed in which "Jamaica people colonizin / England in Reverse" (3-4) with the latter suddenly being faced with *their* postcolonial history: "An turn history upside dung!" (16).

> […] post-colonialism is much more to do with the painful experience of confronting the desire to recover 'lost' pre-colonial identities, the impossibility of actually doing so, and the task of constructing some new identity on the basis of that impossibility. 'Who is the post-colonial?' then becomes at least temporarily or partially unanswerable: to the extent that major reformulations are taking place, with the identities of both the formerly colonized or diasporic groups and the imperial nations unsettled in different ways by colonial and post-colonial histories, attempts to define or circumscribe in advance the content of that Who? are premature. (Childs and Williams 14)

Another aspect of the initial question comprises the criticism that postcolonialism is primarily a jubilation of some emblematic figures, some "'star' intellectuals" (Childs and Williams 14), such as Young's Holy Trinity. In fact, there is the danger of granting intellectuals "in general an unearned, or at least unexamined, heroic status" (ibid.). However, without the philosophical, literary, and political work (one might as well include revolutionary resistance) conducted under the umbrella of postcolonial criticism, "the field of post-colonialism would be literally unthinkable" (ibid.).

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin raise another important, fundamental dimension to the question of who the postcolonial applies for and warn that to ask for boundaries between the postcolonial and the "not-really-post-colonial" (200) is delusive as "the idea of cultural fixity which these boundaries promote have seemed to […] contradict the nature of the post-colonial enterprise" (ibid.). More precisely, it is claimed that "by putting barriers between those who may be called 'post-colonial' and the rest, contradicts the capacity of post-colonial theories to demonstrate the complexity of the operation of imperial discourse" (ibid.).

Thus, the authors suggest an understanding of the postcolonial that is focused on its potential to account for cultural relations in its most general terms. Postcolonialism as a reading strategy "can illuminate diverse contemporary and historical cultural phenomena, since the impact of colonialism has been so widespread and so endemic in shaping the twentieth century and its effects" (201). Rather than struggling with some "ambiguous spatio-temporality" (Shohat 102), it seems to be more important to ask what postcolonial criticism can offer. To ask for a 'when', a 'where', and a 'who', are definitely the wrong questions, as they clearly fails to recognise the potential value postcolonial theory holds in the challenge of (new) unjust power-relations:

> It follows that the term 'post-colonial' is not merely descriptive of 'this' society rather than 'that', or of 'then' and 'now'. It re-reads 'colonisation' as part of an essentially transnational and transcultural 'global' process – and it produces a decentred, diasporic or 'global' rewriting of earlier, nation-centred imperial grand narratives. Its theoretical value therefore lies precisely in its refusal of this

> 'here' and 'there', 'then' and 'now', 'home' and 'abroad' perspective. 'Global' here does not mean universal, but it is not nation- or society-specific either. It is about how the lateral and transverse cross-relations of what Gilroy calls the 'diasporic' (Gilroy, 1994) supplement and simultaneously dis-place the centre-periphery, and the global/local reciprocally re-organise and re-shape one another. (Hall, "Rethinking at the Limit" 247)

2.3. Towards planetary perspectives on english writings? Transcultural World Literature

Against the background of the many problems of the term 'postcolonial' raised above and the difficulties it entails for the study of literature, it has been suggested to drop the term and leave the problematic, to some extent restricting framework behind, to step into a new era of transcultural world literature that does justice to worldwide migration, the interconnection, interdependence, and cross-fertilisation of people around the world. For Wolfgang Welsch (1999), it is transculturality that accounts for the diversity and plurality of people living in a globalised world. In stark contrast to concepts of the nation, transculturality acknowledges or even highlights that culture is not linked to one geographic territory, language, or cultural space; on the contrary, culture, in Welsch's view, is de-terroitorialised:

> Cultures de facto no longer have the insinuated form of homogeneity and separateness. They have instead assumed a new form, which is to be called transcultural insofar that it passes through classical cultural boundaries. […] Cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures, but go beyond these […] (Welsch 197).

In regard to cultural and literary studies, Lars Eckstein points out that "[i]n the 21st century, we need a more encompassing perspective that does justice to the intricate interplay of the global and the local in modern-day writing" (15). To think in terms of 'clusters' or labels, such as postcolonial literature, he argues, misses the trans-global reality we are living in. What Eckstein and other advocates of world literature suggest then, is the development of a "planetary perspective on English writing" (ibid.), a transcultural perspective on English literatures that is regarded to overcome the limits of postcolonialism. There is indeed a point in arguing that postcolonial writers have long overcome the phase of writing back to the centre as a means of challenging colonial misrepresentations: In agreement with Eckstein, I, too, would argue that "[…] cosmopolitan award-winning writers championed by 'postcolonial' criticism are hardly 'marginal' […]; they have long moved centre-stage, both geographically […] and in terms of their global success" (17). In this context, Eckstein criticises that to label these

bestselling authors ‘postcolonial’ would be highly restricting and, in fact, would always keep them in a safe distance from other celebrated authors. The argument is that “the spatial logic of an imperial ‘centre’ and a (post)colonial ‘periphery’” (17) has become too simplistic to account for the complex intertwinement of social, cultural, and political matters in today’s globalised world. Certainly, neo-colonial structures play a crucial role in “today’s cultural hegemony” (ibid.); however, transculturalists argue that today’s transcultural concerns simply “transcend the explanatory logic of postcolonialism” (ibid.):

> The transcultural dynamics of the ‘contact zone’ in our globalised modernity encompass many encounters, of which that between coloniser and colonised is really just one […]. Reading literature as a site in which the dynamics of the ‘contact zone’ are acted out therefore requires allowing for perspectives beyond imperial centres […] and their peripheries. (Eckstein 17)

Eckstein suggests to conceive of English literatures as “a web of ‘writing across’ multiple cultural frontiers” (18) instead of a one-way conception of writing back. Obviously, this view of literature goes hand in hand with a change in the conception of ‘culture’ and ‘society’, too. Schulze-Engler argues that there is a need to transcend traditional concepts of culture and society, for “both have lost much of their epistemological persuasiveness and explanatory potential” (“Theoretical Perspective” 27) in a globalised world. Instead of relying on ontological concepts of the nation-state as the only reference point, we need to move on to develop an understanding of a world society. A transcultural approach is, however, not a “utopian notion that cultural differences no longer matter” (“Theoretical Perspective” 28), but rather points to the necessity to change the very concepts of culture and difference. In arguing for the shift in perspective towards a transcultural world literature, Schulze-Engler points out that a transcultural turn “does not necessarily imply a total break with postcolonial studies” (ibid.); still, he, too, warns against the preoccupation of postcolonial literatures with “the sometimes blatantly nostalgic politics of anticolonialism” (ibid.) and stresses its inadequacy to account for contemporary issues. In contrast to postcolonial literature, transcultural world literature is perceived of as a “multipolar, decentred system of literary communication” (29) that “engages in a renegotiation of cultural norms and values” (ibid.) not only between, but also within different cultures. The formulation of the new discipline of (transcultural) world literature, it is argued, is a way to understand and come to terms with the complexities of globalisation. To adhere to national literatures in a globalised world, indeed seems to be self-contradictory; thus, to be able

to participate in a multidimensional, interconnected world, to integrate the self into a world view that is no longer divided by national borders, a worldview in which any borders seem to become obsolete, people need to adjust the parameters on which to ground the understanding of (trans-) cultural developments. "[…] studying literatures from across the globe […] allows one to become a citizen of the world, a cosmopolitan, not just a citizen of this or that local monolingual community" (Miller 254). There is, in fact, little to argue against an open, multipolar, decentred, local as well as transnational, collective as well as individual understanding of literature; however, at a closer look, there are several problems such a planetary perspective on literature involve, such as the question of translation, representability and canon, and the more general question of the nature of world literature and related hegemonial power-relations (see, for instance Miller 2011; or Damrosch 2003; 2009 who can be read as an answer to Miller's concerns).

The idea of moving on from postcolonial literature to a planetary perspective of literatures, to transcend the assumed conceptual narrowness of the postcolonial framework, seems to be appealing; yet, the framework of postcolonial literature should not be dismissed too easily, as postcolonial theory and literature have much to offer, even for a transcultural world. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin point out, "we cannot understand globalization without understanding the structures of the sort of power relations which flourished in the twenty-first century as an economic, cultural and political legacy of western imperialism" (216). There is good reason to turn to postcolonial theory and literature to analyse these power-relations as they "can provide very clear models for understanding how local communities achieve agency under such pressure" (ibid.). Moreover, I would oppose the claim that postcolonial literature is a writing back machine. In fact, postcolonial literary writings tie in with many concerns proponents of a transcultural world literature raise, too. As has been argued above, the master-slave, coloniser-colonised, centre-periphery dichotomy has been fiercely criticised within postcolonial theory itself, and has been identified as being too simplistic to describe the complex relationships and dynamics in times of colonialism and well beyond. Additionally, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue that much criticism of postcolonialism "stems, invariably, from a somewhat limited view of imperialism itself" (216), a view that neither accounts for "the circulation of […] power within the empire" nor the "transcultural exchanges involved" (ibid.). According to the authors, such a limited view "tends to see the subjects of empire as the passive objects of

imperial dominance" (ibid.), a view that totally neglects indigenous agency and anti-colonial activity.

To reduce the complex and diverse body of postcolonial criticism to the premise of the master-slave or centre-periphery logic is not only a violent misreading of the postcolonial discourse and ignorance of the postcolonial discussion within its conceptual framework, but also devalues and trivialises the important critique postcolonial theorists and writers have brought forth. Also, I agree with Childs and Williams, who, like other postcolonial critics, such as Neil Lazarus (1999) and Gayatri Spivak (1999), oppose the call of some theorists of transculturalism and globalism to leave the postcolonial framework behind to move on to a conception of a borderless world[6]:

> In the face of the enormity and global impact of colonialism, calls to move on to topics other then the (post-) colonial can only seem hasty; indeed, if […] the overall framework is one of imperialist expansion, it is difficult to see what a responsible moving-on would involve, caught up as we are in imperialism's relentless unfolding dynamic. (Childs and Williams 10)

The value of a postcolonial approach to globalisation, as articulated by Lazarus and Spivak, is that it does not only provide a 'theoretical' instrument to analyse the dynamics of globalisation, but also offer ways of cultural resistance, both localised as well as trans-local.

Finally, postcolonial literature and world literature do not need to contradict each other. Rather than dismissing postcolonial theory in favour of the theory of transcultural world literature, the disciplines can, and I would argue, should be conceived of as supplementary discourses. To some extent postcolonial literature is and has always been world literature, given the vast amount of postcolonial creative production spread all over the world on the one hand, and facing the shared concerns such as the challenge of binary oppositions and the blurring of boundaries, on the other. A postcolonial perspective on globalisation can offer valuable insights into issues of migration, (inter-) cultural, transcultural, or diasporic identity, cultural mixing, transcultural political relations, and the question of place, all of which address both, the role of social movements and the concept of the nation state, in the search of a sense of self in a postcolonial context. In NoViolet Bulawayo's novel *We Need New Names* (2013) the postcolonial perspective becomes evident when Tshaka Zulu's fateful story of de-placement is told (237-250). Also the way in which Bulawayo makes the political

---

[6] See Miyoshi (1996).

personal, how she places her critique of postcolonial national politics as well as transnational relations within everyday life, reveals her critical eye on globalisation and notions of transculturalism in a postcolonial world. In Doreen Baingana's short story collection *Tropical Fish: Tales from Entebbe* (2005), it is Christine in "Questions of Home" who develops to some extent a transcultural identity in a postcolonial context, and in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) it is the complex socio-political situation in post-independent Nigeria that can serve as a starting point to explore cross-references, and relate the story to other literary writings dealing with nationalism, tribalism, neo-colonialism, and international political relations. The question, Why not move to a planetary perspective to approach these texts? seems to be obvious here; however, given the specific postcolonial relevance as well as the postcolonial criticism that pervades these texts, there is the risk of ignoring most of the substance of the work when reading them as 'transcultural world literature' all too readily.

I agree that teachers need to raise their students' awareness to the fact that

> […] new literatures are not simply the products of local cultural, political, geographical, colonial, or whatever influences. They are also part of a universal search for expression in which any singly example can be usefully illuminated, enhance, and enjoyed through contrastive and comparative study. (McRae 230)

There seems to be concerns that to be labelled 'postcolonial' is synonymous to being pushed into the role of the 'victim' (see McRae 230f.). Again, I would like to stress that postcolonial theory and literature has long moved on from being just a means of writing back to the centre; it has developed, and reacts to local and global concerns, alike.

As will be seen in chapter 5, there is no contradiction in dealing with a text as a postcolonial work and a piece of transcultural world literature. In fact, it is the beauty of postcolonial literary texts that they are specific and general at the same time; a text might deal with issues specific to postcolonial discourse and raise transcultural concerns at the same time, which links the text across space and time.

2.4. African Postcolonial Literature

'Postcolonial Literatures in englishes[7]' is an umbrella term that hosts a vast spectrum of writings of different countries all around the world "where literature is being produced and circulated in English, or some variety of English, but where a distinctly non-English cultural influence is at the same time at work in the text" (Döring 6). Comprehending the literary production of a single nation or geographical area may already be a "Herculean, perhaps impossible, task" (Miller 255), but to do justice to the vast range and variety of postcolonial literary texts of all cultures affected by imperial and colonial rule, the different authors, as well as the culturally, linguistically, socially, and politically most diverse backgrounds and implications these texts involve, would certainly explode the confines of this diploma theses.

For this reason, I concentrated my discussion mainly on African postcolonial literary texts. However, even to speak of 'the' African postcolonial literature seems to be an overgeneralisation of a body most diverse in its literary productions, socio-political contexts, ethnic, cultural, and religious compositions, and points to a certain superficiality such a comprehensive discussion (necessarily) entails. In his essay "The African Writer and the English Language", Chinua Achebe discussed the problem of definition of a discipline called African Literature and concluded that

> […] you cannot cram African literature into a small, neat definition. I do not see African literature as one unit but as a group of associated units – in fact the sum total of all the *national* and *ethnic* literatures of Africa. […] Any attempt to define African literature in terms which overlook the complexities of the African scene at the material time is doomed to failure. (56)

Also, the assumption of a coherent body of Africa itself falls short of accounting – apart from the rich cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity – for the violent displacement of countless Africans in times of slavery, the voluntary, respectively socially forced emigration due to harsh socio-political and economic situations or wars, and the situation of immigrants and second or third born generations of white citizens who might identify as much as African as a member of any tribe. To account for this diversity, the individual histories, and new cultural forms that developed due to migration and mixing, Paul Gilroy suggested in "Roots and Routes: Black Identity as an

---

[7] The differentiation between English and english(es) goes back to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (38f.) and is used to indicate the manifoldness of variations within the English language. Moreover, it emphasise the relative de-stabilised and de-centred status of 'the' English language, the language of the former British empire and, more generally, points to the dynamic nature of any language: "Because language is such a versatile tool, English is continually changing and 'growing' (becoming an 'english') […]" (39).

Outernational Project" (1995) to conceive of 'Africans' in terms of 'routes rather than roots', a concept that conceives of race as a historical formation, rather than an ontological one. The historical (and relational) conception of race and identity lends itself, I would argue, to expand it to account for white Africans, too.

Keeping the problems of forcing the heterogeneous body of African literatures into one single term in mind, the category of 'African literature' is used strategically "to emphasise commonalities in the many forms of African writing across the great diversity […]" (Döring 109) and to stress "a sense of shared concerns which may either derive from connecting cultural elements or from shared experience in recent history" (ibid.). In short, I deal with African postcolonial literature with a "sense of unity in diversity" (Eckstein 16).

An earlier answer to the question of how to deal with the diversity on the one hand, and how to re-establish a common basis, a unifying black consciousness, on the other, was the concept of pan-Africanism, first presented at the Pan-African Conference in 1900 in London. Though it has taken many forms, the overall idea of pan-Africanims is that there is a unifying, distinct African identity that connects people of African descent all over the world, thus establishing a link between the African diaspora and the 'mother continent'. The idea of a United Africa – which has remained a prominent theme until today – was particularly put forward by Kwame Nkrumah (1963)[8]. Pan-Africanism stresses 'Africanness' as a distinctive feature to rehabilitate African culture(s), empower an African spirit, and to promote black consciousness as a unifying tie. As will become clear from the exemplary readings of African postcolonial literary texts, the concept of pan-Africanism was not left without criticism as the idea of an all-embracing black identity soon clashed with the particularity of tribal or ethnic identifications.

The idea of a pan-African or universal black identity has a long and complex history, which cannot be fully discussed here. Very briefly, it can be summarised that opponents have fiercely criticised pan-Africanism for reinforcing eurocentric visions of universalism rather than conquering them. Proponents, while acknowledging this critique, however, assert that there is a need to regain an "Afrocentric conception of African identity and personality" (Dei 46). Drawing on Blake, Dei (47) argues that the idea of pan-Africanism of the early years was meant to be a unifying force – politically, culturally, philosophically and ideologically, alike – to challenge Western hegemonial power-relations and conquer colonialism; however, soon it was identified as being part

[8] Ghanaian philosopher and politician, later president of Ghana, advocate of an African Unity.

of exactly these power-relations itself, as it reproduced and reinforced (neo-) colonial structures rather than helped liberating the African mindset from colonial ideologies. The problem was that the ideological framework on which early pan-African ideas were based, was entirely eurocentric – it "has been centered on Marxist social thought, rather than on African concepts and knowledge principles" (Dei 47). Proponents of a 'new' pan-Africanism are aware of the conceptual and epistemological mistake of earlier theories and call for "the development of a particular Pan-Africanist-Afrocentric framework […]. That is, a Pan-Africanist ideology based on African indigenous value systems, concepts and principles such as community, collective responsibility, traditions of mutual interdependence, and responsible governance – and not adaptations of Western value systems" (Dei 48).

Still, pan-African ideas are very much disputed, not at least because it seems to conflict with tribal and ethnic identifications. In essence, while tribal identities seem to be naturally grown identities, a global pan-African identity is very much perceived of as a constructed, artificial artefact[9]. Moreover, to assume an underlying black consciousness turned out to make sense only outside Africa – as will be argued in chapter 5, 'Blackness' or 'Africanness' is as much a constructed category as any other social category, too, rather than a natural, innate bond, and there is no necessary need to identify with it just because of one's skin colour. "[…] the black soul is a construction by white folk" (Fanon xviii). Also, as has been claimed above, it is not clear how white Africans can relate to an underlying African identity when such a unity is judged along the colour-line.

A further complication to the discussion of African postcolonial literature is the colonial, racist implication of the term 'African'. As Döring points out, an African writer actually was "a *European* writer who wrote *about* Africa" (8). In other words, the adjective 'African' was used to describe the basis of an object to be constructed, named,

---

[9] Drawing on Kwame Nkrumah, Dei (44) argues against this objection in stating that "national pride is important, but must not be at the expense of a Pan Africanist vision of United Africa". Rather than aiming at a "'pure' and 'uncontained' past or present" (43), an unspoiled pre-colonial African identity, Dei envisions "an authentic of African collective identiy[ies] as informed by the Indigenous African cultural experience, local cultural knowledges, and the histories of the politics of resistance that have shaped and continue to shape our existence as African beings" (ibid.). His goal is to establish or recall "the authenticity of the African voice and human experience" (ibid.) that lies outside Euro-American hegemonial structures. His considerations slightly resemble what Spivak termed strategic essentialism, for which she has been violently misread. Very briefly, her concept refers to a political *strategy* that is "not general but directed, combative, and particular to a situation" (Childs and Williams 159) – quite in contrast to a theory that is always universal. More precisely, it is applied as a "mobilizing force at a specific moment: in order to change the world […] more than to theorize it" (ibid.). It refers to a strategic alliance – "[…] an anti-essentialist position in which similarity is forged strategically" (Baker 203).

and studied. “Therefore, the phrase ‘African writer’ functioned rather like ‘botanical writer’, indicating an expert writing about some specimen of interest but clearly not expecting that this specimen could ever write back” (ibid., 9). However, the object, the constructed Other, started to write back, with which a grand era of African postcolonial literary writing and artistry began. In the postcolonial challenge of the misrepresentation of ‘the African’, or more generally, ‘the Other’, the ontological and epistemological framework of colonial ideology, the dominant “narrative of Western *Man*” (Pawling 143) that has operated on the (post-) colonial subject to manifest it as the inferior Other, has gradually been dismantled and deconstructed in intellectual work, art, music, as well as literary writing.

According to Tejumola Olaniyan, when dealing with African postcolonial literature, specification concerning the particular nature of colonialism in Africa needs to be made. In his article “Africa: Varied Colonial Legacies” (2002), Olaniyan emphasises the diversity of colonialism experienced by the African continent and analyses the enormity of the “all-embracing marginality of Africa, produced by the tripartite elements” (270) of the colonial machinery in Africa. These elements, (1) The domination of physical space; (2) The reformation of natives’ minds; and (3) The integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective, were, according to the author, the major structures to produce and maintain the marginality of a whole continent, a marginality that did not become any better after political independence. In this constructed marginality, Olaniyan ‘locates’ the postcoloniality of Africa that is marked by “an ambivalent temporality situated between the end of formal empire and an inability to tame or transcend imperial institutional structures” (ibid.). Similar to Childs and Williams who emphasis the notion of anticipation that lingers in the term postcolonialism, Olaniyan, too, accentuates the temporality of the postcolonial condition: “In our more hopeful moments, we can describe the temporality as an ‘interregnum,’ bound to end one day […]” (ibid.). For now, however, it is the work of postcolonial scholars, critics, philosophers, artists, musicians, and writers, to keep on dealing with the postcoloniality and, to use Antonio Gramsci’s (see 556) formulation, the “morbid symptoms” in times of neo-colonialism and globalisation. In the following, I will briefly discuss the issue of the domination of space as well as the colonial reformation of the natives’ minds as significant colonising structures in Africa.

2.4.1. The Domination of Physical Space

As a matter of fact, the geopolitical borders of African countries, as they are known today, are the product of the colonial conquest, and the arbitrariness and coercion with which the formation of the colonial states in Africa was achieved, is outrageous. Unsurprisingly, the ignorance of existing borders has led to fierce conflicts, even civil wars, and the consequences of the inability to 'feel as one nation' still bedevil today's Africa. Olaniyan concludes that today, "[p]art of the contemporary crisis of the African state is its inability to forge a nation from its awkwardly thrown together constituent parts, parts that were routinely manipulated into fierce competition and set off against one another by the colonizers during colonial rule" (271). Or, to put it differently, "[t]he lines drawn in the sand still haunt Third World geographies" (Shohat 99). In the following, the complex socio-political situation of the post-independent African state will be discussed using the example of Nigeria, to give an idea of how the colonial ideology alienated the indigenous population, and how this manipulation still pervades contemporary post-independent countries. Also, the understanding of the socio-political situation of Nigeria is crucial to grasp the postcolonial critique, Adichie placed in her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* discussed in chapter 5.

As it was with so many other African countries, the national borders of Nigeria set up by the colonial ruling power totally ignored and violated ethnic, religious or linguistic differences. Moreover, Nigeria, as it is known today, resulted from the strategic and administrative amalgamation of North and South Nigeria in 1914, which forcefully imposed a unified national identity on people who were ethnically and culturally most diverse[10] (see Berndt 66). Instead of the creation of a model-nation, the colonial master rather sowed the seeds of future ethnic and religious conflict, as the only thing 'Nigerians' had in common really was the name of their country. After 1960, tribal rivalry more and more infiltrated into politics, which added even further fuel to "[…] the battle to consolidate the legacy of political and military dominance of a section of Nigeria over the rest of the Federation […]" (Atoafarati). As Schubert summarises,

[10] Among Nigeria's more than 177 million inhabitants (estimated in 2014), there live more than 250 different peoples (see "Central Intelligence Agency"). According to the official website of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it is even more than 300 ethnic groups, with the Christian Igbos in the South Eastern region, the Yoruba in the South Western region, and the Islamic Hausa/Fulani in the North, being the major ethnic groups (see also Berndt 66). The official language, English, is widely spoken, especially among educated people. In addition to Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and Fulani there are more than 500 indigenous languages. This vast ethnic heterogeneity has constantly been breeding grounds for conflicts, crises, and even wars. Katrin Berndt (66) concludes, "At present, the country is still divided: ethnic and religious conflicts between the wealthy southern and eastern regions and the poorer, Islamic north continue to threaten the existence of the state".

> AfrikanerInnen haben das Gefäß des Nationalstaates geerbt, allerdings ohne Nation. Die koloniale Erfindung von Distrikten und "Stämmen" führte zur Herausbildung politischer Ethnizität, die als koloniale Erblast auch nach 1960 die formal unabhängigen afrikanischen Staaten prägte, ein *Nation Building* erschwerte und in einer ganzen Reihe von Staaten innere Konflikte bis hin zu Kriegen und zum Zusammenbruch staatlicher Strukturen verschärfte. (10)

In this passage, Schubert raises another aspect of the strategic domination of space, namely the formation of colonial political communities or districts to guarantee colonial power. Western territorial domination was achieved through the reorganisation of indigenous political communities and the promotion of local chiefs, who ruled their peoples according to European standards. The method of indirect rule created loyalty to the empire and secured authoritative power. As is stated in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (166f.), British colonial rule created and manipulated insurmountable difference among the different tribes to prevent them from uniting and gaining strength and power to rebel against colonial authority (see also Schubert 9). Unsurprisingly, when Nigeria was united due to strategic reasons in 1914, tribal animosity was so strong that people just did not feel connected to each other. Moreover, "the Second Wold War changed the world order: Empire was crumbling […]" (*Yellow Sun* 155), which further complicated the socio-political situation in Nigeria. With the wary North on the one hand, and the more educated, elitist South on the other, British Nigeria was about to crumble, too. "But the British had to preserve Nigeria as it was, their prized creation, their large market, their thorn in France's eye" (155)[11]. To keep the nation from breaking apart, "[…] they [the British] fixed the pre-Independence elections in favour of the North and wrote a new constitution which gave the North control of the central government. The South, too eager for independence, accepted this constitution" (ibid.). Finally, when independence was gained, "[…] Nigeria was a collection of fragments held in a fragile clasp" (ibid). In essence, "[t]he postcolonial African state was determined mainly by the colonial state" (Olaniyan 273), which was a conquest state, a dictatorial state. Independence was gained, but the colonial structures remained and leaders only repeated the tyrannical manners of their former colonial rulers and led their countries into corruption, dictatorship, ethnic chauvinism, and tribalism, an issue which will be revisited in chapter 5.

[11] What is conveyed in this comment is a further dimension in the struggle of many post-independent (African) countries, namely the battle for prestige of the former colonial powers.

2.4.2. The Reformation of Natives' Minds

A crucial mechanism to secure Western cultural hegemony has been the "underlying discursive realm of the political 'subject' and subject formation, which lies at the heart of politics, philosophy and ideology in general" (Pawling 143). In colonial Africa, it was the racist ideology of the superiority of the white man and the supposed natural inferiority of the African that justified colonialism and paved the way for cultural imperialism. In tandem with philosophical inquiries – Childs and Williams (see 190) name Hume, Voltaire, and Kant as influential examples to bring forth the racist representation of the inferior, exotic Other –, scientific theories such as Social Darwinism and evolutionary theory further consolidated colonial and imperial superiority and ensured the white (superior) race a position from which to judge upon lower, less developed ape-like, sub-races[12]. Against the background of the superiority of the white man, the African was constructed as an object of knowledge.

> To name a 'race' was to assign a place within or outside a hierarchy of cultures and histories, and so to outline a relationship whose natural expression was taken to be a colonial or imperial one. (Childs and Williams 189)

In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon elaborates on the way in which the black man was determined by the white race:

> I arrive slowly in the world; sudden emergences are no longer my habit. I crawl along. The white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me. I am *fixed*. Once their microtomes are sharpened, the Whites objectively cut sections of my reality. […] I sense, I see in this white gaze that it's the arrival not of a new man, but of a new type of man, a new species. A Negro, in fact! (Fanon 95)

'White' became the norm, not only in terms of race, but also in terms of a human quality, blackness was not only equivalent to 'the inferior', but, in fact, to 'the non-existent'. "The white man is all around me, up above the sky is tearing at its navel; the earth crunches under my feet and sings white, white. All this whiteness burns me to a cinder" (Fanon 94). "Space and place are the objects of colonial territorial control, but the soul is the object of its reformation of minds" (Olaniyan 273). The project of this reformation, according to Olaniyan, was to "socialize Africans to despise their history and culture, and therefore, themselves" to accept "an inferiority complex that perpetually yearns for Europeanness" (ibid.). As will become clear in chapter 5, the inferiority complex of the (post-) colonial subject and its desire the overcome it in mimicking European ways of life and thought, is repeatedly taken up in postcolonial

---

[12] In *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), Charles Darwin formulated his theory of evolution and explained that both black people as well as people stemming from Australia constitute a sub-race which is the missing link between civilised white man and the animals (see Lyons and Butt).

literature. The process of self-denial of the (post-) colonial subject and its psychological consequences is the central part of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* in which he analyses the psychological damage the colonial ideology of the assumed natural inferiority of the black race caused in the (post-) colonial subject. "I slip into corners, my long antenna encountering the various axioms on the surface of things: the Negro's clothes smell of Negro; the Negro has white teeth; the Negro has big feet; the Negro has a broad chest. I slip into corners; I keep silent; all I want is to be anonymous, to be forgotten" (Fanon 98). According to Fanon, it is only with an 'aggressive' analysis of the postcolonial psyche that the inferior complex of the black people can be shattered.

Part of the process of the self-denial of the colonial subject was the devaluation of the indigenous, pre-colonial past. As Weaver (228) argues, "Albert Memmi, Frantz Fanon, and Edward Said all point out that it is not enough for the colonizer to control the present and future of the colonized but […] he must rewrite the past as well" (228). Colonialism constructed race as a human quality – the African race, then, was the embodiment of negative difference (see Childs and Williams 192).

Against the constructed superiority of the white race, many cultural, political, and ideological movements, such as the pan-Africanist movement of Négritude, developed as a means to restore the dignity of the back people, to create a sense of self as a black people. In their attempts, the movement around Aimé Césaire, Leopold Senghor, and Léon Gontran Damas aimed at affirming the values and human qualities of the black world against a world in which the norm was white. "On the other side of the white world there lies a magical black culture. Negro sculpture! I began to blush with pride, Was this our salvation?" (Fanon 102). Négritude has been fiercely criticised, especially by philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, who identified Négritude as a re-production of neo-colonial patterns for it seeks to pin down some Africanness that defines its people beyond differences. The negro-subject is trapped in essentialism once more, provocatively exclaimed by Sartre: "The Negro, as we have said, creates an anti-racist racism" (Sartre qtd. in Fanon 111). Also Fanon criticised that the psychological damage can ever be restored by the desperate search of the meaning of black identity, for what has been identified as the 'black soul' is nothing but a white construction, too. Fanon agrees with proponents of Négritude and other pan-African movements that the misrepresentation has to be shattered. "There was this myth of the Negro that had to be destroyed at all costs" (Fanon 96), but to do so in terms of an essentialist definition of a black soul or an underlying, innate black identity, was definitely the wrong direction.

The programme of Négritude was to describe a positive blackness, to construct black identity in contrast to white identity. Especially in relation to rationality, this conception had devastating consequences as black rationality, too, was constructed in contrast to the European conception of rationality: “Emotion is Negro as reason is Greek” (Senghor qtd. in Fanon 106). This statement about ‘black ways of knowing’ yielded another wave of criticism. In essence, it was accused of only reproducing another system of (essentialist) binaries. To overcome this essentialism, Fanon suggested leaving the binary categories of black people versus white people aside, and move on to the recognition of a humanity that connects all human beings around the world. Towards the end of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon reveals the ethical dimension of his work, an ethic that is highly influenced by existentialist philosophy: “I find myself one day in the world, and I acknowledge one right for myself: the right to demand human behaviour from the other” (Fanon 204). Racism can only be overcome when people recognise that ‘race’ is a constructed category with which all evils actually begin: “There should be no attempt to fixate man, since it is his destiny to be unleashed” (205). The world Fanon envisions, is a world in which man is endlessly creating himself – “The density of History determines none of my acts. I am my own foundation” (ibid). On the final page, the author calls for a dialogue which is based on the recognition of each other’s humanity; a dialogue which is guarded by respect and appreciation, an approach which will be of interest in a later chapter of this diploma thesis, too:

> The black man is not. No more than the white man. Both have to move away from the inhuman voices of their respective ancestors so that a genuine communication can be born. […] Superiority? Inferiority? Why not simply try to touch the other, feel the other, discover the other? (Fanon 206).

Indigenous artistic productions in art, music, film, and literature have been recognised as powerful means of accounting for African postcolonial subjectivity. The “cultural-artistic decolonization” (Olaniyan 274) is particularly evident in postcolonial literary writings, as its development “can be seen to correspond to stages both of national or regional consciousness and of the project of asserting difference from the imperial centre” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 4). Postcolonial scholars have identified various stages in postcolonial literature, either on a rather general level, like the authors of *The Empire Writes Back*, who describe the development of postcolonial writing in terms of assimilation, abrogation, and appropriation, the latter of which will be discussed below, or on a specific level that accounts for the development of African postcolonial literature in correspondence to the intellectual transcendence of colonial ideologies.

Olaniyan (see 275f.), for instance, identifies the following three major phases in the development of African postcolonial literature: (1) Early African Literatures up until the 1950s, which was characteristic of a "fundamental ambiguity about European imperialism in Africa" (275) and a general optimism about Africa's future; (2) African Literatures from the late 1950s to the 1970s, which is typical of its anti-colonial nationalist activity as well as its critical investigation into the African state, African politics, and neo-colonial relations with the West; and (3) African Literatures of the post-1970s, which is a continuation of the concerns of the second phase plus issues of social relations including gender, interracial or interethnic relationships, and migration. Similarly, Berndt (see 67) divides African literature into three stages: (1) The period of cultural nationalism, which roughly describes the writing-back era; (2) The period of post-independent disillusionment, which is typical of its critical view of African post-independent politics and mismanagements; and (3) The contemporary phase of postcolonial literature in Africa, which is characteristic of its investigation into issues of social movement, individualism, generation conflicts, as well as "postmodern portrayals of the construction of history, values, and knowledge" (Berndt 67).

Also stylistically, contemporary African postcolonial literature is more experimental and varied than it was in earlier stages, realised in terms of "magic realism, distorted plots, hybridised subjectivities, self-reflexivity, irony and satire" (ibid.). Diversity and plurality is mirrored in form, as well as in point of view, as becomes evident in Baingana's *Tropical Fish.* Composed of multiple genres and different point of views, it comprises five interrelated short stories that read like a fragmented novel. Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* includes one chapter which is particularly interesting in terms of style and text type. "How they left" (145-146) reads like a poem written in free verse. The repetition of structures and phrases like "Look at them leaving in droves", "They are leaving in droves", "Look at the children of the land leaving in droves", as well as the deliberate use of commas, gives structure and rhythm to the text. Content-wise the text deals with the African diasporic movement, a movement which is not just about some individuals emigrating, but masses of people leaving their homes. This theme is mirrored in the language as well – people are leaving in *droves*, "the children of the land scurry and scatter like birds escaping a burning sky" (145), all of which hints to masses of people escaping their homes. Also the choice of the progressive aspect conveys the sense of ongoing motion, incompleteness, and a state in progress: they are "moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting,

flying, fleeing" (ibid.), a whole continent seems to be on the run. Who is leaving? Who is crossing the borders? Again, the rhythm and the repetitive pattern underline the poetic aspect: "Those with nothing are crossing borders. Those with strength are crossing borders. Those with ambitions are crossing borders. Those with hopes are crossing borders. Those with loss are crossing borders. Those in pain are crossing borders" (ibid.). They are leaving for a better life, but leaving one's home is a painful experience, they are leaving with "blood in their hearts" (146), they leave "everything behind that makes them who and what they are" (ibid.). What they experience is a feeling of displacement, disruption, alienation, disorientation, a loss of identity, a feeling of what Bhabha (*Location of Culture* 9) called "unhomeliness". The poem ends with an account of what will await those people who are leaving their "own wretched land" (ibid.). They find themselves in a hopeless situation. Although they know that "they will be welcomed with restraint" (Bulawayo 146), they have no other choice than leaving. However, their dreams of a better life will remain unfulfilled, an experience many people of the diaspora share.

Also in terms of intertextuality, African literatures from the second and third stage compose creative cross-references and engage with earlier writings. Bulawayo's novel is saturated with references to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), the influence of which is beyond question. In fact, Bulawayo uses Achebe's title as a catch-phrase that runs like a thread through her writing. The use of this powerful phrase, which entails a whole discourse of societal, cultural, and political upheaval, adds to Bulawayo's story in terms of fragmentation. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie opens her novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) with reference to Achebe, too. On a more subtle level, Adichie engages with Achebe's novel in the way in which the character of Eugene resembles Achebe's Okonkwo (see Toye qtd. in Kurtz), or how Adichie incorporates the tale of the tortoise and its cracked shell (see *Purple Hibiscus* 157-161), which plays a central role in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (96-99), too. Certainly, intertextuality does not simply mean to reproduce previous texts. Intertextuality as a literary device means to engage with significant voices, to acknowledge their achievements, and to enter into a critical dialogue with perspectives raised elsewhere. Concerning the story of the tortoise, for example, Adichie does not simply parrot Achebe's account, but adds new meaning to the tale.

2.5. Textual Strategies of Postcolonial Literature

Always omnipresent in (African) postcolonial literary writings, is the question of "the 'appropriateness' of an imported language to describe the experience of place in post-colonial societies" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 23). African literature, too, has always been occupied with the question of the appropriateness of the use of European languages:

> The old anxiety that the relationship between the colonial language and the indigenous African languages is a murderous, culturally deracinating zero-sum in favour of the former, has barely been allayed or proven wrong, and neither have all the palliative arguments about globalism and hybridity – arguments with a peculiar ability to turn historical accident into destiny – been able to sell the fact of African literature in European languages as anything but a constant reminder of African dependence. (Olaniyan 276f.)

In other words, "[t]he question of language for postcolonialism is political, cultural, and literary […] in the material sense that a choice of language is a choice of identity" (During qtd. in Childs and Williams 193). The vexed question of language and cultural identity has led to fierce debates of whether the use of the English language poses a betrayal to African culture. Above all, it was the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who argued in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) that the postcolonial project, the artistic-cultural decolonisation, is all in vain, when still using the language of the former colonisers and thus, remaining imprisoned within the colonial frame of mind. The essence of Ngugi's critique of African writers using the language of the former colonisers was that African people will only be able to break free from colonial ideologies when they return to their 'true' heritage and start using their African languages again. As long as people will speak the language of the coloniser, as long as people will see the world through the eyes of the coloniser, they will be trapped within the ideological system of colonialism. Embracing the African languages (again) is a necessary step towards restoring cultural identity and decolonising the mind.

Postcolonial authors who spread their works in englishes, however, have proved that the imposition of another language, need not necessarily destroy a people's self-identification. As Chinua Achebe pointed out, the introduction of the English language in many African states brought about positive aspects, too, such as the possibility for people from different parts of Africa (and in fact of the whole world) to enter into a mutual dialogue. Another important aspect of using a world language is the accessibility and circulation of literature around the world. The danger of sticking to one's ethnic

language is that one's writing will remain unread, or at least it will be accessible only to a limited number of readers. In relation to Brazilian authors and the problem of writing in a language that is not as widely spread as the English language, Achebe warned that "the work of the vast majority will be closed to the rest of the world for ever, including no doubt the work of some excellent writers" ("The African Writer" 59). Moreover, the English language is as much a part of African history, as is the tribal tongue. Rather than rejecting the English language "because it came as part of a package deal which included many other items of doubtful value and the positive atrocity of racial arrogance and prejudice which may yet set the world on fire" (ibid., 58), the African writer can indeed embrace it as part of his/her identity – "I have been given this language and I intend to use it" (ibid., 62).

Postcolonial authors have found ways in which to express their critique of the colonial endeavour and present alternative perspectives to restore the sense of the (postcolonial) self in their english writings. The problem with Ngugi's radical position is that he assumed language and culture to be inseparable. However, "meanings are constructed through usage, struggle, and adaptation" (Childs and Williams 196); thus, "a more complex oppositional strategy to cultural hegemony is needed" (ibid.). As Achebe stated, the use of the English language does not necessarily entail a commitment to the colonial ideological apparatus: "[…] let us not in rejecting the evil throw out the good with it" ("The African Writer" 58). Chinua Achebe's answer to Ngugi's and other African authors' cultural essentialism is that language is always open to creativity and change: African writers will appropriate the language and claim a language their own "which history has forced down our throat" (59). "[…] I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings" (Achebe, "The African Writer" 62). "What I do see is a new voice coming out of Africa, speaking of African experience in a world-wide language" (61)[13].

In *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin explore the many ways in which postcolonial authors have made creative use of the English language in order to appropriate it to their own ends, to both, inscribe alterity and express cultural identity. The authors describe two processes to re-place language, abrogation or the "denial of the privilege of 'English'" (37), which entails the "refusal of the categories of the

[13] See also the discussion about the relationship between language and culture in chapter 4.

imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or 'correct' usage, and its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning 'inscribed' in the words" (ibid.), and appropriation, which describes the process in which a language is remoulded to new usages to inscribe new meanings to it in order to mark "a separation from the site of colonial privilege" (ibid.), and to convey "cultural specificity in a different language" (59). Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue that while the moment of abrogation is vital to the process of the decolonisation of language, it is the process of appropriation which marks the development of a new usage of the English language, the development of englishes (37f.). Childs and Williams (195) refer to the process of appropriation as a strategy of "disidentification" which "involves recognizing that the dominant discourse cannot be avoided, [it] is always-already-there. Disidentification requires working on and through the pre-existing language: appropriating the concept".

Strategies of undercutting the power structures of English (see Childs and Williams 193f.), include the employment of glossing, the use of untranslated words, neologisms, interlanguage, the fusion of syntax, as well as code-switching and vernacular transcription (see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 60-76). Such creative 'devices' have de-centred the English of the former master, and gave birth to new forms of englishes; they made it possible to "convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own" (Rao qtd. in Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 38). Ultimately, with the appropriation of the English language, the language of the master has become de-privileged: "English was no one's and everyone's now. Or so the unloved step-children to the English tribe insisted" (Baingana, "Questions of Home" 170).

2.5.1. Glossing

Glossing describes the parenthetic translation of individual words or phrases and constitutes, according to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin "the most obvious and most common authorial intrusion in cross-cultural texts" (60). The underlying function of glossing is its focus on the implicit gap that occurs between the indigenous word and its translation. This gap is the meaningful place in which identity can be expressed. The indigenous word functions as a cultural sign, it creates a metonymy. "The retention of the [indigenous] word perpetuates the metonymic function of the cross-cultural text by allowing the word to stand for the latent presence of [indigenous] culture" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 61).

2.5.2. Untranslated words

Another way of appropriating the English language, and thus conveying a sense of distinctiveness, is the technique of leaving some words, phrases, or even whole passages simply untranslated. In contrast to glossing, this strategy requires a particular focus on discourse – "[s]uch a device not only acts to signify the difference between cultures, but also illustrates the importance of discourse in interpreting cultural concepts" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 63). Moreover, this technique obviously "forces the reader into an active engagement with the horizons of the culture in which these terms have meaning" (ibid., 64). In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, for instance, the reader is confronted with the Igbo concept of 'chi', the meaning of which is repeatedly explored in various contexts. Although it is translated as "personal god" in the glossary, the concept really is more complex. The further the reader penetrates the text, the more complex his/her understanding of the concept chi becomes, too. The strategy of narrative framing requires the reader to actively co-create the meaning of untranslated words or concepts presented in the text. Moreover, the choice of leaving words untranslated hints to the polysemy of language; it gives weight to the "situating context in according meaning" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 65) and "demonstrates quite clearly that the use of a word […] confers the meaning, rather than any culturally hermetic referentiality" (ibid).

2.5.3. Interlanguage

This textual strategy describes "the fusion of the linguistic structures of two languages" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 65). The term interlanguage was coined by Nemser (1971) and Selinker (1972) (both referred to in Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 66) to depict the way in which L2 learners are approximating the target language. It points to a L2 learner's current version of the target language, a version that is neither fully congruent with the linguistic norms of L1 nor with the codes of L2. It is "some inbetween system used in L2 acquisition which certainly contains aspects of L1 and L2, but which is an inherently variable system with rules of its own" (Yule 195). Though it is a dynamic process, interlanguage can well fossilise, meaning that a learner can remain in a certain stage (ibid.). In a postcolonial context, interlanguage, a system that neither fully belongs to the source language nor to the target language, is regarded a fruitful "basis of a potent metaphoric mode" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 67). In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie uses Igbo-English[14], a form of interlanguage, to infuse "Igbo

[14] See Christopher Anyokwu's "Igbo Rhetoric and the New Nigerian Novel: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*" (2011) for the different functions of the use of Igbo in her novel.

grammatical elements below the sentential level in her narrative" (Onukaogu and Onyerionwu qtd. in Anyokwu). The respective functions of English and Igbo are quite a different: While information is conveyed in English, the function of Igbo is to judge this information: "My son sucked one liter from my husband's car this morning, just so I can get to the market. *O di egwu*. I hope fuel comes soon." (*Purple Hibiscus* 133). 'O di egwu' translates into 'that is something', which clearly qualifies the utterance.

2.5.4. Syntactic Fusion

The device of syntactic fusion refers to the fusion of the syntactic structures of two languages. In relation to postcolonial literary texts it points to the 'marriage' of the syntax of an indigenous language, often oral, to lexical forms of English. This strategy is indeed one of the most interesting ones, as it appropriates the orthography of the English language to carry the rhythms and textures of the vernacular voice, with the aim to account for the oral tradition of African indigenous cultures. Through certain devices such as the use of proverbial or poetic expressions, the inclusion of traditional folklores, or structures of storytelling, a sense of orality can be manifested in written texts. Very often, when reading a postcolonial literary text, it is more like somebody telling you a story than you reading a text, which is due to the inscription of oral elements in written language.

In his article "The African writer and the English Language", Chinua Achebe illustrated what is meant when an African writer appropriates the language to carry the spirit of his culture, in presenting two versions of a passage taken from his novel *Arrow of God* (1964), with one being the original one, and the other being the same passage 'translated' into formal English (see "The African Writer" 61f.). The difference is indeed remarkable and the reader can really 'feel' the absence of cultural specificity in the altered version. Indeed, Achebe is a fine example to explore the way in which syntactic fusion creates a sense of cultural identity as well as cultural distinctiveness. In *Things Fall Apart* (1958), it is the deliberate use of African proverbs (see, for instance, Alimi's article on the use of African proverbs in Achebe's novels *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*), rhetorical devices, as well as the rhythm of the Igbo language that transform the English language into something entirely new. What might appear simplistic or even primitive at first glance reveals itself as a high sense of literary ability. Oral cultures, other than assumed by colonial discourses, "developed very complex modes of oral storytelling, knowledge codification and social interaction" (Döring 48) and were far from being primitive in terms of communication. In *Things*

Fall Apart, the dismissive attitude towards the Igbos' art of speech is reflected in one of the colonial officers, who remarks that "[o]ne of the most infuriating habits of these people was their love for superfluous words" (Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 206). Obviously, the officer cannot recognise the indigenous mode of sophisticated speech, and I would claim that he does not understand the complexity of utterance either, for he is not used to metaphorical, proverbial ways of communication. In Igbo culture (as well as in other African cultures), however, proverbs enjoy a privileged status and are heavy with meaning. "Among the Igbo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which worlds are eaten" (ibid., 7). The combination of the English written language and the Igbo oral tongue, results in what Herbert Igboanusi (qtd. in Anyokwu) termed 'Igbo English', "a deliberate but significant stylistic device, which arises from the influence of the Igbo language and culture on English". In sum, orality can be regarded as a specific literary device in African postcolonial literature.

2.5.5. Code-switching and Vernacular Transcription

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (see 71) describe the strategy of code-switching as the most common method to inscribe distinctiveness in a text. Vernacular transcription, or the use of "weird English" (see Ch'ien, 1997) can be explored in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, which illustrates the extent to which code-switching and vernacular transcription is imbedded in a power discourse for which language itself is a sign (see, for instance, 220f.).

Final Remarks

It can be concluded that all these examples of appropriation constitute powerful ways in which the language of the former colonisers has been transformed to undermine its power structures, to inscribe cultural distinctiveness in a language that is not one's own, and finally, to communicate a sense of cultural identity. Postcolonial authors, who used the English language to spread their writings, have decisively contributed "to the transformation of English literature and to the dismantling of those ideological assumptions that have buttressed the canon of that literature as an elite Western discourse" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 76). In a foreign language learning context, the exploration of the manifold ways in which to creatively use and gradually claim a language constitutes a wonderful starting point to encourage language learners to become explorers of the new language as well. Language is a gift that can be used and claimed by anyone regardless one's cultural, ethnic, or social background. Clearly, often

it functions as a marker for certain groups of people, however, this does not imply that it is exclusive to them. Language learning entails the exploration of cultural meaning and the self, and the reading of literature, in particular postcolonial literature, can take students to a wonderful journey to discover their newly gained identity as users of a foreign language (see also chapter 4).

Certainly, it is not only the use of language that contributed to the de-centring of the dominant discourse; equally important is the postcolonial critique of the very basis of the (neo-) colonial ideology, which will be discussed in chapter 5. Against the criticism that postcolonial theory cannot account for contemporary problems, it will be illustrated how a postcolonial reading strategy enables to criticise cultural, social, and political conflicts in a globalised world, and how even postcolonial literary texts of the writing back era can provide valuable insights for issues still relevant today. In essence, while acknowledging the need for a more transcultural colouring in postcolonial literary theory, I would criticise the oversimplifying stamp of 'the postcolonial' being the marginalised stepchild tenaciously fighting back against its centre and not being able to reach beyond a writing back mode. Postcolonialism is not just a splinter in the side of the colonial (see Mishra and Hodge 43), but a critical cultural practice that is inevitable in the face of the contemporary "post-colonial neo-colonized world" (Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic* 166). As will be argued, postcolonial literary authors delve into the complexities of colonialism, postcolonialism, and globalisation, touching upon issues of education, feminism, violence, language, cultural identity, ethnicity, race and racism, all against the background of the aftermath of colonialism that still bedevils the postcolonial sense of self, as well as the neo-colonial realities of the contemporary world. "[T]he utility of post-colonial reading strategies lies not only in their centrality to the field of post-colonialism but also their adaptability and wider relevance" (Ashcroft, "Including China" 360). Postcolonial theory still matters today, even more so against the background of globalisation and the ways in which neo-colonialism produces even more uneven distribution- and power-structures, as it poses challenging, sometimes unpleasant, questions that are inevitable in the development of a critical stance towards contemporary socio-political and cultural developments. In short, "[p]ostcoloniality queers the norm" (Spivak, *Foreword* xvi) and any theory that aims at challenging the dominant discourse can never be outdated. Taking a postcolonial stance means to think "at or beyond the limit" (Hall, "Thinking at the limit" 259) and it is only natural that such a "dangerous enterprise" (ibid.) will always be targeted from various sides.

3. Literature in the EFL/ESL Classroom

> "Do you think he's crazy? Seriously. Maybe he's read too many books–"
> (Baingana, "Passion" 79)

3.1. Literature and Language Learning

The relationship between literature and language learning, in particular foreign language learning, has been discussed widely among scholars and educators ranging from rather unreflected pro-discussions to fierce objections of the use of literature in the language classroom. Edmondons' negative position towards the use of literary texts in EFL education (referred to in Paran 468f.), for instance, is very much informed by a functionalised model of language learning, which is focused on acquiring language competence only. Language education, then, is nothing but a "utilitarian business" (Paran 469), a machinery to produce fit subjects for the business market[15]. Clearly, this idea constitutes an almost violent reduction of language learning – an "isolationist position" (468) as Paran puts it. Language learning is certainly more than just L2 competence. "Language learning is not only about language – it is about learning as well; it is not only about training, but also about education" (Paran 469). There have been many changes in the perception of literary education in EFL/ESL teaching (see Kramsch and Kramsch 2000). As far as the Austrian curriculum is concerned, literature is given a twofold role in language education: To promote linguistic competence on the one hand, and to develop what is regarded the underlying value of education, namely the development of the students' personality, on the other:

> Schülerinnen und Schüler sollen angeregt werden ihren Wortschatz durch außerschulische Lektüre fremdsprachiger Texte und literarischer Werke auch eigenständig zu erweitern. […] Im Sinne einer humanistischen orientierten Allgemeinbildung ist bei der thematischen Auswahl fremdsprachiger Texte auch literarischen Werken ein entsprechender Stellenwert einzuräumen. ("Lebende Fremdsprache" 3f.)

Concerning the first aspect, more research has to be conducted, as it is by far not clear how and to which extent literature promotes linguistic skills[16]. In short, the role of

---

[15] Utilitarian arguments are especially prominent and effective in the U.S., where there is a rich tradition of this kind of philosophical argumentation strategies. However, the utilitarian line of argumentation increasingly finds its way into Austrian educational politics, too (see "Sondersitzung Bildung"). Utilitarian arguments in education should be considered with caution, as an idea of functionalised education totally neglects the high underlying value of education to contribute to the development of each individual student to become critical subjects.

[16] See, for instance, Lazar (1993) and Chan (1999), who reveal that a focus on literature in language learning can raise language awareness, Thaler (2008), who argues that teaching a variety of literary texts (and text types) can support the development of linguistic skills for it raises awareness to different styles,

literature for foreign language learning and the development of linguistic knowledge is still a contested field of study (see Kramsch and Kramsch 571f.).

In terms of a holistic approach to education, literature is an indispensible source to gain, generate, and negotiate knowledge. Especially, in the context of (inter-) cultural learning, literary texts are invaluable – "literature is a particularly important means of improving multicultural understanding" (Rosenblatt, "Interview"). In regard to the specific focus of this thesis, postcolonial literature in particular, creates a "space of cultural mediation" (Johnston and Mangat vii), a third place in Kramsch's sense (see Kramsch, 1993; 2009; 2011), in which learners from various cultural backgrounds can negotiate cultural knowledge. Teaching language learners literature from across the globe is important for the development of the students sense of self, as it is the critical engagement with different perspectives presented in literary texts that is regarded the starting point to make new insights, re-evaluate one's own set of ideas, and eventually broaden one's horizon. In this thesis, reading is conceived of as a complex dynamic process which affects the entire person, his/her feelings, emotions, as well as cognitive abilities (see also chapter 4): "Reading is a cognitive and emotive process conditioned by social and cultural conventions" (Fokkema and Ibsch 126) and it is important to pay attention to these processes if teachers wish to capture the teaching of literature and language within a holistic approach of education. This (working) definition suggested by Fokkema and Ibsch bears some important implications for the understanding of reading and literature in an educational context. On the one hand, it pays equal attention to the domain of emotions as to the aspect of reason, the latter of which has often been privileged in literature education and literature studies (see Reichl, 2009; Wolff, 2002). Drawing on cognitive psychology, Donnerstag and Wolff (2007) argue that in fact, reason and emotion are not separate, independent operators as hitherto suggested[17]; on the contrary, reason and emotions are tightly connected, they are interrelated, interdependent processes[18]. Feelings and Emotions[19] have, in fact, a vital role, not only in language learning in general but also in connection to literature education (see Reichl

---

or Widdowson (1995; 1992), who particularly focuses on the relationship between the teaching of literature and the development of stylistics skills.

[17] In a nutshell, the separation of reason and emotion goes back to the philosophical body-soul dilemma, going as far back as to Plato. Most famously the body-soul dualism was formulated by René Descartes.

[18] See, for instance, Damasio (1994; 1999).

[19] See Damasio's differentiation between feelings (*Ich fühle* 57) and emotions (ibid., 67f.) What is decisive for the subsequent discussion, is the way in which students emotionally react to literary texts – they might show certain emotions, which teachers can respond to, however, feelings will remain largely private to the learners. This is why the process of interpretation (see also chapter 6) is so important – students need to be given the chance to reflect on their reactions, to make sense of what has just happened with them, to 'rationally' organise their emotional experience.

104-114; Donnerstag and Wolff 143-164), especially in regard to the receptions process to literary texts (see Hogan, 2003). In relation to (inter-) cultural learning, feelings and emotions play an essential role as it is the extent to which readers are able to relate to or identify[20] with characters, their lives, actions, fates, etc. that influences the degree to which (inter-) cultural learning is possible (see also chapter 6). Emotional or emphatic responses reinforce and deepen the cognitive processing (see Donnerstang and Wolff 157 and 160), which makes (inter-) cultural learning more likely to occur. In essence, without feelings and emotions the engagement with literature will remain largely anemic.

On the other, their definition places the reading process as well as the reader him-/herself within a social and cultural setting. Neither reading, nor writing is ever a neutral activity – readers and authors bring their social, moral, historical, cultural backgrounds, their set of norms and values, in short, their underlying cultural presuppositions to the text. Drawing on Foucault, Donnerstag and Wolff (144) state that "Das Individuum ist in der *Matrix* der Kultur, ohne es zu wissen. Literatur ist als Text Teil der gesellschaftlichen Diskurse und die Macht der Diskurse ist der Literatur eingeschrieben". This is when postcolonial literature comes in: As a counter-discourse, or to put it more positively, a discourse of empowerment, postcolonial literatures provide the reader ways in which to challenge dominant discourses, dominant single stories of the world, which keep shaping the lives of many people, and offer more diversified readings of the world. In the following chapters, the main focus is to illustrate how the development of a postcolonial reading strategy enables students to critically investigate into both, language and culture. As will become clear, the engagement with postcolonial literary texts is most valuable for the students' development towards critical, open, tolerant, and culturally-sensitive individuals. Before, however, the notion of reading in general, including questions of the role of the reader, should be investigated in some more detail, as the underlying understanding of reading will decisively influence the way in which language and literature teachers will deal with literary texts in the language classroom.

[20] There has been skepticism about the appropriateness of the term identification to describe the way in which readers relate to fictional characters in literature. Norman Holland (2000) suggests using the term empathy instead, to capture the complexities of these processes more adequately. An interesting theory of identification based on the concept of mimesis is presented by Oatley (1994).

3.2. The Many Faces of Reader-Response in the Language Classroom

> "You know, literature requires passion; you have to get involved, you have to care."
> (Baingana, "Passion" 77)

One of the most influential critics in reader-response theory is Louise Rosenblatt with her transactional theory of literature. Generally, reader-response criticism is primarily focused on the readers' interaction with a text, their response, and the paths readers take to arrive at a certain interpretation. As it is the reader or learner who is in the centre of the process of the construction of meaning, reader-response criticism has been appreciated in recent literature teaching approaches as well. In a nutshell, what Rosenblatt describes happening in the reading process is the following: In reading a text, the reader activates the linguistic symbols and, metaphorically speaking, awakes the text to life. Only by the very process of reading, the text will be transformed into a poem, novel, play, etc. (see Rosenblatt, *The Reader* 12):

> The poem, then, must be thought as an event in time. It is not an object or an ideal entity. It happens during a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and a text. The reader brings to the text his past experience and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, he marshals his resources and crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, thought, and feeling a new order, a new experience, which he sees as the poem. This becomes part of the ongoing stream of his life experience, to be reflected on from any angel important to him as a human being. (Rosenblatt, *The Reader* 12)

The poem, which can be substituted with novel, play, or any other form of literary text, is conceived of as an event in the life of the reader, "as the experience shaped by the reader under the guidance of the text" (*The Reader* 12). In other words, reading affects the entire person.

The relationship between reader and text is defined as transactional. In an interview headed by Philomena Marinaccio in 1999, Rosenblatt explains why she prefers the term transactional over interactional, which is, I would argue, central to the understanding of her idea of the relationship between reader and text. Based on John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley's *Knowing and the Known* (1949), Rosenblatt adopted the term transaction and argued that it perfectly describes her notion of reader-text relationship, as it does not communicate some sense of fixity as the other term – in her opinion – unfortunately does (see Rosenblatt, "Interview"). "Reading is 'transactional,' during which each [reader and text] is continuously affecting the other" (Rosenblatt, "Interview"). In other

words, there is “continuous reciprocal influence of reader and text” (ibid.). Her theory is a transactional theory because it implies a dynamic relationship.

Rosenblatt (see *The Reader* 24f.) differentiates between two types of reading: efferent reading on the one hand, and aesthetic reading on the other. The former type of reading refers to the way in which the reader’s attention is directed to information presented in the text; the latter, describes the transaction between reader and text – the way in which the text affects us and vice versa. The distinction describes the way in which readers do not only try to make sense of words and their literal references, but also pay attention to the associations or feelings they arouse.

For a EFL/ESL teaching the observation that texts, or in fact, one and the same text, can be read ‘neutrally’ as well as ‘aesthetically’, has of course important implications as to the purpose of reading. In short, literature brings together meaning and form (see Hanauer 1997). Also for the structuring of (inter-) cultural learning processes discussed in chapter 6, the model developed by Rosenblatt is decisive, especially her notion of evocation and interpretation, which are guiding principles for Delanoy’s dialogic model of literature education presented in chapter 6.

So far it has been argued that the reader activates, actualises the text in the reading process – readers generate the work of art (see Rosenblatt, *The Reader* 48). In this process, the reader does not simply ‘decode’ the lexis of the text, but also tries to make sense of the feelings and emotions these words arouse. This process, Rosenblatt calls the evocation process, that is “the lived through process of building up the work under the guidance of the text” (*The Reader* 69). In this process, “[t]he reader ultimately crystallizes his sense of the work” (ibid., 70). In this connection, Rosenblatt points out that it is import to differentiate between this lived-through process (evocation) on the one hand, and the interpretation of this process on the other. “Interpretation involves primarily an effort to describe in some way the nature of the lived-through evocation of the work” (ibid.). In (inter-) cultural learning, the process of interpretation is regarded as especially important to successfully integrate the newly gained insights into one’s conceptual frame of mind (see also chapter 6). Moreover, especially if a text triggers negative or troublesome feelings and emotions like frustration, anger, disgust, fear, stress, sadness, etc., the moment of interpretation is indispensible in a language learning context. Finally, interpretation helps to understand why different readings in the classroom are likely to come about. Ultimately, in negotiation different meanings and readings in the classroom, learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their

interpretations; such an approach to teaching literature promotes learner or reader autonomy, appreciates diversity, and accounts for cultural plurality.

A reader-response approach to teaching literary texts in the EFL/ESL classroom accounts for and appreciates the subjectivity of the reader – in contrast to an objective paradigm that excludes the reader from the reading process and focuses on the text and the inscribed meaning instead. Drawing on Rosenblatt's theory of transactional reading, a hermeneutical reader-response model, too, argues that "reading is an interactive process" (Bredella and Delanoy, "Introduction" viii) in which readers or students engage with the text and enter into a dialogue with it. Thus, meaning is not inscribed in literary works but evolves between reader and text during the reading process.

Reader-response criticism is by far not a homogeneous set of ideas, as is none literary theory: The cherishing of the reader has also led to some rather extreme positions. Especially, with Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" (1967), the subjectivist conception was led ad absurdum. Barthes was certainly right to criticise the way in which literary analysis was "tyrannically centered on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions" ("Death" 143) and completely excluded the world of the reader. Yet, to consider the text empty and insignificant unless filled with meaning by a reader is problematic, especially in a postcolonial context. Postcolonial authors have deliberately 'used' their texts as powerful tools of resistance, critique, and as a means of providing alternative answers to the 'big questions of humanity'. Proponents of subjective criticism, such as David Bleich or Stanley Fish, however, argued that "the text is powerless" (Bredella, "Significance of Aesthetic Reading" 9); it is only the reader who brings meaning to the text. In other words, "[i]nterpreters do not decode [texts]; they make them" (Fish 327). Within this concept, interpretation "becomes absurd, because there is nothing to be interpreted. There is only invention" (Bredella, "Significance of Aesthetic Reading" 9). "Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile" (Barthes, "Death" 147). Ultimately, when interpretation becomes superfluous, there is no need to discuss literature anymore at all. Not only becomes the text powerless, literature as a whole might become powerless, too.

A hermeneutical oriented reader-response model can dissolve the tension between author-centered (objective) versus reader-centered (subjective) approaches in introducing a concept of understanding that is principally limited. The subject is placed in a historical (and cultural) context that limits his/her understanding: "the reader is an

historical and finite individual who has to learn from others" (Bredella, "Significance of Aesthetic Reading" 9). Only with the interpretative (and dialogic) engagement with other perspectives ("verstehenden Auseinandersetzung"; Delanoy, *FLU* 58), can the reader become aware of his/her preconditions of understanding, which is the basis for the possibility of gaining new insights. "Understanding begins […] when something addresses us" (Gadamer 299). To put it in Delanoy's (*FLU* 58) words: "Ein Einlassen auf die Sichtweise des Gegenübers erlaubt das Überschreiten der eigenen Begrenztheit" (see also chapter 6). Only through the encounter with others, critical reflection becomes possible. It becomes clear that (hermeneutical) understanding in this context does not simply mean to know something or "to understand the other's view" (Bredella and Delanoy, "Introduction" x); Understanding here refers to the process of understanding which aims at the critical re-conceptualisation and re-evaluation of one's norms and values through the means of interpretation. Understanding, thus, is always related to one's experience: "we can only understand if we bring our prior knowledge and our prior experience to the text" (ibid., x).

Drawing on Hans Georg Gadamer and his notion of aesthetic experience, the engagement with literary texts or artworks can have quite an impact on its reader or observer. Gadamer describes the 'power of the artwork' to pull the viewer out of his/her environment to create a reflexive moment in which the subject distances him-/herself from reality. This distance enables the viewer of an artwork or the reader of a literary text to question his/her reality, worldview, norms and values, and empowers him/her to explore different reactions triggered by this aesthetic experience (see Delanoy, *FLU* 59). "Das Sich-Öffnen für verschiedenste Reaktionen begünstigt das Entdecken ungewohnter Sichtweisen. Es erleichtert das Erfahren neuer Aspekte und noch nicht erkannter Zusammenhänge" (Delanoy, *FLU* 59). Rather than claiming that meaning is exclusively brought to the text from outside, proponents of a hermeneutical oriented reader-response approach assume the central impulses to trigger aesthetical understanding or experience to lie inside the artwork or literary text (ibid., 60). "The text claims to say something to us. Therefore, we must be open to this claim" (Bredella and Delanoy, "Introduction" x). Certainly, the reader has to display a certain attitude towards the text as well. It won't just miraculously enchant the reader towards some kind of metaphysical experience[21].

[21] In a language learning context this aspect poses many challenges for the language and literature teacher. As a matter of fact, not all students will happily and readily embrace the prospect of a reading session. Some might be reluctant and refuse reading altogether. Additionally, language problems can

As becomes clear, this approach acknowledges the author without imposing the text an ultimate meaning and without neglecting reader agency, either. In contrast to Barthes, for who the author was a real threat to the freedom of the reader – “[t]o give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with final signified, to close the writing” (Barthes, “Death” 147) –, a hermeneutic approach is interested in the dialogic relationship between text and reader (and I would claim the author, too). Concerning the ‘role’ of the author, the aim of reading is not “to [discover] the Author […] beneath the work” (ibid.), but to sometimes listen to what the author might have to say. The author’s commentary function can provoke a range of different reactions in the readers, which ‘forces’ them not only to engage with the characters of a literary text, but also to enter into a dialogue with the author him-/herself:

> Nun beschäftigt er [the author] den Leser genauso, wie dieser von der Geschichte beschäftigt wird. Die Kommentare provozieren vielfältige Reaktionen. Sie verblüffen, sie reizen zum Widerspruch und decken doch häufig viele unerwartete Seiten am Erzählvorgang auf, die man ohne diese Hinweise nicht wahrgenommen hätte. (Iser, “Appellstruktur“ 239)

It should be mentioned that the reader has an entirely different relationship to the text than the author (see also Rosenblatt, *The Reader* 49f.).

The act or process of reading becomes the center of a hermeneutical oriented reader-response approach. Text and reader enter into an interdependent, interrelated relationship, a dialogue – “Das Lesen als eine vom Text gelenkte Aktivität koppelt den Verarbeitungsprozeß des Textes als Wirkung auf den Leser zurück. Dieses wechselseitige Einwirken aufeinander soll als Interaktion bezeichnet werden” (Iser, *Der Akt* 257). Neither is there a pre-fabricated meaning or truth inherent in the text, nor is meaning exclusively ‘injected’ from outside. This is why readers can still relate to works from former times and feel part of the social structures referred to in the text (Iser, “Appellsturktur” 230), or connect to texts of culturally diverse origins. For example, postcolonial literary texts claim to be relevant not only for a Western or postcolonial readership – even though the settings, backgrounds, and contexts of these texts might be quite specific, it is possible for a diverse range of readership to connect to them (see also Achebe “An African Voice”).

---

decisively hinder the reading process and inhibit aesthetic experience. For these reasons, literature classes demand a great deal of preparatory work to provide guidance for one’s students for each phase in their reading processes. Delanoy refers to language teachers as “Vermittlerinnen zwischen Texten und Lernern” (*FLU* 5); As mediators they need to monitor their students’ reading processes and intervene whenever necessary (see also chapter 6).

According to Iser, the condition for the feeling of timelessness and context-lessness is set in the text; however, it is the reader who has to activate it. “Wir aktualisieren den Text durch die Lektüre” (Iser, “Appellstruktur“ 230). Interpretations of or reactions to a literary texts vary over time and change from reader to reader. Even, one’s own understanding may change after a second or even third reading (“Appellstruktur” 235f.), a phenomenon on which Iser bases his conception of the way in which readers combine and connect the schematic elements of a text and thereby fill so called Leerstellen, which Iser calls “Gelenke des Textes” (*Der Akt* 284), to make sense of the text in front of them, to actualise it, to transform the literary text into a literary work (see Iser, “Lesevorgang” 253; *Der Akt* 39; see also Rosenblatt, *The Reader* 12 for a similar formulation).

It is the function of fiction to inspire the reader to develop new viewpoints on already known realities (see Iser, *Act of Reading* 181 qtd. in Delanoy, *FLU* 63) – the aesthetic experience, which results from the dialectic engagement of text and reader and the actualisation of the literary text by the reader, initiates a “Einstellungsdifferenzierung” (Iser, *Der Akt* 8). Authors of fictional texts create the basis for the possibility of a change in perspective by challenging or negating social conventions, norms and values in their texts[22] (see Iser, “Wirklichkeit der Fiktion” 320qtd. in Delanoy, *FLU* 63). According to Iser’s aesthetic response theory, readers actively and creatively engage with the text and constantly seek to solve unresolved tensions, conflicts, or gaps, so called Leerstellen, which may arise due to unusual constellations of social norms and values (see Delanoy, *FLU* 63), the clash of different perspectives, narrative situations, or lines of action (see Iser, *Der Akt* 286ff., 304). Iser borrows Ingarden’s term of “schematisierte Ansichten” (Iser, “Appelstruktur” 234) to describe the manifoldness of perspectives or layers a text is composed of. These layers or representations must remain schematic; each perspective can only account for certain aspects and never fully display the whole picture (characters, for instance, remain fragmented too; though sometimes very complex, it is sheer impossible to sketch out their full personalities). What follows is that due to the schematic composition, the different elements are likely to collide unmediated. These gaps or Leerstellen are not

[22] “Die Negation wird zum Signal erhöhter Aufmerksamkeit, denn die erwartbare Leistung der Norm ist außer Kurs gesetzt“ (Iser, *Der Akt* 330). The intentional negation of familiar and normally not consciously recognised norms and values creates a splitting, a “Perspektivierung eindimensionaler Positionen“ (331). The (partial) negation of norms leads to a decoupling from their usual contexts/backgrounds; therefore re-interpretation is needed. Thus, the act of negation becomes constitutive for interpretation, re-evaluation, and change.

explicitly formulated in the text and thus remain un-communicated: “Leerstellen sind als ausgesparte Anschließbarkeit der Textsegmente zugleich die Bedingungen ihrer Beziehbarkeit. Als solche indes dürfen sie keinen bestimmten Inhalt haben; denn sie vermögen die geforderte Verbindbarkeit der Textsegmente nur anzuzeigen, nicht aber selbst vorzunehmen“ (Iser, *Der Akt* 302).

Therefore, it requires active participation to creatively fill, resolve, or coordinate them. In other words, Leerstellen provide scopes of interpretation: “Solche Leerstellen eröffnen dann einen Auslegungsspielraum für die Art, in der man die in den Ansichten vorgestellten Aspekte aufeinander beziehen kann“ (Iser, “Appellstruktur“ 235). Leerstellen constitute an important “Antrieb der Konstitutionsaktivität des Lesers“ (Iser, *Der Akt* 302). “Der Leser wird die Leerstellen dauernd auffüllen beziehungsweise beseitigen. Indem er sie beseitigt, nutzt er den Auslegungsspielraum und stellt selbst die nicht formulierten Beziehungen zwischen den einzelnen Ansichten her“ (Iser, “Appellstruktur” 235). In doing so, the reader transforms into an active participant – he/she is not just a passive receiver but to some extent a creator too: “[…] die Leerstellen gewähren einen Anteil am Mitvollzug und an der Sinnkonstitution des Geschehens” (Iser, “Appellstruktur“ 236). The reader carries out “a continuing, constructive, ‘shaping’ activity” (Rosenblatt, *The Reader* 53).

Susanne Reichl points out that Iser’s conceptual theory of aesthetic response privileges “the text rather than the reader as the driving force of an aesthetic experience” (124). Accordingly, “it is the text in connection with prevailing socio-historical norms and not so much the individual reader’s activity that determines the outcome of the reading process” (123). Reichl identifies the ‘problem’ of Iser’s reception theory to lie in his undecidedness of whether the driving force to realise a text lies in the reader or the text itself (123). Rather than dismissing his indetermination as a shortcoming, however, this ambivalence bears great potential to deeper investigate into the intricate relationship between text and reader. Undeniably, the process of meaning-making is highly complex, it is a vibrant interplay. Therefore, the relationship between reader and text must remain dynamic – to pass on either the reader or the text the driving force to create meaning would only function in a linear model of communication. Iser, however, suggests an interactive model of meaning-making which is neither deterministic nor prone to an ‘anything goes’ fallacy (see Iser, *Der Akt* 39f.)

Though the ‘relative priority’ of the text within this dialogic relationship has led to much criticism, Reichl stresses that Iser’s focus of textual structures as the basis for

reader agency bears some pedagogical value: It "is a useful way of giving the students an idea of how to approach the multitude of responses to a text: rather than trying to discard their own value-judgements of whose subjectivity they are usually highly aware, they can investigate them and look for identifiable evidence in the text that has caused such a response" (126). In other words, not only interpretation and reflection find their way back into the discussion about literature, but also argumentative skills.

As Delanoy points out, however, Iser's reception theory which aims at a "vornehmlich reflektierenden, intellektuell ausgerichteten Lesegenuß" (*FUL* 63), is rather elitist, and therefore less suitable for a language learning context. For Delanoy, it is Bredella, Jauß, and Benton who seem to bridge this gap and make accessible aesthetic response theory for the language learning classroom, too. Rather than focusing on the intellectual processing of Leerstellen as the primary motivation for reading, Bredella, for instance, pronounces the importance of an intensive evocation potential (see also chapter 6) which results from the "gelockerten Situationsbezug" (see Delanoy, *FLU* 3) literary texts provide. In this connection, Iser, too, refers to the way in which readers can experience fictional risks, and experiment with alternative thinking and behaviour patterns within the safe haven of literature: "Der Leser kann aus seiner Welt heraustreten, unter sie fallen, katastrophale Veränderungen erleben, ohne in Konsequenzen verstrickt zu sein" ("Appellstruktur" 249). Additionally, while Jauß (37f.) emphasises the significance of the characters' fates for learner motivation, Benton (see Benton and Fox 2-16) underlines the learner's wish to live through secondary worlds and intensively connect with the characters presented in a literary text. Such a learner-oriented aesthetics is concentrated on the way in which readers or learners experience a text – certainly, the reading process is one of the primary interests of Iser's aesthetic approach too, and pedagogically there is definitely much to gain from his conception; however, in an educational context language and literature teachers need to go a step further and ask how to guide and support students to reach towards a "Verstehenserweiterung" (see Delanoy, *FLU* 77), a point which is especially central to a hermeneutical oriented literary didactic. As teachers, "[t]he main goal is not to convey to the students the correct interpretation, but to enable them to develop their own interpretation" (Bredella, "Pedagogical Significance" 5), and this certainly requires certain strategies or a concept on which to base one's teaching of literary texts, a concept which helps navigating the learners through their reading processes.

3.3. Dialogic Literary Didactics

Influenced by the hermeneutics and aesthetics of Hans Georg Gadamer and Hans Herbert Kögler, and based on aesthetic reader-response criticism as formulated by Iser or Jauß, as well as the hermeneutical oriented literary didactics as presented by Rosenblatt, Benton, and Bredella, Werner Delanoy develops a dialogic literary didactics for EFL/ESL learning and teaching which will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this paper. In general, Delanoy's model is driven by dialogue – dialogue between theory and practice, dialogue between reader and text, dialogue between literary didactics and literature teachers, and ultimately, dialogue between cultures. Also, given the manifold theoretical influences in Delanoy's work, his model itself constitutes a dialogue between different theories. To begin with, Delanoy's model is characteristic of its experience-driven approach, which lays the foundation of his subsequent work. An experience-oriented approach constitutes the preliminary premise (see Delanoy, *FLU* 2-4):

(a) Lernerorientierung als Prinzip

Learning within an experience-oriented approach is conceived of as an open process (see 24) which implies that students need to be provided ample space within which they can develop their own relations to a text or theme (see *FLU* 2, 24). Interaction and dialogue are the focus of this approach, in which the learner and his/her aesthetic experience is in the centre of attention (ibid., 25).

(b) Lernen als Gewinn neuer Einsichten

What follows from the considerations above, is that learners or readers can produce new knowledge him-/herself based on their aesthetic reading attitude (ibid.). In essence, the primary goal of learning should always be the making of new insights (ibid., 2). In relation to the teaching of postcolonial literature, this implies that reading is not only geared towards the appreciation of different cultures, but to a change in one's perspective and the making of new insights.

(c) Literatur als Appell zur Verstehenserweiterung

Literary texts are regarded as central sources to prompt new possibilities of (inter-) action and to approach new horizons of understanding. Literary texts are granted potentials to expand the reader's understanding of the self (and the Other), to make sense of the complexities of human life. These potentials are realised and activated in

the reading process, the act of reading, by each individual subject. Thus, this aspect also implies that texts are polysemic – they are open to variant readings.

(d) Einnehmen einer ganzheitlichen Erfahrungsperspektive

Learning within an experience-oriented approach conceives of learning as a holistic concept that includes the dimensions of thinking, feeling, and acting, alike.

> Der Text lässt den Leser kreativ werden, indem er ihn durch seine Lenkung dazu bringt, eine fremde Welt entstehen zu lassen. Dabei wird deutlich, dass Lesen nicht bedeutet, dass man dem Text Informationen wie aus einem Behälter entnimmt, sondern dass man ihm Wissen, Gedanken und Gefühle zur Verfügung stellen muss. (Bredella,"rezeptionsästhetische Literaturdidaktik" 54)

(e) Einnehmen einer ästhetischen Erfahrungshaltung

The adoption of an aesthetic attitude requires the reader to fully and intensively engage with the text, and implies the willingness or readiness to confront oneself with the (conflicting) viewpoints presented in it. This is only possible because of the safe environment literary texts provide. In other words, the reader is freed from everyday pressures when he/she enters the fictional worlds of texts. This safe environment enables the reader to experiment with alternative, even problematic viewpoints, which would be difficult to deal with or hold in everyday life. As Rosenblatt points out, literature gives readers the freedom to experiment:

> In the experience of literature, free of the demands that practical life makes for speedy, economical response and action, this capacity for flexibility should surely be exercised and enlarged. Fundamentally, the goal is the development of individuals who will function less as automatic bundles of habits and more as flexible, discriminating personalities. (Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration* 99f.)

Iser, too, points to the safe environment of literary texts that gives back the reader the freedom of understanding, which is again the basis to make insights about ourselves:

> Denn die Konsequenzlosigkeit der fiktionalen Texte ermöglicht es, jene Weisen der Selbsterfahrung zu gewärtigen, die von den Handlungszwängen des Alltags immer wieder verstellt werden. Sie geben uns jene Freiheitsgrade des Verstehens zurück, die durch das handeln immer wieder verbraucht, vertan, ja oftmals auch verschenkt werden. Zugleich halten fiktionale Texte Fragen und Probleme parat, die sich ihrerseits aus dem Zwang des täglichen Handelns ergeben. So machen wir mit jedem Text nicht nur Erfahrungen über ihn, sondern auch über uns. (Iser, "Appellstruktur" 249)

As the engagement with literary texts is aimed at the making of new insights, it is important to, apart from the emotional engagement, critically step back from the lived-through processes to reflect on the aesthetic experience (see also chapter 6). In this

connection, Bredella ("Pedagogical Significance" 18) refers to the reading of literary texts as a "dialectic between involvement and detachment".

(f) Ein begrenzter, für Weiterentwicklung offener Verstehensbegriff

It has already been argued that understanding within a hermeneutical approach is always limited, but can be expanded through dialogic interaction. In other words, the acknowledgement of the limitation of one's understanding implies that viewpoints in general are only partial insights into the complexity of human life. In order to develop our partial understanding and to gain deeper insights, we have to confront our limited perspectives with other viewpoints. On the one hand, this confrontation makes us aware of the partiality of human viewpoints; however, it also bears the potential to develop deeper understandings. This might seem relatively abstract at first sight; however, it has crucial implications for the teaching of literary texts in the classroom. With such a concept of understanding in mind, teachers need to accept different, even conflicting readings, which requires flexibility and spontaneity in terms of teacher response.

Based on these experience-oriented aspects, Delanoy's theoretical framework of dialogic, experience-oriented learning and hermeneutical literary didactics is marked by four interrelated key concepts: Verstehen, Widerstehen, literarischer Text, and fremdsprachendidaktischer Task (see Delanoy *FLU* 7-12). These concepts operate as pairs in which field of tension dialogic understanding can be realised:

3.3.1. Understanding and Resistance

Even though aesthetic reception theory remains highly influential for Delanoy's experience-driven conception of literary didactics, he expresses concerns about the way in which reader-response theories tend to idealise literature (*FLU* 6). Ideological criticism constitutes an important corrective moment to engage with literature in a critical way (and not just in an overly positive), as it introduces the possibility to resist certain perspectives. Here, postcolonial criticism can definitely play an important role in approaching the way in which individuals create meaning in the dialogic, or rather dialectic process of resistance and understanding. Especially when it comes to resistance and the critique of inscribed ideologies in literary texts, a postcolonial reading strategy might be helpful to develop a critical, even sceptical attitude towards taken for granted viewpoints as well as towards the text itself. Postcolonial criticism, then, is one way to resist dominant ideologies, as has been pointed out in chapter 2 as well.

Drawing on Zima (1991), Delanoy, however, argues that an “ideologiekritische Erfahrungshaltung” (*FLU* 103) does not primarily or necessarily dependent on any theoretical standpoint, may it be postcolonial, feminist, poststructuralist, or any other critical position; a critical stance depends on the readers ability and readiness to understand and recognise one’s beliefs as congruent, in order to challenge, question, and appropriate them in the dialogic engagement with the Other (ibid.). What seems to be essential to note, is that Delanoy’s model of dialogic learning and his notion of resistance must not be confused with an oppositional stance. Reading against the grain does not mean to formulate a position from which to resist any other systems of norms and values:

> Glaubt man, diesen Standpunkt gefunden zu haben, dann besteht keine Veranlassung mehr, sich über die Auseinandersetzung mit anderen Standunkten zu hinterfragen. Diese Auffassung droht, selbst ideologisch zu werden, wenn sie als einzig richtige betrachtet wird und daher Anstrengungen unternommen werden, sie als solche im Bewußtsein von Menschen zu verankern. (Delanoy, *FLU* 104)

A postcolonial reading strategy is, as I would argue, paradigmatic to enable students to read against the grain, to recognise, question, and challenge ideological inscriptions without developing a dogmatic or ideological position oneself. Certainly, a postcolonial approach to reading must always remain open; otherwise, it will become an ideology itself, which contradicts a dialogic conception to literature teaching. However, as has been argued in chapter 2, with its interdisciplinary nature and the critical engagement with positions raised within and outside postcolonial criticism, its framework remains flexible and dynamic – its confines are contested on a constant basis.

In general, what Reichl claims for a university context, is, as I would claim, equally valid in a school context, namely the development of critical thinking skills (see Reichl 288). Students “need to be able to critically evaluate what they read” (Brown and Campione qtd. in Reichl 288). It might be ambitious to want one’s students to be “independent, self-motivated critical thinkers able to take responsibility for life-long learning” (Reichl 288.), however, I would argue that one must set high demands in this respect. As Reichl argues, “Reading literature in general seems to be an ideal training ground for critical thinking. In fact, reading as such is often equated with thinking” (289). However, Reichl points out that critical thinking does not just “happen automatically as the result of a few year’s exposure to literature” (ibid.) – students need to be guided in developing critical thinking strategies, which is why language and

literature teachers have to be equipped with a set of tools that enables them to structure and monitor their students' (inter-) cultural learning processes (see chapter 6).

3.3.2. Literary Text and Task

The interplay between literary text and task creates a dialogue between task-based learning (TBL) and aesthetic reception theory (see Delanoy, *FLU* 10), and bridges the gap between language learning on the one hand, and literary studies on the other. The main focus of this dialectic interaction is to analyse how reader-response criticism and TBL can fruitfully enrich each other to enable learners to gain new insights. TBL is regarded as an approach that seeks to enable students to negotiate meaning in complex communication situations (see Delanoy, *FLU* 142), which can only be advantageous for a literary didactics that aims at (inter-) cultural understanding. Moreover, Delanoy (ibid.) argues that TBL and his model of dialogic literary didactics both share a holistic, experience-oriented approach to language learning. More specifically, both are learner-centred and capture the learner as a whole person including both, affective as well as cognitive qualities. Ultimately, TBL as well as Delaony's theory seek to contribute to the development of a culture of dialogic interaction (ibid., 143), or to put it differently, to the development of an education as a 'third place' (see Kramsch, 1993, see also her concept of third culture pedagogy, 2009). The combination of the notion of TBL and the concept of a hermeneutical oriented approach to literature teaching seems to be ideal to promote learner or reader autonomy and agency: On the one hand, Delanoy's concept of literary didactic provides space to deeply engage with the text and to build up a relationship with the text that is not teacher-directed, on the other hand, TBL helps teachers to monitor (and, if necessary, intervene) the reading process and structure (inter-) cultural learning (see also chapter 6).

3.4. A Note to Contextual Knowledge

There has been fierce discussion about whether students should be provided with contextual knowledge or not (see Peterson and Lashagari, 1991; McRae, 1996; Kramsch, 1993; Delanoy, 1996; Weber, 1996; Reichl, 2009). In accordance with Bredella, Delanoy (1996) and Reichl (2009), I, too, regard historical and cultural knowledge to be helpful rather than distracting, especially when dealing with literary texts from foreign cultures. I agree that as teachers, "[…] we must activate the students' prior knowledge but we must also give them the opportunity to reflect critically on their frame of reference and this can only be done by offering them cultural and historical

knowledge which allows them to see things from a different perspective" (Bredella and Delanoy, "Introduction" xii). Proponents of a planetary perspective on literature see their advantage in the privileging of text over context. It is argued that world literature is more concerned with "comparative study, text-based approaches, and perception of text rather than context" (McRae 227). However, to 'erase' context altogether is, as I would argue, as 'dangerous' as to favour context over text. I agree that the traditional paradigm in literature teaching to feed the student with context prior to the actual reading is rather counter-productive for an understanding of literature teaching that places the readers and their reading experiences at the centre of the teaching of literary texts. It contradicts, as Reichl (275) points out, an approach that focuses on reader autonomy: "[…] relying on pre-teaching is certainly not a step towards greater autonomy as a reader […]". Moreover, to start a literature class with a contextualising, a pre-reading unit can reduce the reading motivation to zero and spoil the reading experience altogether – it takes away something[23]. However, to ignore context as a whole might downgrade the significance of political, social, and cultural issues addressed in postcolonial texts. It might trivialise postcolonial literary writings and underestimate its socio-political as well as ethical dimension. Also, it can hinder the process of perspective-taking, if there is a lack of understanding of the contextual framework. For example, it might be difficult to deeply engage (critically and emotionally) with a text, such as *Half of a Yellow Sun*, if students know nothing about the socio-political situation of post-independent Nigeria, the ethnic rivalry between the North and the South, and the conditions that ultimately led to the outbreak of the devastating civil war. As teachers of a foreign language we have to be aware that we "are caught between the risks of discussing sensitive political and cultural differences and the equal risks of glossing over these differences" (Byram and Kramsch 24). This gives the discussion of contextual knowledge a whole new dimension, especially against the background of postcolonial literature. Dealing with texts that are highly political, it might be difficult to grasp its critique if one does not understand enough about the context. In general, students should be encouraged to develop an interest for other people, countries and their political, social and cultural relations. It is a question of general education to look beyond one's own nose. Certainly, it would be too optimistic to fully rely on one's students' natural curiosity, but it needs to be assumed as an intrinsic part of human nature, nonetheless. Maybe it is also about the teacher's ability to stir this curiosity and

[23] Certainly, there is nothing to argue against the activation of prior knowledge for the purpose of raising interest or curiosity.

to create a positive, supportive environment in which curiosity and motivation can grow; after all, the question is about how teachers can motivate their students to go beyond what is demanded to pass an exam or a class, which again leads back to the importance of learner autonomy and agency (see also Ushioda, 2003).

I would argue that context can well be explored without interfering the reading experience – sometimes, contextual knowledge, especially in relation to postcolonial literature, can be quite helpful to make sense of passages, comments, or references. Also, to avoid misreadings, or biased readings, contextual knowledge can be quite revealing (see also Byram and Kramsch, 2008). Many postcolonial literary texts bring in domain knowledge themselves, which makes the texts accessible for readers unfamiliar with the specific context, too. Others need specification or further background knowledge to be able to connect to the text at a deep level. In essence, rather than spoon-feeding students with contextual input as a prophylactic measure, teachers need to be sensitive and provide students according to their needs. Teachers need to find a balance and develop a feeling as to how much background knowledge is actually needed to understand the text. Pre-reading activities are not bad per se, however, if there is too much pre-teaching, there is "the risk of pre-determining the outcome of reading situations" (Reichl 275). The important thing about the activation of prior knowledge and the provision of contextual knowledge is, according to Reichl (279), that it should always be aimed at enabling and motivating students to "engage creatively and critically with the text at the same time". In other words, the teaching of contextual knowledge is closely connected to the question of learner autonomy and agency – teachers need to reflect whether the provision of background knowledge impedes or supports learner agency and autonomy (see also van Lier, 2008). One possible approach to activate prior knowledge and to raise one's students' curiosity as well as to help them become more autonomous and develop research strategies, is to turn the class into a research lab (see Reichl 280f.). Again, I would argue that such a pre-reading unit is not always necessary and an overuse would certainly spoil the effect of it; however, it is a good way of getting students into a subject, while at the same time, guiding them to develop research skills. Pre-reading 'activities' are also discussed by Delanoy, although in a rather different understanding (see chapter 6). Here, the purpose is to 'get the students into the text', to create an environment or an atmosphere that invites students to enter a literary text. This might be achieved with a picture, a poem, a song, or any other kind of stimulus which changes the atmosphere and prepares the

students for the subsequent reading process. Again, teachers should be careful of the extent to which they channel their students' reading processes. Sometimes, a focus might be desired; yet, "if every text is preceded by an activity that directs thinking, the meaning-making processes are already on their way long before the students start reading" (Reichl 275), which might be counter-productive for the development of their own critical perspectives.

Final Remarks

From what has been argued in this chapter, it can be concluded that the teacher's underlying idea of the relationship between reader and text, the related understanding of the reading process, and the attitude towards feelings and emotions in the literature classroom, decisively influence how students will read a literary text and experience literature as such. Thus, teachers constantly need to evaluate their own beliefs about and approaches to literature if they want their students to embrace and benefit from literature. The beauty of literary texts is that they invite readers to dive into fictional worlds, to leave behind the pressures of everyday life, and experience new perspectives. As readers we can experiment and take risks, have love affairs, be villains, detectives, thieves, or just slip into the minds of 'ordinary' people who try to master their lives and see how they handle complex situations. Postcolonial literary texts invite us to go a step further: Postcolonial literature seeks to challenge its readership. It confronts us with problematic discourses, such as ideological, racist, and essentialist conceptions of identity as well as eurocentric (mis-) representations. It highlights the way in which identity is constructed and shows how the process of construction is sometimes a hegemonial and biased one. However, postcolonial literature does not only point a finger at ideological presuppositions about culture and identity, but invites readers to embrace and value different ways of knowing and being – as a means of empowerment, postcolonial literature seeks to break limited perspectives and enrich the reader's mind to appreciate the manifoldness of humanity.

4. Postcolonial Literature in the EFL Classroom

4.1. The Danger of the Single Story

> "Until lions tell their tale, the story of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."
> (African Proverb)

In her lecture, "The Danger of the Single Story", Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a contemporary Nigerian writer, impressively expounds problems of the construction and subsequent consequences of single stories; that is biased accounts of the world, countries, cultures, and its people that do not allow for alternatives. The world is full of single stories of all kinds, whether it affects people, nations, countries, cultures or even a whole continent. Concerning Africa, for instance, Adichie remembers how she learned about the conception of her home continent when she was abroad in the United States of America. Influenced from either popular 'National Geographic-images' or media coverage, Africa was predominantly perceived as "a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals and incomprehensible people fighting senseless wars dying of poverty and Aids, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner" (Adichie, "Single Story" 06:11 – 6:28). At university her literary writings failed as they turned out to lack what her professor called 'African authenticity'. In a nutshell, it was criticised that her characters were simply too similar to Western citizens: educated and middle-class. Instead of starving, they drove cars. Soon she realized that many people held a single story of Africa – "a single story of catastrophe" (ibid., 05:06). What these experiences clearly show are the narrowness, the ignorance, and the harm single stories can cause. Single stories allow only for one possible perception; they "show a people as one thing, as only one thing over and over again" (ibid., 09:28 – 09:34). Certainly, Africa has many horrible stories to tell, as the author puts it. However, there are other stories too that are not preoccupied with war, starvation, murder, etc. and it is important, according to Adichie, to talk about those stories as well.

Concerning the single story of Africa, Adichie is convinced that this tradition can directly be traced back to early Western travel literature which decisively moulded the perception of foreign cultures. In specific, Adichie refers to the accounts of John Locke who explored West Africa in 1561. In his travelogue he describes "the Black Africans as beasts who have no houses" ("Single Story" 06:53 – 06:56) and continues to referring to them as "people without heads, having their mouths and eyes in their

breasts" (ibid., 06:58 – 07:04). The telling and retelling of these highly racist and stereotypical stories mark the vantage point of a tradition to construct a picture of 'the foreign', 'the Other' that has endured for centuries and whose impact is still perceptible today in the way in which people think of the African continent as a hopeless case. Certainly, such imaginative accounts cannot be taken seriously; however, for Adichie, John Locke

> represents the beginning of a tradition of telling African stories in the West. A tradition of sub-Saharan Africa as a place of negatives, of difference, of darkness, of people who, in the words of the wonderful poet Rudyard Kipling are half-devil, half-child. (Adichie, "Single Story" 07:13 – 07:31)

In line with Michel Foucault, Adichie refers to the interrelationship between power, knowledge and reality and states that power is indeed directly connected to the production and distribution of single stories: Power "is the ability not just to tell the story of another person but to make it the definitive story of that person" (10:12 – 10:18). Stories are produced by those in power: It is the powerful who decide which and whose story to tell. The perception of a culture, then, highly depends on the way in which its story is told. As the author skilfully puts it, the history of a whole nation appears in a totally different light just with a slight shift of one's focus:

> Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans and not with the arrival of the British and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African states and not with the colonial creation of the African states and you have an entirely different story. (Adichie, "Single Story" 10:30 – 10:51)

The devastating consequence of the single story, according to Adichie, is that "it robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasises how we are different, rather than how we are similar" (13:57 – 14:08), a critical moment in the pursuit of a peaceful world.

Certainly, we all inherit single stories for a very simple and basic reason: Categorical thinking constitutes a mechanism applied to reduce the complexity of the world without which everyday life would not be possible as people would be overwhelmed by the masses of information which overflows them at an accelerated pace. However, stereotypical thinking can become dangerous if it exceeds a mere functional purpose (see, for instance, Fricker, 2007). Adichie points out that "the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story" (13:14 – 13:24). For this reason, it is essential to absorb as many different stories as possible, to compare and contrast different accounts,

and to listen to marginalised stories too, in order to open one's mind to the richness of the world and its people. To reject the single story means to embrace diversity and become part of a peaceful and interconnected world. To put it into Adichie's words, "When we realize that there is never a single story about any place we regain a kind of paradise" (18:22 – 18:30).

4.2. Rationale: Postcolonial Literature in the EFL/ESL Classroom

Given that "more than three-quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1) the question of why postcolonial literature should be included in the EFL/ESL curriculum seems to be no longer necessary. And yet, the incorporation of postcolonial literature in the EFL/ESL classroom often falls on deaf ears as the purpose of (postcolonial) literary texts for language education seems to be rather unclear and the benefits for language learning unspecific. Against the background of the manifold functions of literature in general (see Bredella, "rezeptionsästhetische Literaturdidaktik" 52) and its various benefits for EFL/ESL teaching (see Keshavarzi), Hallet (41) argues that the marginalisation of literature within the German teaching context, which is particularly visible in lower secondary, where it has almost completely disappeared, poses a real challenge for an education that is geared towards the "diskursive Teilhabe der jungen Menschen". The same is true for Freitag and Gymnich (259), who make a case for the use of postcolonial literature in language learning. They point out that it is assigned only a subordinated role in the language classroom and argue that there seems to be a general uncertainty concerning the use of postcolonial literature. Against the background of the complexity of and diversity within the vast body of postcolonial theory, it is no wonder that language teachers seem to shy away from teaching postcolonial texts. Some teachers also fear that they simply do not know enough about a foreign culture. Concerning the latter, such insecurities do not need to be an obstacle to teaching (postcolonial) literature – "No expert knows every culture in the world" (Cai 148). However, one can make an effort to acquire cultural knowledge and do research – after all, "[…] teaching multicultural literature is a continuing process of researching and learning about other cultures" (ibid.). Moreover, the dichotomy between teaching and learning is increasingly resolved with a view on education that regards teaching and learning as an interactive, dialogic process: learning can become a group effort[24] in

[24] This suggestion I owe to my mentor Susanne Reichl.

which both, teachers and students are equally involved. Though still quite persistent, the traditional role of the teacher as the master and dispenser of knowledge is gradually dismantled and replaced by a more interactive approach in which the teacher acts as a supervisor, mentor, supporter, guide, or resource and gives away some of his/her control to empower the students without losing authority at the same time. Especially in language and literature classes an interactive approach to teaching turns out to be fruitful. As research has revealed (see, for instance, Paran's overview of different studies on interaction in the literature classroom, 2008), teacher-centred lecturing on literature goes hand in hand with particularly negative effects on language learning ranging from high drop-out quotes (Yang qtd. in Paran 472) to almost no improvements in language proficiency (see Yang qtd. in Paran 472; Donato and Brooks qtd. in Paran 473) although an earlier study by Yang (2002) showed that classes which use literature to promote language competence can well outperform control groups[25]. Generally, it can be said that a predominance of teacher talk (teacher monologue) and IRE (Initiation – Response – Evaluation) patterns of interaction inhibit discussion in the classroom (see Donato and Brooks 2004 qtd. in Paran 473) and prevent students from interacting with one another and developing own understandings and interpretations. A dialogic relationship between teacher and students, on the other hand, invites students to participate, and encourages them to develop their own understandings rather than parroting a pre-fabricated interpretation and answering a row of display questions. Certainly, such a dialogic approach to teaching literature is less predictable as it is the particular situation that determines the course of a lesson (see also Delanoy's concept of dialogic learning referred to in chapter 2 and 6).

Whether it is because of a lack or insufficiency of special training in literary didactics in the course of teacher training programmes or due to a general mistrust in the usefulness of literature for language teaching and learning, there seems to be a need to assure language teachers of the power of (postcolonial) literature on the one hand, and to provide teachers with a convincing set of tools, a feasible methodology, which facilitates the use of postcolonial literature (see chapter 3), on the other. Also, language teachers need to engage with postcolonial theory themselves in order to be able to successfully guide their students in their reading and learning processes. Most

[25] Again, it becomes clear that using literature is not automatically a guarantor for language improvement (or in the case of this diploma thesis a shift in perspective towards a critical mind). The teaching of literature must be based on a theoretical background to structure, monitor and guide the reading process and to really gain from the potentials literature can offer.

importantly, however, language teachers who want to take cultural diversity seriously need to reflect on their self as well, and explore their own (inter-) cultural values. As Cai (148) puts it, "[t]o help students explore, and perhaps transform, their cultural perspectives, teachers should first engage in examining their own […]".

In general, if foreign language learning should not be reduced to a mere functional learning – experience in foreign language teaching methodology has shown what fatal consequences the instrumentalisation of language learning can have (see Bredella, "Zielsetzungen" 93) – teachers need to comprehend of foreign language teaching and learning (and education in general) as a dialogic, hermeneutic, social, and (inter-) cultural undertaking that is geared towards understanding between people (see also Gadamer's concept of understanding and Delanoy's appropriation in chapter 3, 6). Ultimately, students will be affected in their attitudes towards different languages and cultures, multicultural societies, different life concepts, etc. In short, it will affect learners in their very identity as the learning of a foreign language perpetually oscillates between the foreign or the Other and the familiar or the self, whose relationship has to be negotiated on a constant basis.

Literary works, in general, can be great support for both teachers and students to experience a language (and variations of a language) and its cultures in a relatively safe environment (see also chapter 3). To underline the idea that literary texts are indispensible not only of EFL/ESL teaching and learning but of a holistic education and personal development in general, I would like to cite Doreen Baingana who points to the ethical dimension of reading (postcolonial) literature: "Stories will help us moving to new ways of being, new ways of behaving, new ways of interacting with one another" (Baingana, "Offensive Language" 05:04 – 05:11). Herein is articulated what postcolonial literary texts 'do' – in offering alternative perspectives they seek to disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions and notions of knowledge and make discussable what has been uncontested in order to move towards a more just and equitable world.

Certainly, stories can cause considerable harm to people, especially when they function to debase them and eventually create distorted realities about these people. To put it into Edward Said's words, "[…] texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe" (94). Drawing on philosophers such as Paul Ricoeur, Martha Nussbaum, and Oliver Scholz, Bredella ("rezeptionsästhetische Literaturdidaktik" 61f.) stresses the importance to ask what worldview, attitude towards humanity, or moral stance a text implies (or even produces). Clearly, it makes a big

difference, whether a text indirectly stirs or conquers racist attitudes. Similarly, Henry A. Grioux and Peter L. McLaren point to this issue and highlight the teacher's responsibility to sharpen the student's critical eye as a consumer of cultural productions:

> Representations are always produced within cultural limits and theoretical borders, and as such are necessarily implicated in particular economies of truth, value, and power. In relation to these large axes of power in which all representations are embedded, it is necessary to remind the student: Whose interests are being served by the representations in question? Within a given set of representations, who speaks, for whom, and under what conditions? Where can we situate such representations ethically and politically with respect to questions of social justice and human freedom? What moral, ethical, and ideological principles structure our reactions to such representations? (xxiv)

In this respect, language learners can highly profit from the postcolonial deconstruction of literary representation, especially in regard to critical issues such as race and racism, identity, cultural hybridity, gender, etc., and gain a deeper understanding of how meanings, knowledge, and realities are constructed and circulated. This competence will empower students to challenge and counter-act single stories.

Regarding the latter, the challenge of dominant discourses, postcolonial literature is exemplary to examine the way in which 'subaltern' authors started to deconstruct and reconstruct a biased reality to rehabilitate the dignity of a whole people. As Childs and Williams (105) note, the reclamation or recovery of indigenous culture is particularly strong in postcolonial writings. In short, stories bear great potential in 'repairing' a distorted picture. This notion becomes evident in Achebe's statement about the 'purpose' or intentions of his writings: "I would be quite satisfied if my novels […] did no more than teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them" (Achebe, "The Novelist as Teacher" 30).

The character of stories as double-edged swords is explicitly referred to by Adichie in her lecture "The Danger of the Single Story" (17:40 – 17:55) when she states that "stories have been used to dispossess and malign; but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people but stories can also repair that broken dignity". Postcolonial literature is an attempt to repair the broken dignity of a people. In this sense, its ethical dimension is particularly strong and must not be ignored in an education that is geared towards peace education ("Lebende Fremdsprache" 1) and the respect of and solidarity with minority groups ("Lehrplan, allgemein" 2). In essence, I would argue that the integration of postcolonial literature in EFL/ESL learning and teaching indicates a decisive move towards an appreciation and

recognition of cultural, ethnical, and religious diversity and plurality in this world, all of which contributes to the development of students as critical, responsible, sensible, and open-minded human beings.

"Stories matter. Many stories matter" (Adichie, "Single Story" 17:36 – 17:40). In a foreign language learning context this means that teachers have the responsibility to educate their students to become respectful and fair individuals whose perspective is not exclusively informed by a single story but a balanced variety of different standpoints and worldviews. Postcolonial literature is regarded an important 'category' to be included in the endeavour to realise an education which truly aims at cosmopolitanism, tolerance, and peace education (see "Lebende Fremdsprache" 1). Keeping the specific (historic) background of postcolonial literature in mind, an education which is based on high moral principles such as the respect of the dignity of all people, the respect for minorities, freedom, and solidarity (see "Lehrplan, allgemein" 2), has to acknowledge the artistic, scientific, and academic production of all countries around the globe, especially of those authors, artists, and theorists who have tried to recognise, criticise, and challenge distorted knowledge and provided alternative answers to create more just societies in this world. The exclusion or ignorance of a field as rich, diverse, and significant as postcolonial literature would continue a tradition of white supremacy and thus constitute an enormous harm, both ethically and epistemically.

This idea is by far not just an idealistic vision of what teaching and education should look like. On the contrary, the Austrian education system highly emphasises the importance of the teacher's contribution to the students' personality development, repeatedly formulated in both, the general principles of the curriculum as well as the syllabus for EFL/ESL for lower and upper secondary of Austrian grammar schools. Accordingly, teaching does not simply involve the transfer of knowledge but gears towards the development of various competences, including expertise, self-, social competence, as well as the communication of values, such as solidarity with marginalised people.

These core principles are relevant for all subjects, however, in a language learning context fundamentals such as solidarity, respect, responsibility, and critical thinking abilities become essential key concepts as language learning always involves (inter-) cultural learning[26] as well. In other words, language education is a complex cultural

[26] For a detailed analysis of the role of (inter-) cultural learning for language education see chapter 6.

activity (Hallet 31). On the one hand, language learners, and teachers of course, too, are cultural subjects themselves – Hallet refers to language learners as "kulturelle Aktanten" (32) – meaning that their cultural experiences, life-world knowledge, interests, beliefs and values will most certainly affect the language learning process. On the other hand, the English language is marked by cultural diversity and plurality by nature, given that englishes are spoken around the globe with each culture adding a new facet to the language.

This constitutes a wonderful vantage point to explore the English language and its variations in the language classroom and to sensitise language learners to the richness of the English language. The overall learning objective communicated in the curriculum for EFL/ESL teaching is the development of communicative language skills – "kommunikative Sprachkompetenz" (2). In order to achieve this goal, students need to be exposed to 'authentic texts' that train their competences and ultimately enable them to successfully communicate – both orally and in writing – in a variety of different situations ("Lebende Fremdsprache" 2), be it private, professional, or educational communication situations (ibid., 4). Without opening a debate about the role of Received Pronunciation and Standard English in EFL/ESL teaching, as far as oral skills are concerned, teachers will have to consider whether it is not more 'profitable' to expose their students to different varieties of the English language (regional as well as national varieties) rather than just one dialect, given that standards are rarely spoken in real life. In this regard, film adaptations[27] of postcolonial literatures, such as *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* (release date 2013) which is based on Nelson Mandela's autobiographical novel *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995) or the adaptation of the same title of Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (published in 2006, release in 2013), offer invaluable opportunities for language learners to engage with postcolonial perspectives in social, political, and cultural issues, to learn about a country's pop culture and other cultural mannerisms, and to explore the rich and diverse body of englishes, the variations in pronunciation, style, lexis, and grammar. Films as well as literary texts offer language learners the chance to experience a language in a living situation and to explore the lives of English speaking people. "Actually, different people talk and write differently. As such, literature contains all these various forms of use of language" (Keshavarzi 555).

[27] It should be noted that film as a teaching resource should be applied carefully and purposefully. As complementary input, however, films can be very useful for both, language learning and (inter-) cultural learning.

4.3. Culture and Language

EFL learning is always connected to what Hallet (34) calls a "Fremdheitserfahrung", an encounter with the Other:

> Sprachen erfassen die Welt auf verschiedene Weise, und Menschen in anderen Kulturen sind von anderen Welt- und Wertvorstellungen, Denk- und Verhaltensweisen sowie anderen kulturellen Praktiken geprägt. (Hallet 34)

Certainly, the relationship between language and culture is most complex and an understanding of culture and language forming an indissolvable entity would definitely be too simplistic. Bredella ("Zielsetzungen" 83), for instance, points out that especially in foreign language learning contexts, culture and language can diverge as foreign language learners always relate their own culture to the learning process.

As has already been pointed out in chapter 2, in postcolonial studies the correlation between culture or cultural identity and language plays an essential role in the discussion of issues such as the imposition and pronunciation of Western norms through the master-language, the denial and loss of the indigenous culture through the adoption of the new language, the inability to communicate the indigenous culture through the new communication system, including the complexity of the introduction of literacy to oral cultures, or, more positively, the transformation and creative use of the imposed language as a means of critique. Doubtlessly, cultural norms and values are communicated through language. "Language constitutes reality […]" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 43). Drawing on Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, Bredella ("Zielsetzungen" 87) points to the way in which proponents of linguistic determinism have argued that the perception of the world is always mediated through language. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, each language inherits a certain world view or, to put it differently, language determines one's perception of the world – "language determines thought" (Yule 247):

> We dissect nature along the lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face, on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds – and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. (Whorf 213).

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, however, fiercely criticise the idea of culture being carved in language and clearly state that such an assumption is both "false and dangerous" (52). Such cultural essentialism and linguistic determinism would deprive the language user of the creative use of any language. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths,

and Tiffin (52), to assume a cultural essence in words is to confuse usage with property. "The notion that language determines thought may be partially correct, in some extreme limited way, but it fails to take into account the fact that users of a language do not inherit a fixed set of patterns to use. They inherit the ability to manipulate and create with a language, in order to express their perceptions" (Yule 248). Similarly, Bredella urges that the idea of the irresolvable unity of culture, world view, and language, poses a real dilemma, especially for postcolonial authors: "Geht man davon aus, daß Sprache und Weltbild unauflöslich zusammengehören, dann bedeutet dies, daß postkoloniale Autoren nicht in der Sprache der ehemaligen Kolonialherren schreiben dürfen, weil sie damit deren Weltbild übernähmen" ("Zielsetzungen" 88).

This already indicates that the relationship between culture and language must be more complex than initially assumed. In fact, postcolonial authors are exemplary to show that while there might be some grain of truth in the link between language and culture, it is the language user who can actively oscillate between systems of communication without simultaneously adopting the world view, norms, and values communicated through a certain language. "The human manipulates the language, not the other way round" (Yule 248). It is the creativeness that enables the language user to either express or criticize different world views in one and the same language (Bredella, "Zielsetzungen" 88). Chinua Achebe perceived of the English language as an effective weapon to fight and undermine the logic of colonialism: "English was the language of colonization itself. It is not simply something you use because you have it anyway; it is something which you can actively claim to use as an effective weapon, as a counterargument to colonization" ("An African Voice"). Similarly, the Ugandan writer Doreen Baingana stresses the power of the language user, when she states that "language is a tool that anyone can use" ("Offensive Language" 04:23 – 04:26). In this sense, 'the master's tools can well dismantle the master's house'[28].

It can be concluded that the relationship between language and culture is presumably more flexible than originally suggested. On the one hand, the potential of creative language use must not be ignored; on the other, one must not slip into relativism either. It would be as false and dangerous to neglect that different world views are inspired by different cultures, traditions, norms and values, which are ultimately communicated through a certain system of communication. To deny the obvious is to negate diversity and plurality, all of which are constituents of a holistic

[28] The dictum 'the master's tools cannot dismantle the master's house' goes back to the radical feminist Audre Lorde.

approach to humanity. The Austrian education system explicitly pronounces the importance to foster the understanding of the role of culture and language for different concepts of life with the ultimate goal to reach towards a positive and enriching perception of cultural difference:

> Die Auseinandersetzung mit unterschiedlichen Sozialisationsbedingungen ermöglicht die Einsicht, dass Weltsicht und Denkstrukturen in besonderer Weise sprachlich und kulturell geprägt sind. Wenn die Begegnung mit anderen Kulturen und Generationen sowie die sprachliche und kulturelle Vielfalt in unsere eigenen Gesellschaft als bereichernd erfahren wird, ist auch ein Grundstein für Offenheit und gegenseitige Achtung gelegt. ("Lehrplan, allgemein" 3)

In postcolonial writings, the foreign language learner can directly experience the complex interrelationship between language, culture, and identity and witness the effects it has on human behaviour, the perception of the self, as well as the evaluation of others. The exploration of key concepts of postcolonial theory in literary texts, as well as the engagement with different understandings of culture, language, and identity negotiated in these texts, offer a valuable opportunity to broaden one's horizon and reach towards a positive and respectful attitude towards cultural diversity. The beauty of postcolonial literary texts, I claim, is its epistemic value: it constitutes a rich body of alternative, often conflicting readings of human existence without ever claiming authoritative status and knowledge. This also lies at the heart of the methodological 'nature' of postcolonial theory:

> […] the strength of post-colonial theory may well lie in its inherently comparative methodology and the hybridized and syncretic view of the modern world which this implies. This view provides a framework of 'difference on equal terms' within which multi-cultural theories, both within and between societies, may continue to be fruitfully explored. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 35)

4.4. Language Learning, Postcolonial Literature, and the Language Learner's Identity

Language learning involves the ability to engage with other cultures, to collaborate and cooperate, all of which is based on the development of the self as a critical and sensitive individual. Thereby, the students' process of self discovery and the search for identity are situated in a context which is characteristic of its complex structure: Drawing on Homi Bhabha, Hallet (36) argues that language classrooms are third spaces, transcultural contact zones and areas of negotiation in and among "Diskurswelten" of different languages and cultures (Hallet 35). According to Hallet (36), these spheres

include (a) the life-world of the language learner; (b) the discursive and cultural world of foreign-language texts; as well as (c) the globalised sphere of transcultural discourses. The intertwinement of these "Diskurswelten" (Hallet 35) turns (foreign) language learning into a process in which students are constantly affected in their identity formation process (26) as the exposure to foreign cultures and mannerisms influences the conception of their own life too: "Jeder interkulturelle Kontakt hat auch Auswirkungen auf das kulturelle Handeln der Beteiligten in ihren eigenen lebensweltlichen Kontexten“ (36).

Bhabha's idea of the 'third space' to describe spaces of negotiation is also adopted by Claire Kramsch who famously developed the concept of the 'third place' and the subsequent, interrelated notion of the 'third culture' (see Kramsch 1993; 2009; 2011). Based on these concepts, Kramsch develops the concept of the language learner as the (inter-) cultural speaker (see also 1998):

> THIRD PLACE, THIRD CULTURE and SPHERE OF INTERCULTURALITY are metaphors that attempt to capture through a place marker what is in fact a process of positioning the self both inside and outside the discourse of others. (Kramsch, "Symbolic Dimension" 359)

Influenced by discourse analysis and post-structuralist approaches to the relationship between language and culture, Kramsch uses the concept of 'thirdness'[29] to disrupt and eschew binary oppositions in EFL learning and teaching, including the dichotomy native speaker (NS) – non-native speaker (NNS), the boundary between native (target) culture (C1) and non-native (source) culture (C2), or the duality between first language (L1) and second language (L2).

> The only way to start building a more complete and less partial understanding of both C1 and C2 is to develop a third perspective, that would enable learners to take both an insider's and an outsider's view on C1and C2. It is precisely that third place that cross-cultural education should seek to establish. (Kramsch, *Context and Culture* 210)

Her concept of third place and third culture is not meant to eliminate these boundaries, but to highlight their relationality. Her focus lies in the space between C1 and C2, NS and NNS, L1 and L2. In the process of negotiation between these poles, foreign language learners create a 'third place' in which they act as (inter-) cultural speakers and mediators. Similar to Bhabha, who captures his third space as an ambiguous and

---

[29] For Kramsch, *thirdness* describes a stance, an attitude; it refers to the ability of recognising the relationality of language, thought and culture (Kramsch, 1999). The concept of thirdness has been widely applied in semiotics (Barthes, 1977; Peirce, 1940), applied linguistics (stylistics: Widdowson, 1992; educational linguistics: van Lier, 2004); in literary theory (Bakhtin, 1981), and foreign/second language education (Kramsch, 1993)

uncomfortable zone, Kramsch's concept, too, is subject to tension and conflict. Again, like Bhabha, Kramsch regards this place as a considerable source of creative power and invention (see "Third Culture" 238). Kramsch's concept of third place and third culture is characteristic of the following three aspects (see Kramsch, "Third Culture" 238f.): (1) A popular culture: This characteristics refers to the third place as a space of negotiation in which the foreign language learner creates meaning, out of, within, and against a cultural and social discourse that is not their own. In other words, learning a foreign language means using a language, making sense of a language, and making sense of the world in a language which is not one's own but eventually becomes part of one's space because of the use of it. It is about "constructing *our* space within and against *their* places, of speaking *our* meaning with *their* language" (de Certeau qtd. in Kramsch, "Third Culture" 238). Of all what has been argued so far, this aspect is nothing other than the appropriation of a language (that is originally not one's own) to make it part of one's identity. Again, with reference to Chinua Achebe and his idea of the deliberate and conscious use of the English language, this aspect underlines the idea that culture and language are relational categories that allow for creative and subversive spaces. (2) A critical culture: Kramsch's concept of third place and third culture encourages language learners to critically evaluate the way in which ideology is inscribed in language. (3) An ecological culture: The last aspect refers to the practical implication of her concept for foreign language education. Kramsch remains rather vague as to the realisation of her concept and states that "[s]ince bricolage is the name of the game, third culture uses any method that 'works' […]" (ibid., 239) and lists several possible activities which seem to be congruent with her approach.

To complete Kramsch's concept of the third place/third culture, it should be noted that Kramsch appropriated her notion of culture from 1993 to account for the perception of "culture as discourse and the production of meaning" ("Symbolic Dimension" 354):

> […] culture today is associated with ideologies, attitudes and beliefs, created and manipulated through the discourse of the media, the Internet, the marketing industry, Hollywood and other mind-shaping interest groups. It is seen less as a world of institutions and historical traditions, or even as identifiable communities of practice, than as a mental toolkit of subjective metaphors, affectivities, historical memories, entextualizations and transcontextualizations of experience, with which we make meaning of the world around us and share that meaning with others. (Kramsch, "Symbolic Dimension" 355)

Third culture is not so much a physical 'place' but should be conceived of "as a symbolic PROGRESS of meaning-making that sees beyond the dualities of national

languages (L1-L2) and national cultures (C1-C2) ("Symbolic Dimension" 355). Thus, for the (inter-) cultural speaker it is not only essential to express, negotiate, and interpret meaning between cultures from a third place, but also to grasp the symbolic dimension, "the symbolic power game" (ibid. 359) of cultures.

> Language learners are not just communicators and problem solvers, but whole persons with hearts, bodies, and minds, with memories, fantasies, loyalties, identities. Symbolic forms are not just items of vocabulary or communication strategies, but embodied experiences, emotional resonances, and moral imaginings. We could call the competence that collegiate students need nowadays a symbolic competence. ("Symbolic Competence" 251).

Literature is seen a major source or vehicle to promote symbolic competence, given its discursive as well as transformative function in the meaning making process: "For it is through literature that learners can communicate not only with living others, but also with imagined others and with the other selves they might want to become. Through literature, they can learn the full meaning making potential of language" ("Symbolic Competence" 251). Literature, according to Kramsch (ibid., 251f.), can promote three major aspects of symbolic competence: (a) Production of Complexity, which refers to the recognition of the complexity of human communication, including the symbolic use of language; (b) Tolerance of Ambiguity, which refers to the recognition of contradictions and ambiguities in human communication; and (c) Appreciation of Form as Meaning, which refers to recognition of meaning in its various manifestations. Metaphorically, literary texts can be third places in which meanings are negotiated, criticised, and created. I would argue that a postcolonial reading strategy supports Kramsch's concept of symbolic competence, as it, too, raises awareness of ideological discourses in language/in texts and highlights the way in which languages inscribe political, ideological, cultural, social meanings (symbolic meanings). A postcolonial reading strategy encourages the reader to position him-/herself in relation to the text, the language(s), the culture(s), and the world represented in it. Literary texts are never neutral, and a postcolonial reading strategy empowers students to recognise and negotiate the symbolic dimension of language and culture(s) 'inscribed' in literary writings.

In accordance with Kramsch, Bredella, too, argues that reading has a transformative dimension as it affects the entire personality of the reader (Bredella, "rezeptionsästethische Literaturdidaktik" 54) – "[w]e don't just observe fictional worlds from without. We live in them […]" (Walton 273 qtd. in Bredella, "rezeptionsästhetische Literaturdidaktik" 51). In other words, literary texts affect us –

we do not just read the text as an object, but emotionally connect with the characters, their fates, and lives (see also chapter 3), which makes perspective – taking and the negotiation between and ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ perspective possible (see “Zielsetzungen” 111). To take an inner perspective, according to Bredella, means to make an effort to see the world through the eyes of somebody different, to put oneself into somebody else’s shoes in order to reconstruct a situation from his/her perspective. This does not imply that the learner has to abandon his/her own situation; in order to make sense of somebody else’s perspective means to negotiate it with one’s own understanding of the world (see “Zielsetzungen” 113). The ability to negotiate an inner and outer perspective means that learners need to be able to stand some degree of ambiguity as not always will perspectives cohere[30]. Consequently, the exploration of the manifold explanations of and perspectives on reality will shape language learners in their identity and perception of life (ibid., 60)[31]. Moreover, the absorption of alternative perspectives through postcolonial literary texts and the critical reflection of the possibility of different conceptions of life will help students to grasp the symbolic dimension of culture and thus, better recognise their own cultural dependencies as well. Ultimately, the skills gained through the exploration of postcolonial literary texts will enable students to critically explore power-relations and cultural, political, and social issues in their own environment and participate in cultural politics as the dialogic or dialectic engagement with different discourses enhances and encourages them to revaluate their cultural propositions as well. “In this way, the reader or spectator of a literary work is reading and watching the work, but at the same time reading the world, and reading her own self. The work is, in that sense, as Proust puts it, an ‘optical instrument’ through which the reader may focus on certain personal realities” (Nussbaum qtd. in Bredella, “rezeptionsästhetische Literaturdidaktik” 60).

As a symbolic or metaphorical space of transcultural exchange and negotiation (“transkultureller Austauschraum”, Hallet 36) the foreign language classroom together with the reading of postcolonial literary texts fulfil what is demanded by the Austrian curriculum when it states that “Die Schülerinnen und Schüler sollen eigene weltanschauliche Konzepte entwerfen […]” (“Lehrplan, allgemein” 2) which, I would suggest, can only be accomplished through the exposure to and engagement with

---

[30] See also Nünning (1999) and his notion of perspective-taking.

[31] Certainly, as Bredella points out, literary competence covers both, the ability to differentiate between reality and fiction as well as the ability to see the epistemic potential in literary texts (“rezeptionsästhetische Literaturdidaktik” 60).

different and alternative worldviews that function as reference points for the construction of the students' own perception of the world. As the question of the location ("Verortung" Freitag & Gymnich 261) of the self, the search for identity, the question of alterity, as well as the pronunciation of the constructedness of one's cultural, social, and political realities constitute reoccurring themes in postcolonial literature, the engagement with these texts is seen as particularly valuable for the students' construction of the self.

Foreign language education in general and the engagement with and exposure to postcolonial literary texts in particular, then, bear great epistemic potential: On the one hand, both raise awareness to the 'situatedness' in one's cultural framework by revealing the cultural presuppositions that shape the ontological perception of life. On the other hand, the realisation and critical reflection of one's 'cultural situatedness' enables to discover deeper structures that connect humankind as a whole (see also Bredella, "Zielsetzungen" 87). Ultimately, according to Freitag & Gymnich (261), the disclosure of the 'constructedness' of cultural identities as well as the revelation of the cultural dependence of norms and values will facilitate reducing stereotypes and prejudices (see also chapter 5), it will lead towards a less narrow-minded and less ethnocentric perception of the world (Bredella, "rezeptionsästhetische Literaturdidaktik" 64). I would argue that only a deeper understanding of culture, ethnicity, identity, alterity, and language, all of which are interrelated key concerns of postcolonial theory, will allow for a reflective understanding of cultural diversity and the appreciation of the manifoldness of human life.

4.5. The Potentials of Postcolonial Literature for EFL/ESL Teaching and Learning

Mere landeskundliches Wissen about different cultures is clearly insufficient, even if necessary, to contribute to the language learners' development to become critical subjects. Literary works, on the other hand, are generally regarded to offer valuable opportunities for both teachers and students to discover and dive into concepts of life different from their own cultural backgrounds for the introspective function literary texts can have. In other words, postcolonial literary texts do not only allow foreign language learners to glimpse culturally diverse life-worlds, but also to participate in culturally diverse discourses (Freitag and Gymnich 262) which, doubtless enhances their (inter-) cultural competence (see also chapter 6), as has already been argued above.

However, it has to be kept in mind that the exploration of culture-based understandings of life through literary texts is limited to an indirect accessibility (see, for instance, Hallet, 2007; Kramsch and Byram, 2008): It is limited to an understanding of "culture as text" (Hallet 39). This metaphor entails various problems, including the question of the representability of a culture by literary texts, the danger of biased representation of a culture, or the arbitrariness of the selection of texts as well as the privileging of certain cultures or ethnicities over others (see Hallet 39). What follows is that language teachers need to find a balanced variety of texts for the development of a thorough understanding of literature itself[32] as well as in order to be able to provide students manifold impressions about culture-based experiences and to confront language learners with as many different voices and perspectives as possible (see Freitag and Gymnich 263). In other words, language teachers who wish to take the (inter-) cultural dimension in EFL/ESL teaching and learning seriously, need to engage with concepts of thirdness, such as Kramsch's concepts of third place and third culture, as well as her notions of (inter-) cultural and symbolic competence, or other approaches to (inter-) cultural learning, which have their focus rather on the dialogic relationship between the self and the Other, such as Bredella's 'Didaktik des Fremdverstehens', Nünning's concept of perspective-taking, or Delanoy's concept of hermeneutic oriented, dialogic learning (see chapters 3, 6), the latter of which seems to negotiate between Kramsch's approach of thirdness and Bredella's perspective of Fremdverstehen.

It has already been argued that literary texts in general can have a decisive impact on the reader's self and/or conception of reality. This might sound threatening to some language teachers; however, I truly hope that the advantages of the power of postcolonial literature can outweigh scepticism and reservations. Education should be more than the transfer of facts – and even if some teachers wish to teach factual knowledge only, they have to critically ask which knowledge they reproduce, by whom this knowledge was produced, and whose interests this knowledge serves – it is part of Kramsch's symbolic competence to ask exactly such questions when dealing with language, as language is always imbedded in a discourse of power (see above). As postcolonial literary texts reflect important insights of postcolonial theory into the social, political, and cultural dimensions of knowledge production and circulation, the

[32] This aspect affects two dimensions: Firstly, it relates to the misconception of what literature actually is. Hallet (44) argues that literature is still associated with 'high art' which might be a reason why language teachers seem to be rather wary of the use of literature in the language classroom. Secondly and closely connected with the former argument, is a habitus of exclusion in the discourse of literary artwork (see Adichie, "Single Story").

engagement with these texts help students (and teachers) to learn to recognise and challenge frames of thinking that devalue, marginalise, and silence other ways of knowing.

Final Remarks

Postcolonial literature is regarded as indispensible for an understanding of education which pronounces inclusion, tolerance, fairness, and openness as fundamental principles, as these texts fight monopolies of truth. They embrace diversity and multiplicity, and encourage the telling of alternative stories. Moreover, as has already been argued, the exclusion of this 'category' poses an epistemic and ethical injustice alike, to the rich aesthetic production of an incredibly large number of postcolonial writers. To use Adichie's formulations: To avoid a single understanding of literature is to include literary texts which come from cultures that have tried to challenge the dominant (Western) discourse of literature and offer alternative readings of life. To avoid a single understanding of any culture is to leave the dominant discourse behind and engage with writings from margins. Postcolonial literary texts play an essential role in the avoidance of single stories as they offer significant insights into issues of cultural imperialism, (inter-) cultural encounters, (inter-) cultural identity, representation, alterity, hybridity etc. from the perspective of formerly silenced people. In a nutshell, it is important to acknowledge that postcolonial texts have brought forth a whole body of 'new' understandings of issues initially dominated by Western accounts. With the challenge of and break with essentialist binary thinking patterns of the West, postcolonial texts have achieved a tremendous enrichment of the understanding of the complexities of human life. In essence, this means that the inclusion of postcolonial literary texts can decisively contribute to a better and reflective understanding of the complexity of human beings and thus engender a holistic perception of human life. To include postcolonial literary texts in EFL/ESL teaching means "[…] to challenge the dominant ideologies, affirm the values and experiences of historically underrepresented cultures, foster acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity, develop sensitivity to social inequalities, and encourage transformation of the self and society" (Cai 134).

In regard to the foreign language classroom, there are many reasonable arguments for the inclusion of postcolonial literature in EFL/ESL learning and teaching, such as its creative, yet conscious use of language; the problematisation of the relationship between indigenous language, official language, and cultural identity; the challenge of

essentialist and eurocentric conceptions of identity, culture, race, and ethnicity, which greatly supports the foreign language learners' construction of the self and encourages students to experiment with alternative concepts of life; the conflict between tradition and modernity, indigenous faith and Christianity which sensitises students to the multiple ways of engaging with life; the problem of White supremacy and the devaluation of indigenous culture which makes students aware of the importance of tolerance, respect, and acceptance; the issue of native agency and historiography, or most generally, its contribution to the avoidance of single stories. Apart from the mentioned reasons, one of the most promising and convincing arguments for the use of postcolonial literary texts in the foreign language classroom comprises its enormous potential for (inter-) cultural learning, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter of this paper.

5. Postcolonial Intersections: The Potentials of Postcolonial Literature for EFL/ESL Teaching and Learning

In this chapter, major key concerns in postcolonial literature will be discussed. Certainly, the following presentation is by far no complete collection of issues discussed within postcolonial theory and African postcolonial literature, but it can serve as a starting point for EFL/ESL students to dive in the rich and manifold topics relevant to postcolonial literary writings. Also, some themes are only touched upon very briefly, whereas others are discussed at some more length. The choice of topics was influenced by two parameters: Most obviously, the literary texts themselves provided 'the material' from which to choose; on the other hand, issues were picked out on the basis of their potentials for (inter-) cultural learning in EFL/ESL teaching. In other words, I decided on themes which I regard most 'suitable' to encourage EFL/ESL students to critically engage with different, alternative perspectives on life in order to reflect on their worldviews, and discover structures, mechanisms, and processes which are deeply seated in the self and influence everyday life[33].

It should be mentioned that the following discussion of key concerns of postcolonial literature cannot be clearly kept apart; rather, they interrelate and constantly refer to each other. Thus, sometimes it was difficult to decide how to divide the subchapters without creating an artificial cut between the issues. In other words, the

[33] In chapter 6, I will discuss how to structure (inter-) cultural learning processes in some more detail.

division is highly subjective, and some readers might probably disagree with the way in which the themes have been categorised and arranged. This is totally fine, as I do not intend to present a final answer, but provide a possibility of how to deal with postcolonial literary texts in EFL/ESL teaching and learning.

Another important aspect of this chapter is that the topics discussed below 'interfuse' with concerns raised outside postcolonial theory as well. Generally, the themes relevant in postcolonial literature are rather heterogeneous. On a most general level, postcolonial literary texts deal with the "colonial and postcolonial exploitation and injustice as well as the individual and collective psychological, political, and cultural consequences" (Antor 241 qtd. in Freitag & Gymnich 264). As a means of critical reaction to and reflection of social, political, and cultural developments, postcolonial literary texts, then, provide valuable insights into the manifold conditions of human life. Issues explored in postcolonial literature are concrete and general at the same time, which makes these texts even more valuable as they do not only make sense for people with a postcolonial background, but appeal to a relatively large audience. For these reasons, I would like to borrow the idea from Childs and Williams, and call the topics discussed below postcolonial intersections rather than postcolonial concerns, as this chapter, too, "traces some of the major points of crossover between post-colonial theory and other critical positions" (185) on issues such as gender, language, race, nationalism, and tribalism.

This chapter is a crossover, also because different levels of theoretical and creative writing intertwine. As Döring (64) points out, "[…] 'theory' is never absent, outside or beyond a given text but provides the flesh and bones of textual meanings, uses and effects". Especially in postcolonial literature, critical positions weave in creative writing. Thus, the issue of context and contextual knowledge is assigned an important role, as has been argued in chapter 3 and as will become even clearer in this chapter. Taken together, this chapter can be regarded as a 'contact zone' where different discourses meet and intermingle.

In tandem with the more analytical analysis of textual strategies applied in postcolonial literary texts presented in chapter 2, the discussion of major key concerns in this chapter, and the subsequent considerations of an adequate methodology to structure and organise (inter-) cultural learning processes in chapter 6, provide a sound basis for teachers to embrace the enormous potentials of postcolonial literature and incorporate postcolonial readings in their classes too. Again, it is important to note that

language and literature teachers need not fear the vast complexity of postcolonial theory and literature as the exploration of (postcolonial) literary texts should be perceived of as a journey on which both, teachers and learners leave familiar terrain and set off to new shores.

5.1. The Critique of Western Universalism

In her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun,* Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie deals with the psychological processing of the colonial past of Nigeria as well as the challenges of the formation of a united, independent state with the Nigeria-Biafra War as its most dramatic and brutal climax. Her character Odenigbo, a university professor, speaks for the formation of an independent Igbo-state, Biafra, as the idea of a united Nigeria with its most diverse tribes and ethnicities, is nothing but an (European) illusion which has to be dismissed, now that independence has been achieved. His objection of a unified Nigeria can be explained by the 'postcolonial condition' or trauma that became visible after the country received its independence from Great Britain in 1960.

In the novel the socio-political situation of post-independent Nigeria (see also chapter 2) is a pressing issue. Interestingly, it is communicated on two levels: On a meta-level, Adichie uses the technique of including snippets of Richard's book-in-progress in her novel which provides background information about the history of Nigeria as well as critical comments about the socio-political situation. Drawing on the discussion about contextual knowledge in chapter 3, the decision whether to teach background knowledge or not, is more or less needless here, as the author herself decided on the importance of it, and provided the reader with little history lessons disguised as excerpts of Richard's book-in-progress. Certainly, the interweaving of background knowledge into the text is helpful to contextualise the novel and to make sense of the ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, however, Reichl (234) warns that teachers and students need to be cautious of how to judge such knowledge, even more so "if we are dealing with a novel whose background we know little […] about" (ibid.). Teachers need to be aware that, in this case, Adichie is the only source to rely on – "we must be aware that this is a limitation that makes us totally dependent on her account" (ibid.). Therefore, "[w]e must keep an open mind and try to find out more" (ibid.), or at least be ready to question and resist whenever necessary.

As to the second level, Adichie realises the hostility between different ethnic and religious groups on a story-level, as becomes evident in the way in which characters of different ethnic backgrounds interact. In the novel, the hate towards the Igbo community

reaches a feverish, almost holocaust proportion as the novel proceeds. In the beginning, people are forced to reveal their ethnic identity before being brutally slaughtered. Later on, they are massacred on the mere assumption about their Igbo identity without batting an eye. Whole villages are wiped out in this violent manner. The formation of Biafra seems to be the only logic consequence of the growing cruelty and inhumanity.

Against this complex background, Adichie places the character of Odenigbo, who belongs to the Igbo tribe. He is indeed most critical of concepts that strive for universalisms, such as a united Nigeria, or the idea of pan-Africanism (see also chapter 2), all of which are European constructions and ideologies that neglect tribal differences. The idea of a pan-African identity is a quite controversial topic in postcolonial criticism, as has been shown in chapter 2. As far as *Half of a Yellow Sun* is concerned, the debate between Odenigbo (here referred to as 'Master'), Prof. Ezeka, and Miss Adebayo mirror the intellectual discussion about this issue:

> 'We should have a bigger pan-African response to what is happening in the American South really – ' Professor Ezeka said.
> Master cut him short. 'You know, pan-Africanism is fundamentally a European notion.'
> 'You are digressing,' Professor Ezeka said, and shook his head in his usual superior manner.
> 'Maybe it *is* a European notion,' Miss Adebayo said, 'but in the bigger picture, we are all one race.'
> 'What bigger picture?' Master asked. 'The bigger picture of the white man! Can't you see that we are not all alike expect to white eyes?' […]
> 'Of course we are all alike, we all have white oppression in common,' Miss Adebayo said dryly. 'Pan-Africanism is simply the most sensible response.' (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 20)

The conflict between tribal, national, and a pan-African identity, and the related critique of Western universalism is also approached in Baingan's interrelated short stories "Lost in Los Angeles" and "Questions of Home", both of which are included in her collection *Tropical Fish*.

In "Lost in Los Angeles", the challenge of universalism is addressed in the way in which Christine experiences how the dominant Western discourse has constructed the non-Westerner as the (inferior) 'Other' and how these power-relations created the universal category of 'the African'. In addition to questions of identity, issues of centre-periphery relations, and questions of the subaltern become relevant, too.

Drawing on Gilroy, Barker (201) points out that the idea of a unifying black identity is difficult to hold as the histories of 'black' people in motion are quite divergent. "Blackness is not a pan-global absolute identity for the cultural identities of

black Britons, black Americans, and black Africans are different" (ibid.). The question of a global essential black identity is raised and challenged in "Lost in Los Angeles", in which Christine has to face the many problems of being a black female immigrant in the United States of America. To 'cure' her home-sickness, her cousin introduces Christine to her friends, who meet on a weekly basis to "play the game of going back home" (Baingana, "Los Angeles" 132). These parties, where they talk about home, debate about Uganda's political developments, eat home-made food, not the "fake food" (129) they use to eat in the States, and listen to Congolese music, are perfect opportunities where Christine and her newly gained friends – are these people who she has never met before really friends? – can "escape [their] American lives on the fringe and take centre stage again" (128):

> It's a relief from battling the alien world that envelops us the minute we step outside our doors. We cluster together and dance to break away from the self or non-self we have to be at work, among foreigners, in the white world (even though there are blacks there). It's a difficult act, a tiring one. So why not let the wails of *lingala*, well-known oldies played again and again – Franco, Papa Wemba, Kanda Bongoman – why not let them take us back to that safe, *known* place. Sure, we left it willingly, and it wasn't heaven. Now it seems like it was. (Baingana, "Los Angeles" 131f.)

Up to this point, Christine feels part of this black microcosm. Their being all strangers, black strangers, creates a bond between them; they feel connected. They share a common experience which turns them all into sisters and brothers – their blackness seems to be their union (see also Bulawayo 160ff. for a similar account of black unity).

Although, Gilroy argues against an essentialist global black identify, he points out that "[i]t may be that a common experience of powerlessness somehow transcending history and experienced in racial categories; in the antagonism between white and black […], is enough to secure affinity […]" (Gilroy, *No Black* 208). In the beginning, Christine, too, feels connected to this black community. However, soon she becomes tired of these meetings for hasn't she come to America for escaping home, for starting anew? Moreover, she increasingly feels uncomfortable to be so familiar with all these strangers – for her, being all black does not mean to be all family: "How can I, in fact, *why* should I feel one with them, or with any African, here?" (132).

Like Odenigbo in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Christine is wary of a universal African identity, too. In fact, she felt nothing like an African identity before she has actually moved outside Africa. The reason why Christine does not feel the strong bond that unites the blacks of the rest of the community is that her sense of self has not yet been

shaped to such an extent as it is the case with the others who have been living in L.A. for quite a while, who have internalised their identity as the Other. As 'the Other', 'the African', they cannot take centre stage in the U.S (or perhaps anywhere else in the West), which is why they escape into their 'let's-pretend-to-be-home-parties' once a week. Christine, on the other hand, does not feel African (yet?): "Perhaps I haven't been here long enough to feel African" (Baingana, "Los Angeles" 132). Although she does feel alien – "I feel like a fool, even though it's now so normal for me to be in the wrong place and to look wrong" (133) – she does not accept the 'African mark' – she refuses to being delegated to the margin for "[w]hat does it matter anyway?" (133); she wants to go out and experience life, "[t]o try and crack the new code" (132). And so she does. She goes to bars and ends up with a complete stranger in bed and visits a poetry slam where she gets to know two rather weird, yet friendly girls. There again, she encounters the notion of 'Africanness', the invisible spirit that seems to unite all blacks around the globe. One of the girls, Feather, a Native American, urges Christine to perform a poem herself, a poem about her people, an African poem for "Americans have no clue about Africa and native people in general […]" (141). Christine writes a poem; after all she has nothing to lose, really. However, it is not an African poem for she simply does not know what makes a poem an African poem: "What do I know about Africans, I only became one after I left […]" (142). This is indeed a crucial statement – Christine only became an African in the U.S., a consideration confirming scepticism of the existence of a universal black identity. Similar to Odenigbo in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Christine can only identify with her tribal identity: "I am a Munyakore, but who here knows what that is, or cares?" (ibid.). In America, black people are reduced to being just Africans (126). Here, they are all alike.

Feather, on the other hand, is sure that there must be a unifying bond between Christine and the rest of the population of Africa. Even, there might be a bond between Christine and herself, for aren't they both natives living in a white dominated world? "The constant refrain is her people, our people, native people, evil white people" (142). Feather is convinced that soon Christine will become conscious and start writing poems about her people – "Your people need a voice, you know" (143). Yet, Christine does not really understand why Feather is so concerned – she did not know that her people could not speak for themselves; neither does she think that she should be a spokesperson for them.

In this conversation resonates the postcolonial critique developed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In her very much discussed essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), Spivak acknowledges the "epistemic violence" (76) committed against the subalterns, the silencing that robbed indigenous people of their voice. The title of her essay is a rhetoric one – the subaltern cannot speak. Not because she is too passive or even too uneducated, but because she is deprived of space in which she could be heard. To conclude that her voice could be rehabilitated by any (intellectual) representative who could collectively speak for the subaltern, however, would be a severe mistake. Due to her Western education and privileged position, Spivak was often seen as a spokesperson for 'third world people' herself; however, she always fiercely rejected to be labelled as such. Indeed, Spivak is very critical of such 'quasi-liberatory strategies' and points out that they are oppressive themselves: To speak for the subaltern would be as imperial as the silencing itself. In fact, in speaking for the subaltern, "[…] the intellectual is complicit in the persistent constitution of Other as the Self's shadow" (75). Moreover, the question arises, who 'the' subaltern, 'the' other, actually is, for "the colonized subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogeneous" (79). To articulate the assumed voice of an assumed homogenous subaltern group does not only violate the diversity of the subaltern people, but double-silences them. Spivak admits that "[w]e should […] welcome all the information retrieval in these silenced areas that is taking place in anthropology, political science, history and sociology" (90), however, "the assumption and construction of a consciousness or subject sustains such work and will, in the long run, cohere with the work of imperialist subject-constitution, mingling epistemic violence with the advancement of learning and civilization. And the subaltern woman will be as mute as ever" (ibid.). After all, "[h]ow much did one know of the true feelings of those who did not have a voice?" (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 250).

What becomes clear from these considerations is that pan-global ideas are very much dependent on the context in which they are created – as for "Lost in Los Angeles", 'Africanness' is constructed and defined in and by a Western context. 'African' is something which you become or rather, which is ascribed to you. "In America, we are nothing but Africans: lumped together, generic, black" (126). Moreover, to be 'the African' only makes sense outside Africa which becomes clear when Christine returns to Uganda again. Here the 'we-are-all-brothers-and-sisters-game' is ridiculous, as she points out when slowly but surely getting angry about the reluctance of the receptionist at her new workplace: "she [the receptionist] was so

feminine and yet so hostile. Moreover to a 'sister', as was said back in the States, except that here the two of them were no sisters since everyone was black" ("Questions of Home" 156).

In a language learning situation, the critical investigation into universal constructions, such as 'the African', can sharpen a differentiated understanding of categorical (and often stereotypical) thinking patterns. Most likely, students would agree that Europeans are not all alike; they would agree that there are differences between people from the north and people from the south, may it be language-wise or related to any other cultural characteristics. However, in the discussion of African people (or more generally, 'black' people), Asian people, or South American people, one tends to generalise and totalise, and ignorantly lumps together a group of people, actually the population of a whole continent, all too readily.

The critique of Western universalism articulated in postcolonial literary texts can be the starting point to engage into a deeper discussion about the construction of race and identity, entailing the essential question of power: Who names a race? Who decides what Africanness, Europeanness is? And on what parameters are such definitions based?

5.2. Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is indeed one of the most central issues in postcolonial theory. As an umbrella term it touches upon questions of ethnicity, race and racism, the critique of the construction of 'the Other', issues of exoticism, and issues of hybridity, transculturality, interculturality, nationalism and tribalism, all of which are interrelated, dynamic, cultural concepts. Certainly, the question of cultural identity is relevant to all people around the globe, however, in a postcolonial context it is given an extra emphasis as cultural colonialism and imperialism left a deep wound in the sense of self of people, who have experienced oppression, alienation, and incapacitation. Against the background of the 'colonial experience', meaning the experience of "subjugation, mental terror and daily routines of self-mutilation" (Döring 66), the attempt to re-formulate, re-construct, and re-cover the oppressed self can be understood as a process of "self-mending" and "self-assertion" (ibid.). What Döring (65) terms 'life writing' in postcolonial literatures, is nothing other than the attempt to counter dominant discourses of 'the inferior other', and provide alternative perspectives instead.

Another dimension dealt with in postcolonial literature in terms of cultural identity is the complex, very often controversial, attitude towards traditional, indigenous identity. On the one hand, indigenous life was rearticulated, rehabilitated, even glorified as a sign of self-assertion, reassurance, and black national pride, all of which led to cultural nationalism and essentialism itself. On the other, indigenous tribal life was dismissed as being a sign of inferiority and backwardness, a symptom of the inferiority complex mentioned in chapter 2. The latter notion is realised in the characters of Babamukuru in Tsitsi Dangarembga's coming of age novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and Eugene in *Purple Hibiscus*, who both personify Frantz Fanon's black skin-white mask psychological syndrome. Both characters stick to colonial codes of behaviour and dismiss traditional village life. Having set up a clear hierarchical structure with the patriarch being the head of the family, each misbehaviour or departure from this neo-colonial framework is fiercely opposed. In this sense, Babamukuru and Eugene are paradigmatic for illustrating how, especially powerful people such as political leaders, often only "mimic[ked] the rapacious manners of their former colonial rulers" (Berndt 71). They wore white masks in order to hide their black inferior identity. This mimicry is also addressed in Bulawayo's novel when the post-independent Zimbabwean political situation turns out to be just a repetition of colonial terror; this time, however, it is black people who violate against their own country. This is indeed hard to process, especially when things should actually improve, for haven't they all fought for the same cause?

> They shouldn't have done this to us, no, they shouldn't have. Salilwelilizwe leli, we fought to liberate this country. Wasn't it like this before independence? Do you remember how the whites drove us from our land and put us in those wretched reserves? I was there, you were there, wasn't it just like this?
> No, those were evil white people who came to steal our land and make us paupers in our own country.
> What, but aren't you a pauper now? Aren't these black people evil for bulldozing your home and leaving you with nothing now?
> You are all wrong. Better a white thief do that to you than your own black brother. Better a wretched white thief.
> It's the same thing and it isn't. But what's the use, we are here now. Here in Paradise with nothing […]. (Bulawayo 75)

Concerning the tension between national and ethnic identity, interethnic turbulence and the neglect to accept a national identity is, as has been argued above, a pressing issue in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Odenigbo cannot identify as being Nigerian, an umbrella category which seems to force so many different people to assume a shared national identity:

> […] the only authentic identity for the African is the tribe,' Master said. 'I am Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am black because the white man constructed black to be as different as possible from his white. But I was Igbo before the white man came.' (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 20)

Ironically, Odenigbo is so fixated on the idea of tribal identity and the incommensurateness of the different ethnicities living in Nigeria that he cannot see that tribal identity is as much a European concept as national identity:

> Preofessor Ezeka snorted and shook his head, thin legs crossed. 'But you became aware that you were Igbo because of the white man. The pan-Igbo idea itself came only in the face of white domination. You must see that tribe as it is today is as colonial a product as nation and race.' Professor Ezeka recrossed his legs.
> 'The pan-Igbo idea existed long before the white man!' Master shouted. 'Go and ask the elders in your village about your history.' (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 20f.)

Schubert (7) identifies colonialism as a period typical of the invention of both, tradition and the tribe. More precisely, he argues that the tribe, as it is understood today, goes back to colonial times in which it was 'constructed' as a natural and closed entity based on biological descent. As a clearly identifiable and distinguishable unit it could be described in terms of traditions, religious practices, social mannerisms, and linguistic specificities. Most importantly, it was conceived of as a stagnating entity, quite in contrast to dynamic European societies (see Schubert 7). This understanding has, according to Schubert (10), deeply manifested in colonial and postcolonial people, so that ethnicity became not only a cultural or social, but also a political category.

Odenigbo's conviction that only tribal identity is true identity has lead to what has been termed tribalism, a new form of ethnocentrism that assumes ethnic and cultural differences as indissoluble. Bredella ("Zielsetzungen" 100f.) points to the dangers of this form of ethnocentrism and argues that to assume an essential self is dangerous as it can lead to intolerance and ignorance very easily, as can be observed in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, too (see, for instance, 109 or 152f.). Any attempt to blur the boundaries between tribal and national identity poses a real threat to Odenigbo. He insists on his difference. However, for more than 300 ethnic groups to co-exist peacefully in one and the same country, as far as democratic politics is concerned, political, economic, social, and cultural decisions must not be reached on the basis of tribal interests only. Rockefeller, too, warns against the priority of ethnic identity as it violates what he calls "a universal human nature" (88). Especially in multicultural societies it is important, according to Rockefeller, that people recognise themselves as being part of a common nature: "[…]

ethnic identity is not the foundation of recognition of equal value and the related idea of equal rights. All human beings are the bears of a universal human nature […]“ (ibid.).

In Bulawayo's novel *We Need New Names*, this 'transethnic' perspective is realised when Sbho starts feeling sorry for the white people who are so brutally thrown out of their house by the black rebels. When Bastard catches Sbho "sniffling" (120), he almost becomes angry and asks why she is crying for these white people. Sbho is furious about his intolerance and narrow-mindedness and snubs him, "They are people, you asshole!" (ibid.). In other words, Sbho points to the common, universal human nature that connects all people in this world, regardless their race, ethnicity, religion, social status, class, age, gender or sexual orientation. Regarding ethnic identity, Rockefeller further argues that "[t]o elevate ethnic identity, which is secondary, to a position equal in significance, or above a person's universal identity, is to weaken the foundations of liberalism and to open the door to intolerance (Rockefeller 88). As long as ethnic or racial differences are prior to a common human nature, a peaceful co-existence cannot be realised; instead, hate, intolerance, and violence will rule. Thus, for a multicultural society to be successful, it is important to perceive of ethnic, religious, cultural, etc. differences as relational, rather than ontological categories (see Bredella, "Zielsetzungen" 101). Foreign language learning entails (inter-) cultural learning, too, which has been pointed out in chapter 4, and which will become even more obvious in chapter 6. Through the engagement with different perspectives on cultural identity presented in postcolonial literary texts, students can learn to see the world through different eyes and experience what it means to be placed or forced into a certain category. Through this change in perspective, readers can be encouraged to reflect on their own understandings of cultural identity, and identify underlying thinking patterns which might lead to ascribing a certain group of people certain (stereotypical) traits. Again, reading in the sense of Delanoy's hermeneutical oriented, dialogic approach is always aimed at the expansion or transcendence of one's own limited understanding, a change in one's limited perception of the world (see chapter 3, 6). Thus, the engagement with postcolonial literary texts, which critically deal with different conceptions of identity are regarded as most valuable to disrupt essentialist cultural presuppositions that structure everyday judgements about the world.

The search for identity, which is all the more delicate against the background of colonialism in Africa, turns out to be an important act of self-determination, an act of

decolonising the mind. For a very long time, it was the colonial powers with their derogative and racist, so called scientific, descriptions who imposed an identity (or rather a non-identity) and determined who and what their colonised people were. After independence, they could decide themselves who they were, and this catapulted the postcolonial subject into troublesome questions. After a wave of essentialist descriptions of black identity (whether tribal, or pan-conceptual), another approach to identity served to counteract the hegemonial structures of the assignment of (colonial) identity. The binary system of master-slave or coloniser-colonised were disrupted by the opening of spaces in-between.

5.3. Hybridity

> "They will never be the same again because you just cannot be the same once you leave behind who and what you are, you just cannot be the same." (Bulawayo 146)

After having spent some time in England, Nyasha in *Nervous Conditions* feels detached when they come back home again. To Tambu, the narrator of the story, Nyasha just seems to be ignorant, almost bigheaded when she first meets her again after so many years. Also Tambu's mother is most suspicious of Nyasha's strange, distant and inappropriate behaviour. In fact, however, Nyasha just cannot handle her being thrown back into her 'old self' again. She is both, inside and outside her culture, which irritates her and makes her insecure. She is in a nervous condition, indeed. In an intimate conversation with her cousin, Nyasha reveals how difficult it was to suddenly find herself in a new environment when they left for England: "We had forgotten what home was like. I mean really forgotten – what it looked like, what it smelt like, all the things to do and say and not to do and say. It was all strange and new. Not like anything we were used to. It was a real shock!" (79). Then, when they returned to Zimbabwe, it was even harder, especially with their parents who seemed to slip back into their old lives so easily and naturally. What Nyasha's parents forgot, however, was that their children grew up in a different context – not only did they forgot how to speak their national language, they grew distant from 'Zimbabwean mannerisms', too. They could not just forget their lives in England and pretend that nothing had ever happened. Truly, they are stuck in an unhomely condition (see Bhabha (*Location of Culture* 9f.):

> 'We shouldn't have gone,' Nyasha was saying, looking disheartened. 'The parents ought to have packed us off home. They should have, you know. Lots of people did that. Maybe that would have been best. For them at least, because now they're stuck with hybrids for children. And they don't like it at all. It offends them. They think we do it on purpose, so it offends them. And I don't know what to do about it, Tambu, really I don't. I can't help having been there and grown into the me that has been there. But it offends them – I offend them. Really, it's very difficult. (Dangarembga 79)

Nyasha is an ambivalent, nervous in-between. Neither does she feel Zimbabwean, nor British. This nervous in-betweenness gives her a hard time, especially due to her social context – nobody can accept her 'strange' behaviour. Her father, for instance, points out that "[…] there's something wrong with her, something very wrong. A good child doesn't behave like that […]" (Dangarembga 85). Her parents talk of Nyasha as if she had an infectious disease, which will hopefully just vanish if they only keep reminding her of the African ways: "We keep trying to teach her the right manners" (74). The 'disease', Nyasha is suffering from is Anglicisation (see 74, 207). Maiguru, Nyasha's mother, explains Nyasha's situation to Tambu and comforts her that soon she will be normal again. In the end, however, Nyasha cannot stand the pressure to re-integrate (re-assimilate?) to African behaviour anymore and develops the most nervous condition, a severe eating disorder.

It becomes clear that in *Nervous Conditions*, the concept of hybridity is displayed to destabilise binary discourses. Yet, it also points to the difficulties to accept one's hybrid or syncretic identity, especially when the concept of culture and cultural identity is perceived of as stable, fixed, ontological category[34]. The way in which culture and cultural identity is dealt with by the characters hints at an essentialism that hinders Nyasha to live and fully embrace her hybrid self. Yet, there are instances which focus on the positive sides of her hybrid identity. The exposure to another cultural environment as well as the learning of another language has gained her – after all – a broader perspective on life. Instead of feeling superior because of her Western education and instead of despising indigenous culture, she uses her (inter-) cultural knowledge to better understand the social, cultural and political dynamics in her environment. Her critical stance towards issues of race and feminism, for instance, challenge binary oppositions and problematises boundaries; in fact, her critical mind

[34] Tambu, for instance, inherits an ontological understanding of race and ethnicity which becomes evident in the way in which she wonders how the white kids at the mission school would ever be able to re-integrate, when they would go back home again, "how they would manage when they went back home and had to stop behaving like Africans" (106).

constantly “hint[s] at shades and textures within the same colour” (Dangarembga 167), a quality that is inaccessible to Tambu.

Although Breitinger and Thielmann (127) analyse the novel as an example of a transcultural perspective, I would rather argue that the novel is a good example to explore the concept of hybrid identity. Even though there are traces of transcultural perspectives, in particular in connection with feminism and the critique of the binary construction of gender (see below), Nyasha fails to really develop a transcultural identity. Rather, she is stuck between two cultures, whose clearly defined boundaries seem to be shut forever. In fact, Nyasha is what Stina in *We Need New Names* says about people who return to their home country: “[…] leaving you country is like dying, and when you come back your are like a lost ghost returning to earth, roaming around with a missing gaze in your eyes” (Bulawayo 160).

A more positive approach to hybrid identity is displayed in Baingana’s short story “Questions of Home”, in which Christine returns to Uganda after having spent eight years in Los Angeles. Christine is looking forward to coming back home, after all home remains home – a feeling which has stuck to her during all these years abroad. However, soon she has to realise that her sense of home has rather turned into a romanticised, idealised picture during her time in the States. The airport of Entebbe, for instance, which she has envisioned as huge, modern, and impressive, reveals itself almost as “an abandoned barn” (Baingana, “Questions of Home” 147) – her memories seem to have betrayed her. Also, her expectations to simply slip back into her ‘old’ life do not really come true – actually she is far from ‘being her old self’ again. She feels detached, alienated: “She felt like a cardboard copy of herself” (148). This feeling of detachment makes her nervous, she is distressed because of her new hybrid identity which she only became aware of after having returned to Uganda again: “Was she only going to experience expatriate clichés? This was home, she wasn’t here to make comparisons at every turn. All she wanted was for her memories to become solid again, to become real physical things” (147). However, her memories do not fit reality anymore – Uganda has moved on and so has she. When she drives past Lake Victoria, she feels relieved that at least the lake remained the same: “How calming. Physical things remained the same, or at least it seemed so. The lake was Entebbe, its waves would always slap against its shores, whether she could hear them or not” (151).

Christine cannot slip back into her old self again, for her ‘self’ has changed and there is no way to deny this new part of her identity. Similar to Nyasha in *Nervous*

Conditions, she sometimes feels caught between two worlds, belonging to neither of them. This in-betweenness, certainly, is hard to make sense of: "There was a lot to untangle, to make sense of, including why on earth she was so troubled. She was home, right? She felt as if she had to make some sort of decision, but about what?" (168). Constantly, she is reminded of her hybrid identity, her strangeness, by the way in which way in which people react to her. Her English, for example, has pretty much adapted to an American accent. In the States nobody could understand her British accent "I speak English, everyone speaks English, but it's not the English I know" (Baingana, "Los Angeles" 123). First, she refused to take on the American accent: "Like a good colonial subject, I like to think I have a British accent, the proper one" (124). However, the longer she had been in the States the more naturally this strange English became. Back home, however, her American accent seems to be inappropriate, almost ridiculous: "Now back here, at the airport, for example, she had slipped into her American accent, then stopped talking abruptly, mid-sentence, feeling foolish. Maama and Patti laughed, but the baggage clerk gave her a disparaging look, as if to say, you poor lost wanna-be-*mzungu*" (Baingana, "Questions of Home" 156). The term mzungu is used to refer to white people – labelling Christine a wanna-be-white, already indicates how she is perceived by other people. Now she seems to have lost part of what she could not see having in the United States: her Africanness. Her new chef, Musozi, is convinced that she will "settle in soon" (167) again, she has just been far too long in the States that is all. But was it really as simple as that, or would she have to accept her new self: "Was it just a matter of time before she would cave in, settle down, become herself again, as Musozi would call it? Whatever that self was. Her American voice, disgusted, silently replied, *whatever*" (167). Everything has grown so distant from her. When it comes to work, for instance, she cannot keep up with, in fact, the calmness with which things are done here. The lethargy at work is unnerving; it seems to suffocate her ambition and enthusiasm which she learned to display in the States. At work she is really eager and ambitious but this seems to impress nobody, after all, the director's mother has died very recently and this is surely not the time to just go back to normal.

During an evening stroll, Christine realises that things will never stay the same. In order to come to terms with her (inter-) cultural, hybrid identity, she will have to accept that she has moved beyond her old self. There is no decision to be made between her 'old self' and her 'American self' for she is both (and most likely even more). The metaphor of the sunset underlines Christine's scattered identity. It visualises her in-

betweenness and the transformative, even performative nature of the self as an ever-changing process. Just like the sky turns indigo at dawn, and day smoothly merges into night, her cultural boundaries will have to blur too:

> An ever-changing in-between. Christine could accept this fluidity as she now accepted the night creeping up over her, this blanket of warm dusk. And not just because it was inevitable, but because it was different every night: a performance, an adventure. She would have to learn all over again how to live in this new old place called home. The sky was now completely black. And somewhere far away, right now, it was dawn. (177)

It becomes clear that the acceptance of one's hybrid identity is a painful process – it does not just happen without anybody taking notice. People start talking about one's weird behaviour and question one's personality. Only if one learns to accept that boundaries are flexible, that borders can be blurred, just as Christine realised during she was watching the blurring of day and night, will one accept the new manifoldness and see the beauty of an identity which transgresses cultural boundaries. Rather than floating between the attic and the cellar, the staircase now seems to be everywhere. Boundaries are blurred, and one cannot tell anymore where 'one' cultural identity begins and where the others end.

Another example of (inter-) cultural identity is Richard in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. His 'case' is exemplary to see how cultural identity is fluid and flexible and not a fixed property inscribed in one's genetic code – cultural identity here is not judged along the colour-line, either. When Richard moves to Nigeria, he immediately falls in love with the country and its people. Soon he grows distant from the white people in Nigeria and becomes annoyed by their superior, racist mannerisms (see, for instance, 53). When Richard eventually meets Kainene, everything is about to change. He falls in love with her and finally feels more and more Nigerian at heart, too. His Nigerian identity, however, is not accepted immediately – his love affair with Kainene is labelled as a new slavery (see 80f.) –, and often he is mistaken for being racist when, in fact, he just wants to express his appreciation for the indigenous culture:

> 'I've been utterly fascinated by the bronzes since I first read about them. The details are stunning. It's quite incredible that these people had perfected the complicated art of lost-wax casting during the time of the Viking raids. There is such marvellous complexity in the bronzes, just marvellous.'
> 'You sound surprised,' Okeoma said.
> 'What?'
> 'You sound surprised, as if you never imagined *these people* capable of such things.'
> Richard stared at Okeoma; there was a new and quiet disdain in the way Okeoma stared back […]. (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 111)

Richard feels sad and angry at once that he has been treated in such a stereotypical way – as if all white men were colonialists, as if the 'burden' would never end (see 112). Richard's situation shows that it is, in fact, not so easy to acclaim a transcultural position. Things are really more complicated; it is all well and fine to call for the transcendence of ethnic and racial boundaries, to embrace a unifying humanity; however, in reality, things are more complex and questions of tribal, ethnic, racial, or more generally, cultural identity are deep-seated concerns[35]. Yet, Richard's sense of self changes – when he looks at his reflection in the glassdoor he realises his changed self: "He had a tan and his hair looked fuller, slightly tousled, and he thought of Rimbaud's words: *I is someone else*" (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 307). Richard's changed sense of self is most impressively reflected, when he meets the Western journalists and informs them of what is happening in 'his' country. The use of pronouns is crucial here, as they mark cultural identity. One of the journalists wonders about Richard's commitment and notes: "You keep saying *we*". Richard's only response is, "Yes, I keep saying *we*" (372).

As has already been argued, the investigation into concepts of cultural identity presented in postcolonial literary texts constitutes a vital starting point for students to explore their own understandings of their identity and cultural environment. Certainly, against the background of forceful displacement and other reasons for social movement, hybridity is given a special touch in the context of postcolonial discourses; nonetheless, it plays a considerable role in many lives, and there might well sit students with similar experiences in one's own classroom, too. And even if there are students who consider their cultural identity in the narrowest sense possible, they might be astonished to discover different, hidden facets of their cultural self, when deeply engaging with different concepts of identity and life. The myth of an unspoiled, whole, or coherent identity is deeply engraved in some people's conception of life, which very often turns out to be breeding grounds for ethnocentric worldviews. Again, it is the aim of the development of a postcolonial reading strategy to discover any such essentialist and ethnocentric understandings of identity and the self, in order to reach towards a conception of life that appreciates and embraces diversity. The limitedness of such a narrow conception of identity cannot be denied and people might be surprised how their perception explodes when appreciating the multiplicity of cultural identities.

---

[35] See, for instance, Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (1996).

5.4. Ethnicity, Race and Racism

> "Sin is black as virtue is white. […] I am guilty. I don't know what of, but I know I'm a wretch." (Fanon 118)

What becomes clear form Odenigbo's remark about authentic identity (being Igbo) and constructed identity (being black, being Nigerian), is the constructedness of race: Race is "a social construction and not a universal or essential category of biology or culture" (Barker 193). However, the meaning of race as a social and cultural construction is contested, "it is a struggle that determines which definitions of 'race' will prevail" (Gilroy, *No Black* 38). "Anti-essentialist arguments suggest that social categories do not reflect an essential underlying identity, but are constituted in and through forms of representation. "[…] Representation involves questions of inclusion and exclusion and as such is always implicated in questions of power" (Barker 208). In a postcolonial context, this power struggle is particularly prevalent, as the physical, intellectual, and moral superiority of one race – the white race – over another, justified slavery, exploitation, and "the need for patriarchal imperialism" (Childs and Williams 191). Criticism of Western ethnocentrism becomes evident, when Odenigbo and his university colleagues in *Half of a Yellow Sun* are discussing European philosophers such as Hegel, Hume, and Locke (see *Yellow Sun* 50). Another example of white superiority is when Richard encounters a group of highly racist, ex-colonial administrators, who 'teach' him about the Africans: "There were jokes to illustrate each African trait. The uppity African stood out in Richard's mind: An African was walking a dog and an Englishman asked, 'What are you doing with that monkey?' and the African answered, 'It's a dog, not a monkey' – as if the Englishman had been talking to him!" (ibid., 54).

Racism and white supremacy is also addressed when Richard meets the Western journalists (see 317, 370, 371, 374). When one journalist interrogates Richard about an Italian oil worker who was shot by Biafran soldiers, the absurdity becomes apparent with which the Nigerian civil war is approached in the West[36]:

> It was like somebody sprinkling pepper on his wound: Thousands of Biafrans were dead, and this man wanted to know if there was anything new about one

[36] There is indeed ongoing subtle critique of the way in which the world more or less watched the Nigeria-Biafra war, most evident in Richard's (later Ugwu's) book title *The World Was Silent When We Died* (see also 295, 305, 374)

> dead white man. Richard would write about this, the rule of Western journalism: One hundred dead black people equal one dead white person. (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 369).

In *Nervous Conditions,* the issue of race is addressed on a rather different level. Here, it is Tambudzai, the narrator of the story, who approaches the meaning of her black race. Soon it becomes clear, that Tambu struggles with her black identity, an identity which is constructed (has been constructed) in contrast to white superiority, all of which becomes evident in the way in which she thinks about white people. Several times it is mentioned how being black is a burden (16), how black girls are less beautiful (106), how the black race is actually indebted to the white race. Not only does Tambu think that the missionaries were somehow a holy sort of people, also the expatriates should be honoured: "[…] they are deified in the same way as the missionaries were because they are white so that their coming is still an honour" (Dangarembga 105). Tambu cannot really understand why these white people gave up "the comforts and security of their more advanced homes" (ibid.). It does not really make sense for her, which is why she concludes that the only reason why someone wants to leave his/her cosy home, is because of some sort of selfless sacrifice: "Which brings us back to matters of brotherly love, contribution and lightening of diverse darknesses" (ibid). The latter, perfectly ties in with what served colonialism as the moral basis – the 'civilising mission':

> The Whites on the mission were a special kind of white person, special in the way that my grandmother had explained to me, for they were holy. They had come not to take but to give. They were about God's business here in darkest Africa. They had given up the comforts and securities of their own homes to come and lighten our darkness. It was a big sacrifice that the missionaries made. (Dangarembga 105)

The play of words such as the juxtapositions of "lighten our darkness", or the symbolic use of black and white to point to their racist meanings (white=holy, divine, good; black=devilish, evil) hints to the underlying myth of white supremacy which legitimised the colonial and imperial endeavour. Fanon also pointed at the prejudicial use of 'black' to symbolise all evil: "In Europe, evil is symbolized by the black man […] The perpetrator is the black man; Satan is black; one talks of darkness; when you are filthy you are dirty – and this goes for physical dirt as well as moral dirt" (165). He goes on in listing several examples of how 'black' is used to symbolically refer to "the dark side of the personality" (166) to make visible the deep psychological structures behind European colonialism. Fanon concludes:

> Deep down in the European unconscious has been hollowed out an excessively black pit where the most immoral instincts and unmentionable desires slumber.

> And since every man aspires to whiteness and light, the European has attempted to repudiate this primitive personality, which does its best to defend itself. When European civilization came into contact with the black world, with these savages, everyone was in agreement that these black people were the essence of evil. (Fanon 167)

In this context, language teachers might want to point to the way in which cultural presuppositions are communicated through language. It has been argued that the relationship between culture and language is more complex than initially assumed, that they inform and influence, but do not determine each other (see chapter 4). However, language conveys the norms and values of a culture, and language learners should be sensitised to the way in which language and culture 'work'. This is exactly what Claire Kramsch meant when she introduced the concept of "symbolic competence" ("Symbolic Competence" 251): For the (inter-) cultural speaker it is not just important to be able to successfully communicate with someone of a different cultural background, it requires the (inter-) cultural speaker to be able to understand the symbolic dimension and function of culture, too. In short, a postcolonial reading strategy as well as the adoption of a critical stance towards the text as discussed in chapter 3, becomes particularly important, when it comes to the detection and challenge of ideological inscriptions in language (see also Delanoy, *FLU* 105).

In the face of the assumed natural inferiority of the African, the project of the reformation of the natives' minds referred to in chapter 2, was to assign "the mark of the negative to everything African and the positive to everything European" (Olaniyan 273) in order to materialise and naturalise black inferiority. Ashcroft, Griffits, and Tiffin go as far as arguing that the domination of one culture over another does not only suppress other forms of being, but goes hand in hand with the "annihilation of forms of 'Other'" (97). In other words, colonialism closed "off alternative tropes and modes" (97). "A feeling of inferiority? No, a feeling of not existing." (Fanon 118). The extent to which this colonial racism engrained into the psyche of the (post-) colonial subject becomes evident when Tambu addresses the danger of sin: "It had to be avoided because it was deadly. I could see it. It was definitely black, we were taught" (Dangarembga 152). "In the collective unconscious of *Homo occidentalis* the black man – or, if you prefer, the color black – symbolizes evil, sin, wretchedness, death, war, and famine. Every bird of prey is black" (Fanon 167).

As has been pointed out earlier, race is a relational category, not an ontological one. Race comes with negotiation and not with you genes. This idea is taken up in the

coming-of-age novel *We need new Names* by NoViolet Bulawayo. In the book, Darling and her friends witness how rebels wade through the streets with their machetes, guns, and "flags of the country in the air" (Bulawayo 111), all like "angry black water" (ibid.) with only one destination in mind: looking for white people. The story is set in Mugabe's Zimbabwe, a time of change, a time which is meant to bring back black power, for "[…] from now on the black man is done listening […]" (118), it is a time for the "bloody colonists" (ibid.) to pack their things and bagger off. "This is a black-man country and the black man is in charge now. Africa for Africans" (ibid.). When the rebels storm a white family's house, a discussion develops about the meaning of race, in particular 'black' race. The white man is taken aback by the brutality and vigour of the rebels and becomes even furious for he has been living in this country all of his life: "I am an African, he says. This is my fucking country too, my father was born here, I was born here, just like you!" (119). The children watch the situation from above a guava tree. All this is very confusing for them. The angry black soldiers calling for black power on the one hand, and this white man claiming to be African, on the other. Eventually, one of the children, Godknows, asks the decisive question, "What exactly is an African?" (ibid.)

It is these instances of subversive and overt criticism of the dominant (Western) discourse of knowledge as well as the offering of alternative perspectives that make postcolonial literature so valuable for the development of respect and tolerance, and the appreciation of diversity. These critical passages clearly constitute challenges of the very ontological basis of European thinking patterns, all above binary oppositions, such as good versus bad, white versus black, superior versus inferior, etc. It almost constitutes a philosophical inquiry about truth, knowledge, and power that broadens the readers' minds and makes them aware of the dynamics of ideological and cultural imperialism that was at stake during colonialism and which is still discussed within the discourse of neo-colonialism and globalisation.

5.5. The Question of Place

> "Some things happen only in my country, and this here is not my country; I don't know whose it is." (Bulawayo 147)

Closely related to questions of (postcolonial) identity is the question of place and home, especially against the background of diasporic movements, which forcefully, and often violently, dis-rooted people from their very sense of self. Homi Bhabha used the telling expression "unhomeliness" to account for the psychological feeling of displacement (see *Location of Culture* 9f.). Tshaka Zulu in *We Need New Names*, for instance, lives such an unhomely life (see 237-250). The free verse poem "How they left" in Bulawayo's novel (see also chapter 2) also deals with the diasporic movement and addresses the experienced dis-placement and loss of identity, as well as the unhomely feeling people share when leaving their homes: "[…] they will have to sit on one buttock because they must not sit comfortable lest they be asked to rise and leave […]" (146).

The issue of home is also raised in Baingana's short story collection *Tropical Fish: Tales from Entebbe*, realised in the character of Christine, who reflects on the meaning of home when she returns to Uganda after having spent several years in the United States. When she was in the States, she thought she knew what 'home' was but now that she is back in Uganda again, the painful question of home comes up again and again – "Where was home, then really?" ("Questions of Home" 171). Her diasporic journey initiates a process of self-reflection in which her understanding of home changes quite dramatically (see also Boswell 141f.).

In Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, Darling thinks about the sense of home, too, when she migrates to the States to live with her aunt. She feels estranged, especially when she is being bullied by her classmates so that "[…] in the end I just felt wrong in my skin, in my body, in my clothes, in my language, in my head, everything" (165). However, she learns to deal with this new cultural environment, with the excess of food, for example, which is a central theme in the novel (see, for instance, 129 and 268). Ultimately, she comes to the conclusion that there are, in fact, many homes, even if one has never left his/her country. 'Home' is not so much a question of place as of a deep inner feeling (see 191f.). Certainly, the meaning of 'home' changes within the postcolonial context and becomes a complex, contradictory concept: "At times home is

nowhere. At times one knows only extreme estrangement and alienation. Then home is no longer just one place. It is locations" (hooks qtd. in Boswell 141).

Is there a need in EFL/ESL teaching and learning to talk about the notion of home or place? I would argue that there definitely is, as in times of globalisation and worldwide migration, the question of home becomes significant for several reasons: One student or another will have a migration background him-/herself. Others might know some mates, friends, or relatives who experienced social movement. Yet, another group of students might hold rather negative attitudes towards people who moved to 'their' country for whatever reasons, all of which makes it important to discuss the question of home in a critical way to reach towards a differentiated understanding of place and displacement. It must not be forgotten that behind each migrant, there is a personal, very often fateful story which needs to be heard. In the discussion about migration, we tend to forget or blank out this personal aspect; we complain about the masses of foreigners that seem to invade 'our' country without asking who these people are and why they left their homes. Postcolonial stories deeply engage with personal fates and address the many probes of social movement, which makes readers accessible a perspective, from which to look at the issue of migration with different eyes.

5.6. Language

> "[…] English is like a huge iron door and you are always losing the keys." (Bulawayo 197)

It has already been argued that the relationship between culture, language, and (cultural) identity is most complex, especially in (African) postcolonial writings. As the language of the former colonisers, English has certainly a special, yet controversial role and the decision which language to use – whether to stick with the indigenous language or to use the official language – has often turned out to function as a demarcation line (see also chapters 2 and 4).

In many African postcolonial literary texts, the English language is associated with education. As such, it indicates an elevation of one's status, both socially, and very often morally, too. This idea ties in with what will be discussed below, namely the related Western idea of progress. In short, speaking English, rather than one's native language, symbolises that one has intellectually transcended bush life. Ugwu in *Half of the Yellow Sun*, for instance, is even slightly offended when Olanna addresses him in his

native language: “He always responded in English to her Igbo, as if he saw her speaking Igbo to him as an insult that he had to defend himself against by insistently speaking English” (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 47). At times when she actually does talk to him in English, the relationship between them seems to be changed – when she addresses him in English, which she hardly does, it sounds “cold, distancing” (241).

In *Tropical Fish*, the issue of language and cultural identity is addressed in a similar way, when Peter’s houseboy, Deogracias, addresses Christine and her friends in their native language. Christine feels offended by this seemingly rude behaviour: “Deo spoke to us in Luganda, but not to Peter, of course. As if we were at his houseboy level” (Baingana, “Tropical Fish” 102). Clearly, the use of English is associated with education, progress, and higher status. Being addressed in one’s native language goes hand in hand with a devaluation of one’s social identity.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, the language issue is carried to the extremes. Language is embedded in a discourse of power for which language itself becomes a sign. In fact, it is as simple as that: English is the language of the civilised (see *Purple Hibiscus* 13), whereas their native language, Igbo, is a sign of backwardness and powerlessness. Eugene’s preference of the English language, the language of the powerful, is directly connected to his hostility towards traditional culture. The only time, Eugene uses his native tongue is when he becomes angry or emotional, a bad sign indeed, given his violent character.

The complex relationship between cultural identity and language can also be explored in Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*. Nyasha, who has spent some time in England, is perceived of as a stranger by her extended family for her ‘English ways’. Her distant and inadequate behaviour immediately excludes her from the rest of the clan. What is worst about Nyasha, however, is that she seems to have forgotten most of her native language – a real betrayal to the family and their culture. For the clan, the fact that she does not speak Shona after their return from England, is a clear sign of the loss of her indigenous identity. Also Tambu’s brother Nhamo, who has been selected to go to mission school, has changed in many ways. The most terrible change for Tambu, however, is that he has forgotten to speak Shona, too. Again, a threat of losing part of one’s cultural, ethnic or tribal identity. However, it turns out that her brother uses language on purpose – he can easily switch between English and Shona whenever he pleases to do so (see 53). Yet, the problem is that his father is particularly proud of his son and the fact that he increasingly uses the English language instead of their native

tongue, for it symbolises a true sign of progress. The message is straightforward: English is the language of the educated, whereas Shona is the language of the bush people – the English language here becomes a symbol of Western civil progress and the devaluation of indigenous culture and knowledge. Also, when Tambu moves to Babamukuru's to be educated, the nervous condition is reflected in the use of language: Tambu does not know in which language to respond, she does not know which language is the right one, the appropriate one, which is why she starts mixing them up (see 81). Her mixing up English and Shona can be a sign of her nervousness, her insecurity (or in fact the nervousness of a whole postcolonial society); however, it may also hint to the disrupting of English as the dominant, colonial language.

In "Questions of Home", Christine comes to realises that it does not really matter what kind of english someone speaks – not even the Englishmen themselves have one proper way to speak their own language. And anyway, English has become "no one's and everyone's now" ("Questions of Home" 171). In this short story, the English language is being de-centred; it is un-privileged of its status.

In chapter 2, it has been demonstrated how the English language has been appropriated in postcolonial literary texts to become something entirely new, to convey a sense of distinctiveness and a sense of cultural identity all at the same time. Together with the way in which the English language is dealt with on a content level, postcolonial literature has decisively contributed to the de-centring and un-privileging of the language of the former coloniser that threatened to impose a value system, a worldview that was meant to reform the natives' minds and destroy the indigenous sense of self.

In the context of postcolonial discourses the appropriation of the English language goes hand in hand with the claim of a language that is not one's own but eventually becomes part of the self. To put it very cautiously, the situation in foreign language learning is somehow similar, as students gradually adopt a language that is not their own. It is believed that it is their right to claim it – languages do not belong to anyone, or to put it differently, anyone can be a user of a language. Learning a foreign language does not automatically lead to the adoption of the 'foreign' mindset, as has been argued several times. On the contrary, the language user decides him-/herself how much of a culture in which a foreign language is certainly imbedded, he or she wants to acquire too. Regarding the tension between indigenous language and the English language discussed in postcolonial literary texts, students can relate the conflict to the relationship between regional and standard variations of a language. Another, even more delicate

issue, is the status of minority groups and their languages in Europe, and the power struggle involved in the question of whether these language should be or have to be acknowledged and how far such an acknowledgment should reach.

5.7. Decolonisation, Emancipation, and Education

> "Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world […]."
> (Mandela, "Lighting your Way")

The only way to decolonise, to emancipate from Western dominance and exploitation is, according to Odenigbo *in Half of a Yellow Sun*, education. When Odenigbo learns that his houseboy Ugwu did not continue school he is outraged that his father did not borrow in order to afford the school fees (see Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 11). Even during the war, education remains an important theme. For instance, when Akwakuma Primary School is turned into a refugee camp, Olanna, Odenigbo's wife, starts organising classes in the yard of their house. "We will teach mathematics, English, and civics every day […]. We have to make sure that when the war is over, they will all fit back easily into regular school" (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 291). Later in the novel, Umuahia is bombed and the family has to flee again. They leave for Urlu, where Olanna's sister Kainene runs a refugee camp. There, Olanna starts teaching despite the growing desperation of their struggle (see 389). Education and the engagement with different worldviews is the key to success; knowledge is the tool to being able to actively participate in this world: "The real tragedy of our postcolonial world is not that the majority of people had no say in whether or not they wanted this new world; rather, it is that the majority have not been given the tools to *negotiate* this new world" (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 101). In other words, although independence has been achieved, most people, especially those who were deprived of educational opportunities, are still captured in a mind-set that had slowly but surely been implemented from the very beginning of colonialism. Obviously, the colonial rulers were not interested in providing education all over the country – only an uneducated population will keep still and accept power and domination (see also Schubert 9). Education, then, is the only way to break free from the (neo-) colonial condition that holds people in dependency: "Education is a priority! How can we resist exploitation if we don't have the tools to understand exploitation?" (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 11).

In Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel *Nervous Conditions* education is one of the central themes, too. Education is regarded a tool to break free from dependencies that keep people bound in pre-determined places, to emancipate, to prosper, to develop. Without education nothing will ever change. For Babamukuru, for instance, it is important that at least one child of each family has the chance to be educated (Dangarembga 44) – for quite practical reasons though. As only a sound education will guarantee a well-paid job, the family is well advised to enable a school career for one of their children. "These children who can go to school today are the ones whose families will prosper tomorrow" (ibid., 45). Tambudzai, on the other hand, wants to go to school for quite personal reasons: For her, education is the only way to escape a life that tradition has laid out for her long before. She is dying to be educated, and in the end it is her eagerness and dedication that opens up new horizons and possibilities for her. Neither her father's scornfulness, nor her mother's scepticism, nor their pervasive message that girls ought to be nothing but good wives, could have stopped Tambu from reaching her goals and dreams. The most significant message of the book is probably the passage when Tambudzai realises "[…] that circumstances were not immutable, no burden so binding that it could not be dropped" (ibid., 58). If you try hard enough, if you are passionate about your goals, there is no burden too heavy, no situation too complicated, no condition too nervous, to prevent you from realising your dreams.

School education, however, is only one thing along the way; what must really be learned in order to emancipate, to rise above one's circumstances, is to see through the trees. It is beyond doubt that education systems mirror the broader social and political circumstances, which is also addressed in postcolonial fiction: "[…] students buy grades with money or their bodies" (Adichie, "Ghosts" 68). However, the realisation of this situation as well as the willingness to go beyond school career, to negotiate and discuss alternative readings of the world, will ultimately lead to the development of critical subjects that can make a difference:

> There are two answers to the things they will teach you about our land: the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass. You must read books and learn both answers. I will give you books, excellent books. […] They will teach you that a white man called Mungo Park discovered River Niger. That is rubbish. Our people fished in the Niger long before Mungo Park's grandfather was born. But in your exam, write that it was Mungo Park. (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 11)

Apart from the importance of education, this passage also shows how school education was misused to establish Western knowledge, power, and legitimacy in times of

colonialism and probably well beyond, and how it systematically devalued indigenous culture. It shows how the educational system "continued to bear the stamp of European colonialism" (Hickling-Hudson 212), how indigenous knowledge continued to be excluded, and how "this kind of racialised neo-colonial discourse" (ibid., 210) continued to neglect indigenous agency (see also chapter 7).

5.8. The Critique of the Intolerance towards Indigenous Life and Faith

Another important theme in *Purple Hibiscus* is the conflict between traditional, tribal life and modernity, as well as the clash of traditional religion and Christianity. While Eugene is fiercely against any other system of faith than Christianity, Aunty Ifeoma as well as Father Amadi, an indigenous catholic priest, are more moderate and take the positive things of each religion and way of life to enrich their own faith and lives. For Jaja and Kambili this mixture of 'modern' and traditional lifestyles is indeed problematic. For instance, when they learn that singing Igbo-songs and praying in their native language in service is self-evident for Father Amadi, they are alarmed and scared to join in – their father would somehow find out and punish them for having participated in heathen worship. Moreover, this practice of blasphemy is absolutely frowned upon by their white priest Father Benedict at home in Enugu, who leads his masses in Latin and English exclusively.

Eugene's intolerance of other religious denominations has in fact become so extreme that he broke with his own father, Papa-Nnuwku, who lives a traditional village life. The sadness of this standoff situation becomes even more evident when Papa-Nnuwku becomes seriously ill. While Aunty Ifeoma asks God "to stretch a healing hand over him" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 150) and lets him live with her to better take care of him, Eugene cannot brush aside his hate and prejudices against people who hold alternative perspectives: "When Papa prayed for Papa-Nnuwku, he asked only that God convert him and save him from the raging fires of hell" (ibid.).

Eugene's negative, even hostile attitude towards traditional tribal life and indigenous faith can be discussed and analysed in a wider context of tolerance, freedom of faith, respect, and in most general terms humanity. Eugene's extreme position that makes no exception, even when his father dies, can function to demonstrate the importance of openness towards and acceptance of alternative ways of being. It constitutes a good starting point to discuss both the danger of fanatic positions in religion (Eugene) as well as the beauty of a life enriched by faith (Aunty Ifeoma), and

the more general question of how far religion should in fact influence human life, a very controversial and delicate topic indeed[37]. As far as the character of the father is concerned, the fierce rejection of traditional life and faith has turned him into an extreme advocate of everything that brings him closer to Western civilisation. His conviction forbids him to socialise with anybody not of his religion: Primarily, this affects the relationship with his father, but to some extent the bond with his sister too, who he feels sorry for, for leading such a lavish life. Papa-Nnuwku, a very wise and thoughtful character, is visibly disappointed in his son's disrespectful behaviour. For him there is only one possible explanation for his son's hate and scornfulness: The influence and education of the missionaries who taught their children Western norms and values and learned them to despise village life, a reoccurring theme in postcolonial literature. According to Papa-Nnuwku, it is the missionaries who have misled his son (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 84), who invalidated the traditional set of orders and introduced Western parameters instead.

The intolerance towards indigenous life and worship is embedded in the discourse of ethnocentrism and eurocentrism, the assumption or cultural bias that one culture (here the Western culture) is superior to another one. As foreign language teachers, it is our duty, as I would say, to educate our students to become culturally sensitive, tolerant, and open-minded individuals who appreciate the manifoldness of human life and take diversity as a chance rather than a threat. Postcolonial literature engages with issues of ethnocentrism and makes visible the (psychological) damage a culture of white superiority has caused.

5.9. The Critique of the Western Idea of Progress

> […] the more I saw of worlds beyond the homestead the more I was convinced that the further we left the old ways behind the closer we came to progress." (Dangarembga 150)

Eugene in *Purple Hibiscus* has not only internalised Western Christian norms and values, but also the Western idea of civil progress. Strength of purpose, hard labour, and the right religion have earned him wealth, prestige, and reputation, and it is no wonder

[37] Certainly, English classes cannot cover such a demanding issue in full detail. Language teachers should therefore embrace the possibility of cross-curricular teaching and work collaboratively with colleagues teaching the relevant subjects.

that his father and the rest of the village people have nothing on their plates. Against this background he cannot but disdain this 'infantile' and backward way of life his father is living. For Eugene, the European way of living and thinking is the only (morally) right way of being; the Western idea of progress and civilisation has been internalised to such an extent that indigenous ways of being appear backwards, primitive, bush-league. Again, it is Fanon's black skin-white mask syndrome, which resonates in the character of Eugene. In order to hide his black identity, which makes him inferior and weak, Eugene has to put on a white mask, a disguise that allows him to slip into the role of the powerful. Indeed, "[…] Papa was too much of a colonial product" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 13). Similarly, Babamukuru in *Nervous Conditions* is a "historical artefact" (Dangarembga 162), too, a colonial product whose behaviour and perspective is limited to "traditions and expectations and authority" (ibid., 193).

In *Nervous Conditions*, Tambudzai, undergoes at least two decisive mental transformations. Her first "reincarnation" (Dangarembga 94) affects her perception of her former life at the homestead when she moves to her uncle Babamukuru. Tambu is deeply grateful of his generosity of having chosen her after her brother's death in order to enjoy education, and uncritically approves of whatever her uncle does or says. For example, Tambudzai does not disapprove of his decision that her parents ought to undergo a Christian marriage in order to end the never ending circle of problems at home; on the contrary, she is proud that at least she understands the natural order of civil progress. Her understanding of civil development is underlined with the symbol of the mirror. At the homestead, her parents' mirrors only reflect old values and traditions which have long ceased to be valid: these are "[…] mirrors that had once been reliable but had now grown so cloudy with age that they threatened to show you images of artful and ancient spirits when you looked into them […]" (ibid., 62). In contrast to the unreliable mirrors at home, the mirrors in Babamukuru's home show civilisation, modernity, and progress: her aunt's mirror is "[…] so bright and new that it reflected only the present" (ibid., 75). In other words, the symbol of the mirror indicates that the old ways have ceased to be valid; instead, Western norms and values, ways of living, being, and knowing – the clear mirrors symbolise the Western idea of truth, whereas the cloudy and misty mirrors of the homestead stand for superstition and the natural, which is orderless and vague – have become the valid parameters.

When Tambu discusses the wedding with her cousin Nyasha, she is absolutely convinced that her uncle's decision must be the only reasonable and right one, for is not

Babamukuru the one who lives a life in affluence and wealth whereas her parents are only poor peasants? (see Dangarembga 150). In many ways, Nyasha is more mature than her cousin. In contrast to Tambu, Nyasha is very a critical character and constantly questions her environment with her "multidirectional mind" (ibid., 153). She is determined and knows exactly what she wants and what she does not want: "Nyasha gave me the impression of moving, always moving and striving towards some state that she had seen and accepted a long time ago" (ibid., 154). She wants to be received as an equal and respected individual, which is why she is in constant quarrel with her father, who strongly disapproves of her stubbornness and disobedience. Tambu, on the other hand, would never dare to disagree with, in fact, anybody. She is descent, obedient, quiet: "Babamukuru thought I was the sort of young woman a daughter ought to be […]" (ibid., 157). In contrast, Nyasha really seeks the confrontation with her father and questions his authority on a constant basis. Unsurprisingly, she fiercely disagrees with her cousin when Tambu refers to the Christian wedding as evidence of the nature of progress and the end of sin. Nyasha rebukes Tambu for her naivety, for believing that traditional cultural practices are a sign of inferiority and backwardness:

> [Nyasha] delivered a lecture on the dangers of assuming that Christian ways were progressive ways. 'It's bad enough,' she said severely, 'when a country gets colonised, but when the people do as well! That's the end, really, that's the end.' It was the end of the debate too. Nyasha said she had had more exposure than me and so had had reason to think about these things [...]. (Dangarembga 150)

It is only later in the novel that Tambu grows more conscious and critical of her country's colonial past and its implications for her family. Her growing doubts about the wedding of her parents and the realisation of its absurdity and ridiculousness only mark the starting point of a string of suspicions about a whole society.

Is Western civil progress the only right way for a society to move forward? In colonial terms this question has to be answered positively. But what justifies its affirmation? Is it natural for the human kind to develop in a Western way? And if so, who decides this; who decides what is the natural order of civil progress? Why is it 'backwardish' for people to live in a hut and grow their own vegetable, and why is it exceptional, almost applaudable for a so called civilised Westerner to 'go back to the roots' and decide to live in a hut and grow his/her own vegetable? In order to move forward, people need to creatively design life and set themselves targets. Maybe it is natural for the human kind to develop; however, there certainly is no natural, right way of development. Without denying the great achievements of Western civilisation, it

should be critically asked how these achievements were brought about, on whose expense, and why it is that Western civil progress is regarded the only right way of development. Here again, the notion of the reformation of the natives' minds discussed in chapter 2 becomes relevant, as the systematic devaluation (and ultimately the annihilation) of indigenous ways of living, being, and knowing led to the naturalisation of the Western idea of civil progress.

5.10. Tolerance, Fairness, and Openness

In *Purple Hibiscus*, the reader learns how life can be enriched by a moderate and liberal attitude towards religion and a family atmosphere that is filled with love, trust, and sympathy. Aunty Ifeoma leads a life influenced by both, modern as well as traditional elements. Although her kids enjoy a considerable great deal of freedom, Ifeoma is just and consequent. She encourages them to develop their own opinions but urges them to remain respectful all the same. When Amaka wonders whether Kambili is abnormal for her strange behaviour, Ifeoma sharply tells her off: "Amaka, you are free to have your opinions, but you must treat your cousin with respect. Do you understand that?" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 142). One day, for instance, Ifeoma even encourages Kambili to stand up to her cousin Amaka, who permanently picks on her: "Aunty Ifeoma's eyes hardened – she was not looking at Amaka, she was looking at me. '*O ginidi*, Kambili, have you not mouth? Talk back to her!'" (ibid., 170). Moreover, her kids have regular contact to their grandfather and excitingly listen to his folk tales; they know about and appreciate their heritage, speak their native language in everyday life, and happily sing Igbo-songs – in short, they naturally incorporate their traditional culture into their modern life. Their appreciation and consciousness of their cultural heritage is expressed by Amaka, who explains to Kambili her preference for indigenous musicians (see *Purple Hibiscus*118).

During their stay in Nsukka, Kambili and Jaja are treated equally just like their cousins – their aunt does not make a difference. Ifeoma tries very hard to break their silence and make them behave like normal children, to be loud and lively. She even encourages them to see that their grandfather is not the embodiment of sin, the personification of the Devil himself, but a faithful worshipper, just like their father is a faithful Christian. She seeks to sensitise her brother's children to the different ways of being, to be tolerant and see that it is okay for some people to lead a life different from their own. Sensing that her niece is fairly uncomfortable with the presence of her

grandfather, Ifeoma wakes Kambili one early morning to let her watch Papa-Nnuwku performing his morning prayers, to make her realise that there is nothing evil or demonical about his faith (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 166-169).

Generally, in comparison to Enugu, life in Nsukka, appears to be much richer, livelier, happier, more complete, even though they lead a far more sparse life than Eugene, with constant lack of money, notorious lack of kerosene, fuel, and space in their house, water instead of soft drinks, and half-rotten, frozen leftovers instead of freshly prepared meals whenever rice is scarce. And yet, despite all the 'lack ofs', there is love and laughter, generosity, openness, friendliness, encouragement, acceptance, all of which makes it a home. There is a positive spirit that wraps this home with love, tolerance, and respect.

5.11. The Complexities of Societal Change

Postcolonial stories can help to make better sense of the world, to understand the complexity of peoples' behaviour which becomes even more complicated in multicultural societies, to recognise alternative ways of coping with social problems, and, in most general terms, to appreciate alternative ways of being. Furthermore, postcolonial literature draws attention to the way in which social and political developments are produced by human beings and how historical developments shape the future of a society[38]. The 'nature' of postcolonial literary texts is directly in line with what Smith identifies as

> […] the cornerstone of shared human understanding, namely a profound sense of the historically constituted nature of any present state of affairs, with the capacity for illuminating how any humanly liveable future begins by acknowledging those historically derived debts and obligations that are part of any identity in the present. (Smith 6)

History cannot simply be bypassed. The reading of postcolonial literary texts and the development of a postcolonial reading strategy, then, will lead students to a "heightened historical sensibility" (Smith 6) from which it is possible to detect, discuss, and deconstruct ethnocentric discourses."[…] knowing the past is necessary to control the present – it is essential to all forms of self-mastery – because it highlights the contingency of our current practices" (Weiner 592).

Among the numerous examples of postcolonial literary texts which deal with the complexities of imperialist invasions and the gradual colonisation of indigenous

[38] See "Lehrplan, allgemein" 4.

territories and populations, Chinua Achebe's masterpiece *Things Fall Apart* impressively displays the subtle dissolution of indigenous rules and standards, and the successive establishment of Western Christian norms and values by the imposition of the Western system of justice and the Western means of communication. It shows how a society is gradually turned inside out. It illustrates how Western supremacy acts upon the Igbo people and how easily rules can be annulled or replaced by another set of standards, especially in the guise of help and aid – the "pseudo-humanism of the West" (Childs & Williams 41 with reference to Aimé Césaire).

What Achebe's novel also portrays, apart from the way in which Christian missionaries tried to implement Western norms, is the complexity of any societal upheaval. Drawing on Diana Akers Rhoads' (1993) analysis of *Things Fall Apart*, it becomes clear that the rather blunt master-slave, offender-victim assumption is indeed heavily oversimplifying an extremely complex structure of human relationships. As has been argued throughout this thesis, the story of colonialism is not a story about good versus evil. Concerning the novel, the villagers of Umuofia are visibly torn between resisting and embracing cultural and societal change. On the one hand, there are tribal members who immediately convert to the new faith, especially members who have not been fully integrated (the so called osu, the outcasts, see Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 155-157) or members who have become suspicious of certain traditional practices and conventions such as the refusal of twins (ibid., 151). On the other hand, the Igbo society is not exclusively presented as naive followers either: On the contrary, characters like Okonkwo fiercely resist the new establishment; like the Christian missionaries, who are eager to spread their faith and civilisation, some clan members see their heritage in danger and oppose the new influence. Aside from these two extremes, members who follow the European traditions right away and clansmen who are ready to shed blood in order to defend their culture, people from both sides meet to compromise. In this respect, Rhoads (63) argues that Achebe positioned the Igbo society in a very positive light to highlight their great tolerance towards other cultures. Unlike the European missionaries, who are primarily ignorant of and hostile towards other cultural and religious customs – only Mr. Brown is willing to engage into a philosophical discussion about each other's faith and religion (see Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 178-181) –,

Achebe's Igbo society appreciates the Christians' loyalty to their god and accepts their way of worship (190)[39].

The question of how to face the reality of change, also involves the issue of social status. Apparently, Achebe's village life is clearly managed by a patriarchal hierarchy that guarantees stability and order within the Igbo society[40]. Okonkwo, for instance, is well respected for his eagerness and success (Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 26) and already enjoys a considerable high status in his village. A change of the Igbo value system, then, would mean a real threat to his social position. The outcasts, on the other hand, spot their chance and happily embrace the Christian principle of equality among all human beings. The 'problem' this change poses to a hierarchically structured society is also raised in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Here Papa-Nnuwku criticises the way in which elders are no longer respected in families due to the Christian value of equality: "The father and the son are equal? *Tufia!* Do you not see? That is why Eugene can disregard me, because he thinks we are equal" (*Purple Hibiscus* 84).

Without claiming a universalist stance to Achebe's writing and neglecting the cultural specificity of his artwork[41], the novel can well be read symptomatically for any societal and cultural change in this world, if one takes the complex dynamics of societal change and culture conflict into consideration. At a most general level, the book deals with a society's struggle to adapt to cultural, social, and political disorder, a struggle that is neither unique to Igbos, Nigerians, Africans, nor any other group of people in this world. Chinua Achebe himself became aware of this great potential of his novel when he learned about the worldwide effect the book had created. Not only did people with similar histories and backgrounds relate to the story, also people from countries without a colonial past felt connected. As is stated in the introduction to Tsitsi Dangarembga's

---

[39] This superiority is essential to what Rhoads (1993) identifies as the central theme in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. According to Rhoads, one of the major functions of Achebe's novel is to provide proof for the dignity of the Igbo culture which "they lost during the colonial period" (Rhoads 61). Apart from their remarkable tolerance towards other cultures and religions, Achebe's Igbo culture is portrayed as a well-structured and established society that is indeed comparable to Western ideals of democracy. However, with a wrong image of the African in mind, the European missionaries cannot see anything other than the uncivilised, savage barbarians which only legitimises the colonial endeavour of the West.

[40] Yet, the Igbo social structure allows for upward mobility as well, if one only tries hard enough to escape poverty and misfortune. After all, a clan "judged a man by the work of his hands" (Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 27). Thus, it is possible for Okonkwo to make his way and earn wealth, status, and prestige, despite his father's considerable low status and poverty.

[41] In her essay "The Critical Reception of *Things Fall Apart*", Amy Sickels provides an excellent overview about different responses to Achebe's novel. To put it short, there have been fierce debates between universalist approaches and nationalist approaches to the book about the question whether it is legitimate to assign Achebe's work a universal reading – in this regard, the Achebe's Igbo society can be substituted with any other society in this world –, or whether such a universalist lens neglects cultural differences and destroys the value of postcolonial literature altogether.

novel *Nervous Conditions*, "Each novel is a message in a bottle cast into the great ocean of literature from somewhere else […]; and what makes the novel available to its readers is not shared values or beliefs or experiences but the human capacity to conjure new worlds in the imagination (Appiah xi). In an interview carried out in 2000 by Katie Bacon, Chinua Achebe recalled this experience and pointed to the potential of literary texts:

> […] So these people across the waters were able to relate to the story of dispossession in Africa. People from different parts of the world can respond to the same story, if it says something to them about their own history and their own experience […]. Once you allow yourself to identify with the people in a story, then you might begin to see yourself in that story even if on the surface it's far removed from your situation. […] [T]his is one great thing that literature can do – it can make us identify with situations and people far away. If it does that, it's a miracle. […] it's not difficult to identify with somebody like yourself […] what's more difficult is to identify with someone you don't see, who's very far away, who's a different color, who eats a different kind of food. When you begin to do that hen literature is really performing its wonders. (Achebe, "An African Voice")

What the people of Umuofia experienced was disruption and disturbance, a total alteration of their society. With the coming of the British and the creation of Nigeria, the Igbo society had to learn to accommodate to a new reality. For any society to be successful in times of change, it is necessary to engage with the Other, and to enter into a series of negotiations. Okonkwo is not yet ready to open up to new modes of life, which is why he dies a tragic death. In sum, life is like one big trial, in which we constantly have to negotiate our way through. There will always be things falling apart; what is important, however, is that people have the possibility to respond to challenges in life.

5.12. The Critique of the Western Dominance in Native Historiography

Especially, in the case of African postcolonial writing, the emphasis on native historiography and the critique of colonial dominance in writing one's history is significant, as 'Africa' was predominantly conceived of having no history itself. Drawing on Wolf, Döring argues that Africans were considered as "the people without history" (Wolf qtd. in Döring 111). According to Döring, this eurocentric preconception of 'history' goes back to the assumption that only written documents or materialistic evidence can account for the existence of a pre-colonial history and culture – oral traditions were totally ignored (ibid., 78). Again, supported by ethnological, sociological, and philosophical theories – Hegel, for instance, reasoned that for their

lack of adequate cultural evidence, sub-Saharan societies were "frozen in some timeless, primary state of nature, barbarous and primitive, without development, dynamics or participation in the wider movements of world history" (ibid.) –, the colonial endeavour "became not simply justified but morally important" (Childs and Williams 191), as it was the "duty, or burden, of the 'civilized race' to educate and lead the 'uncivilised'" (ibid.). Such eurocentric views have been the basis of doubts whether Africans are really ready to rule themselves, given the unstable political situation in many post-independent countries. Adichie, too, picks up such eurocentric views on the assumed inability to self-organisation when Richard overhears some white men talking about Nigerian politics: "They chuckled about how tribal Nigerian politics was, and perhaps these chaps were not quite so ready to rule themselves after all" (*Yellow Sun* 53).

Achebe's novel challenges this misconception or misrepresentation of African societies as being nothing but a 'bunch of savages'. As a representative of the writing-back era, Achebe's aim was to restore the dignity of the people, to show that "African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and above all, they had dignity" (Achebe, *Role of the Writer* 8)[42].

Instead of portraying history as a stream of Western activity, *Things Fall Apart* is a story of indigenous agency. Achebe deliberately refrained from assigning the Igbo society a passive victim role and highlighted the multifaceted ways in which indigenous people actively took part in their history making process, instead. In the novel, it is their (inter-) cultural competence that enables the Igbos to have constructive influence in times of societal change. Whether it is immediate approval, respectful acceptance, a certain degree of mistrust, or fierce resistance, the novel focuses on indigenous agency in the complex relationship between coloniser and colonised. Even though the power-distribution in these relationships was evidently unequal – in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, this imbalance is symbolised by the invasion of the locusts (56f., 138f.) –, the denial of indigenous agency by Western historiography (see Childs & Williams 26) caused considerable epistemic harm: It excluded the native population from their own history. To re-use Adichie's words: It robbed indigenous people of their dignity. This observation immediately reveals a deeper layer of Achebe's novel, namely the challenge

[42] It has already been argued that to believe one version of identity to be the true image is, in fact, hard to maintain within a postcolonial approach that actually seeks to conquer essentialist notions of identity. Also, it contradicts the dimension of understanding and resistance within a dialogic approach to learning (see Delanoy, FLU 104) as a critical stance must never claim one position to be the only valid one.

of and break with the dominant Western story of colonialism, a story that rarely accounted of native agency. Achebe's novel closes with a colonial perspective with the district commissioner thinking about how to integrate the recent events – which are a complex mixture of native resistance and participation as well as colonial failures – into a book. Finally, he concludes that a paragraph will certainly do, after all "one must be firm in cutting out details" (Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 209). The novel ends with the title this book, already revealing the tenor of its content: A thoroughly eurocentric view on history. The title reads: "The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger" (ibid.).

In her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie cleverly warps the postcolonial critique of white supremacy in native historiography in the way in which Richard, an expatriate and writer from England, suddenly realises that all his effort of the last few years of writing a novel based on the Nigeria-Biafra war is in vain, as the cause is simply not his story to tell. Ugwu, on the other hand, discovers his writing talent and starts jotting down everything connected with the war as kind of a therapy. Eagerly, he writes down his personal experiences as well as stories people start telling him on every free space of paper he can find (*Yellow Sun* 397f.). In contrast to Richard who just cannot find into his writing, words seem to naturally pour out of Ugwu like a waterfall. Eventually, his random notes turn into something like a coherent piece of work. When Richard finds Ugwu's notes, he is thrilled and praises his work (ibid., 424). This is when Richard accepts that he can never keep up with the deep involvement and profound union Ugwu has for the cause, his country, and the people. In essence, despite Richard's personal connection to the whole cause, Richard no longer feels entitled to write about the war; it is not his war (ibid., 425). The fact that Ugwu's book carries the same title[43] as Richard's would have held, suggests that Richard must have given it to him after he has realised the great potential in Ugwu's writing. This act of giving Ugwu the title for his book bears indeed greater symbolism: It constitutes a symbolic gesture of giving back authorship to the indigenous population to write the history of their country themselves. On the surface, this sub-plot seems quite unimportant, however, against the background of the distorted image produced by Western historiographers, theorists, journalists, and novelists, Ugwu's transformation into a writer symbolises the beginning of indigenous

[43] The title *The World Was Silent When We Died* is a sharp critique of the way in which the world almost silently watched the course of the civil war. Also, there are several allusions to the reaction (or non-reaction) of the USA and the way in which it played a decisive role in the course of the war. Because of the limited scope, this political dimension cannot be fully analysed in this paper.

agency in the discourse of literature. To some extent he resembles Chinua Achebe, who felt the urge to rectify the biased image of Africa to tell his story of a complex and sophisticated African society: “At the university I read some appalling novels about Africa […] and decided that the story we had to tell could not be told for us by anyone else no matter how gifted or well-intentioned” (Achebe, *Creation Day* 70).

What becomes important in the connection of the postcolonial critique of the Western biased portrayal of indigenous life, thought, and culture, as well as the related postcolonial critique of the Western dominance in indigenous historiography, is the critical stance of the reader towards such postcolonial critique. To put it differently, as Adichie claims, the spread of postcolonial, alternative, or counter-hegemonic stories is important to avoid the dominance of single, biased accounts. Having this in mind, postcolonial stories themselves can become single stories very easily. Postcolonial literature is by far not immune to the danger of single stories. As has been argued in chapter 3, a critical stance or “ideologiekritische Erfahrungshaltung” as described by Delanoy (*FLU* 103f.), does not seek to find one critical position from which to challenge any other theories or truth-claims. On the contrary, a dialogic conception to literature teaching is process-oriented, meaning that the critical reader enters an never-ending dialogue with the text, its content, its context, as well as his/her life-world, in which he/she generates, appropriates, and alters meaning on a constant basis. Thus, for language and literature teachers, it is essential to train the reader’s critical eye to recognise and question any claims of a monopoly of truth. This argument does not weaken or trivialise the postcolonial critique of the colonial misrepresentation of the native population and the moral, epistemic, as well as ontological injustice related to it, but warns against the glorification of counter-hegemonic discourses, which themselves are not immune to become single and dogmatic accounts of the world.

5.13. Feminism

> “You must never behave as if your life belongs to a man. […] Your life belongs to you and you alone, *soso gi*.” (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 226)

In *Nervous Conditions*, Tambudzai explores very different notions of what it means to be black and a woman, “with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other” (16). In addition to her own experiences, her awareness of the

injustice is driven by the lives of the women surrounding her: Her mother, Mainini, who has resigned to her gender role and accepted her inferiority, her uncle's wife Maiguru, who, despite her qualified education has to subordinate nonetheless, her mother's sister, Lucia, who does things her way but is not taken seriously for it, and her cousin Nyasha, who collapses despite her self-confidence. All of them struggle with their female identity in a patriarchal system. From a very early age on, Tambu experiences male domination and authority – especially from her brother, who demonstrats his superiority whenever possible – and learns that her femaleness is in fact accompanied with a series of 'nots': Women do not need to be educated (15f.), the needs and sensibilities of women are not considered a priority, and what is worse, they are not considered legitimate (12). However, Tambu resists being pushed into the victim role, she will not swallow the double burden: "My mother said being black was a burden because it made you poor, but Babamukuru was not poor. My mother said being a woman was a burden because you had to bear children and look after them and the husband. But I did not think this was true" (16). If her family does not want her to be educated, there will be ways to find the money herself. And in fact, she starts growing her own maize to afford the school fees herself. Maiguru, Tambu's aunt, is a role model, for she really seems to be a self-conscious, independent, and educated woman. However, soon she has to realise that Maiguru cannot realise her true potentials – she is trapped in the (post-) colonial hierarchy of male dominance, despite her Western education. Tambu's aunt grows more and more depressed about the double colonisation, she shares with other postcolonial women[44]:

> 'What it is,' she sighed, 'to have to choose between self and security. When I was in England I glimpsed for a little while the things I could have been, the things I could have done if – if – if things were – different – But there was Babawa Chido and the children and the family. And does anyone realise, does anyone appreciate, what sacrifices were made? As for me, no one even thinks about the things I gave up.' (Dangarembga 103)

Men, in *Nervous Conditions*, victimise women. Tambu is victimized by her brother, Maiguru and Nyasha are victimised by Babamukuru. They are victims of their femaleness:

> The victimization, I saw, was universal. It didn't depend on poverty, on lack of education or on tradition. It didn't depend on any of the things I had thought it depended on. Men took it everywhere with them. Even heroes like Babamukuru

[44] Spivak addresses the desperate situation of colonised women and argues that they are double-burdened: "If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" ("Subaltern" 82f.).

> did it. And that was the problem. […] all the conflicts came back to this question of femaleness. Femaleness as opposed and inferior to maleness. (Dangarembga 118)

Nyasha, a self-confident and willful teenager, is filled with a deep feeling of injustice regarding her position as a daughter and as a woman. She wants to be recognised as an equal member of the society and not as a being of second order. In particular, it is her father who gives her a hard time in constantly making clear that she has to obey and subordinate. Nyasha reflects on the uneven relationship between her father and herself, and notes that "[…] he has no right to treat me like that, as though I am water to be poured wherever he wants. I know I should trust and obey and all that, but really he hasn´t the right" (121). She knows that the binary opposition that serves to maintain a patriarchal hierarchy is unjust and has to be resisted. It is a constructed hierarchy, not a natural one. It only becomes natural when women refrain from questioning the status quo.

> You've to got to have some conviction, and I'm convinced I don't want to be anyone's underdog. It's not right for anyone to be that. But once you get used to it, well, it just seems natural and you just carry on. And that's the end of you. You're trapped. They control everything you do. (Dangarembga 119)

When Tambu watches the women of the homestead, she understands what Nyasha meant when she said that women get trapped in a restrictive, suffocating gender role as soon as they start accepting their inferiority. In a nutshell, what Tambu observes is that the women of the homestead were only shadows of themselves, they "had been taught to recognise these reflections as self" (140)

Mainini is a sad character. Male superiority has made her silent and depressed. Never in her life did she matter, never in her life did her opinion matter: "[…] for most of her life my mother's mind, belonging first to her father and then to her husband, had not been hers to make up […]" (155). In a discussion with her sister Lucia, Mainini reflects on her desperate situation but cannot find the power and energy to do something about it. She is trapped, but what is even worse, she knows that she is trapped.

> 'Lucia,' she sighed, 'why do you keep bothering me with this question? Does it matter what I want? Since when has it mattered what I want? So why should it start mattering now? Do you think I wanted to be impregnated by that old dog? Do you think I wanted to travel all this way across this country of our forefathers only to live in dirt and poverty? Do you really think I wanted the child for whom I made the journey to die only five years after it left the womb? Or my son to be taken from me? So what difference does it make whether I have a wedding or whether I go? It is all the same. What I have endured for nineteen years I ca endure for another nineteen, and nineteen more if need be. Now leave me! Leave me to rest.' (Dangarembga 155)

Tambu witnesses all these gender models surrounding her and tries to find and define her own place. In fact, her perception of femaleness, her idea of a woman is very complex – she seems to be torn between traditional role models on the one hand, and independent, strong women, on the other. Her nervous condition, her insecurity in regard to her femaleness and role in society, becomes evident when she compares herself with Nyasha.

> Beside Nyasha I was a paragon of feminine decorum, principally because I hardly ever talked unless spoken to, and then only to answer with the utmost respect whatever question had been asked. Above all, I did not question things. It did not matter to me why things should be done this way rather than that way. I simply accepted that this was so. I did not think that my reading was more important than washing the dishes, and I understood that panties should not be hung to dry in the bathroom where everybody could see them. I did not discuss Anna's leave conditions with Maiguru. I was not concerned that freedom fighters were referred to as terrorists, did not demand proof of God's existence nor did I think that the missionaries, along with all the other Whites in Rhodesia, ought to have stayed at home. As a result of all these things that I did not think or do, Babamukuru thought I was the sort of young woman a daughter ought to be […] (Dangarembga 157).

As the novel proceeds Tambu grows more and more aware in relation to gender roles, the way in which women are inferior to men, and how women are designed to occupy a very clear defined space, a space which is limiting and restrictive and which serves to keep male dominance and authority intact. "Quietly, unobtrusively and extremely fitfully, something in my mind began to assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed […]. It was a long and painful process for me, that process of expansion" (208).

In contrast to *Nervous Conditions*, the women in *Tropical Fish* are sketched out far more self-confident, independent, and self-conscious[45]. In fact, in Baingana's short story collection, African femaleness is consciously constructed in opposition to "the stereotype of African women as victim" (Boswell 138).

The many facets of African femaleness are underlined by the way in which *Tropical Fish* is composed. On the one hand, the reader is confronted with a multiplicity of viewpoints on African femininity realised in the characters Christine, Patti, and Rosa. On the other hand, the diversity is reinforced by the choice of multiply forms and point of views, including first-person narrations, omniscient point of view narratives, a diary entry, as well as a letter. In terms of female sexuality, the short story collection portrays

---

[45] Also in Adichie's literary writings, most of the women are portrayed strong, self-confident, and independent.

the African woman as a woman, who is aware of her sexuality, and deliberately uses her sexual power. In "Passion", for instance, the power of female sexuality is a main theme: As Rosa points out, "We have physical power over men 'coz of sex, even though they are supposed to be stronger than us, physically" (68). In "Tropical Fish", it is Christine who self-confidently enters into a sex-relationship and enjoys the pleasures and freedom of it. It only becomes serious when Christine is overdue. However, instead of 'bothering' her lover with this 'problem', she deals with it herself and decides to have an abortion. Whether her behaviour reflects a lack of maturity or a sign of strength is up for discussion. However, it shows the way in which African women have stepped out of the shadows, their reflections, to reformulate Tambu's observation, to deal with and negotiate their sexuality and femaleness themselves. The issue of female sexuality is most impressively negotiated in "A Thank-You Note", in which Rosa writes a letter to David, a farewell letter, for both suffer from AIDS. The letter conveys such a mix of emotions and feelings, ranging from anger to joy, from sadness to happiness, from frustration to understanding. However, what it does not say is that the disease has anything to with their sexual pleasures per se, their love, and the joy and pleasures they shared. On the contrary, Rosa does not regret a single moment in her life:

> This shouldn't come from sex. Like pregnancy, it's so removed from the very act itself. I refuse the logical connection. Ten to fifteen minutes of heaving and pushing and a whole new *other* life is created, becomes alive, real. In this case, a slow death is born. Sex *can* change your life. But, David, I still don't believe it; the vultures must be wrong, I keep repeating to myself, this is a fact, *a fact*: I am going to die soon. ("A Thank-You Note" 82)

There is nothing wrong about enjoying, celebrating life. And yet, the vultures mock her for having loved life. She is being "punished for spreading love around" (ibid., 86). "Why should we not have made love? Is that a reason to die?" (ibid., 90). Certainly not, I would argue. The reason why I have included this short story is, because it reclaims African female sexuality and to some extent the African female body, too. "We were young, beautiful, careless, open, giving. […] We could do what we wanted, and did. These were *our* bodies. After the tyranny of boarding school, religious rules, and overbearing parents, we were free! We had such a lovely gift, how could we not use it?" (ibid., 88) Rosa loves herself, her life, her sexuality. Content-wise, Baingana could have written about anything in relation to female sexuality, however she chose to write about HIV/AIDS, which is a strategic move in itself, as very often it is (African) women who

are subjected to HIV discrimination[46]: "Men are forgiven. Women would not be forgiven. Women are blamed even if they are unlucky and sleep with a husband who used to sleep with many girlfriends or is an injecting drug user and brought the disease to his wife" (Nguyen et al. qtd. in Gay, Croce-Galis, and Hardee). In other words, when a woman is diagnosed with this disease, her morality is being questioned, she is being accused for being a 'loose woman', like Lucia in *Nervous Conditions*. HIV discrimination is also addressed in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, when Susan introduces Kainene to Richard and remarks that he should be careful and always use a rubber: "One must be careful, even with the most educated of these people" (Adichie, *Yellow Sun* 236).

Female sexuality is indeed a delicate issue, even more so for African women who find themselves in a complex double-silenced situation (see, for instance, Bakare-Yusuf, 2003)[47]. In her essay "Sexual Pleasure as Feminist Choice", Patricia McFadden explores restrictive discourses of African female sexuality and calls for the rediscovery and reclaiming of it as a means of liberating power for black women:

> For the majority of black women, the connection between power and pleasure is not often recognised, and remains a largely unembraced and undefended heritage. Yet an understanding of this connection is one of the most precious legacies passed on to us by our foremothers. In often obscure or hidden ways, it lies at the heart of female freedom and power; and when it is harnessed and "deployed", it has the capacity to infuse every woman's personal experience of living and being with a liberating political force.

In a language teaching context, the issue of gender and gender-roles as well as the related topics of love and sexuality are delicate, yet important issues for discussion. Certainly, for language learners in their teens, it is anything but easy to talk about what it means to be a woman or a man and how it relates to matters of sexuality, sexual identity, and love. Most of them will be right in the middle of finding these things out – a painful, confusing, and complex process which nobody is comfortable discussing in public. Their sexual and gender development is most private and intimate and teachers

---

[46] For a comprehensive account of the delicate situation of women living with HIV/AIDS see Pranee Liamputtong (2013), a collection of scholarly essays as well as empirical research carried out all around the world to capture the problems, threats, and inequalities women with HIV/AIDS have to face.

[47] See also the four-volume series *Women Writing Africa*, which is an extraordinary resource of cross-cultural literature and women's studies that investigates into the lives and contributions of African women with the aim to make visible the cultural, creative, artistic, political works of women throughout the African continent that has been previously silenced and overlooked. The volumes are divided by regions: Vol. I (Daymond et al., 2003) explores women's literary and cultural production of the southern region, vol. II (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw, 2005) investigates the western part of Africa, vol. III (Lihamba et al., 2007) concerns the eastern region, and vol. IV (Sadiqi et al., 2009) deals with the cultural and literary contribution of African women of the northern region.

should respect this. Here the role of literature comes into play: As has been pointed out in chapter 3 and 4, literary texts can be a means to explore themes in a safe environment; literature can facilitate the discussion about topics which appear to be too tough to discuss as personal matters. It is indeed a clever trick, since, after all, we are discussing issues that happen in a book; it is about characters who experience racism, sexual harassment, the loss of their beloved ones, or a crisis of their identity. Still, students might be affected when they find themselves identifying or empathising with the fates of characters. Learning about gender roles and sexuality through literary texts is certainly not enough for students to become critical and open minded subjects; however, it is a promising means to discover and explore different life projects, different ways in which women and men define and find their roles in society – or, struggle to find one, if society cannot provide a role for them. Reading about different gender roles and the way in which cultural settings influences the search for, as well as attitudes towards gender and sexual identity, can help the make sense of one's own position in society as a woman or man. Postcolonial literature invites its readers to critically approach issues of biased gender roles and limiting perspectives of sexuality, which might initiate a critical examination of the construction of gender and sexuality and the power struggles related to it.

Final Remarks

In this chapter, it has been shown that postcolonial literature does not only constitute a body of criticism of Western ideologies, a body of literature designed to fight some centre; on the contrary, postcolonial texts, too, deal with themes deeply rooted in humanity in general, such as love, friendship, trust, hope, fear, or death. Issues of globalisation, social movement, transnational political relations, and gender play as much a role as the tension between national and tribal identity, issues of the nation-state, race, place and displacement, the home, and language. Doreen Baingana, for instance, thinks of her postcolonial fictional writings as stories that add to the understanding of humanity in general, rather than just representing some specific ethnic or gender group: "Fiction provides personalized takes on universal questions. It does not provide The Answer, since it does not exist. This work [Tropical Fish], therefore, should not be read as representations of African womanhood but as possibilities, instances, imaginings" (Dangarembga, preface). In this regard, postcolonial literature plays an essential role in the avoidance of single stories as it breaks with dominant

myths of the Other, and simultaneously contributes to a thorough or deeper understanding of the complexities of human life. In order to gain from the potentials of postcolonial literature in EFL/ESL teaching and learning, the question needs to be raised, how these texts, the delicate themes, the diversity, the play with language, as well as its politicisation can be made accessible and 'digestible' for language learners, a question which will be the main topic in the next chapter of this thesis.

6. (Inter-) Cultural Learning

6.1. The (Inter-) Cultural Challenge

> "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." (Mandela, *Long Walk* 10437)

Against the background of worldwide migration, the growing (inter-) cultural exchange of ideas, beliefs, norms and values, and the overall cross-fertilisation of cultures, (inter-) cultural awareness is no longer just a simple catchphrase but has become an integral part for a peaceful, interconnected world. In times of increasing globalisation, people see themselves confronted with questions regarding their own cultural identity and heritage as well as issues concerning cultural mixing, the process of hybridisation, and socio-political questions touching upon possibilities of a peaceful, respectful, and ultimately enriching coexistence of people with different cultural backgrounds.

At this point, the issue of 'cultural politics' comes into play, demanding to answer the question of how (and if) different cultures should merge in a globally connected world[48]. Prior to this issue, however, comes the question about the underlying concept of culture as such. Basically, there are two partly overlapping approaches to explain the complexity of cultural mixing in contemporary societies against the background of a

---

[48] Only recently the issue of migration has become a pressing issue with the referendum about the reintroduction of an immigration quota in Switzerland. With the slogan 'Against Mass-Immigration' the right-wingish People's Party, SVP (rechtskonservative Volkspartei), could achieve 50.34 percent, a razor-thin majority to turn the referendum into law within three years (Bonanomi, "Schweizer für Einwanderungsquoten").

globally interconnected world: Transculturality on the one hand and Interculturality on the other. According to Delanoy ("From 'Inter' to 'Trans' " 160) these two concepts are not too different from each other as often claimed by proponents of the transcultural approach. On the contrary, many (inter-) cultural theorists such as Kramsch (1993) or Hofmann (2006) go well beyond the criticised assumption that cultures are separate and uniform entities, and embrace the cultural diversity that emerges when cultures intermingle in 'third places' (see Kramsch 1993, 2009).

Still, for both, Welsch (196) and Schulze-Engler ("Transnationale Literature" 72f.), the concept of transculturality is in stark contrast to the concept of interculturality. They are opposites and conceptually exclude each other. A transcultural world (see Welsch, 1999; Schulze-Engler, 2002; or Antor, 2006), in which cultural boundaries both on maps and in peoples' heads become obsolete, would definitely be the ultimate goal, however, in the face of current socio-political issues concerning attitudes towards immigrants (or generally migration), it seems to overlook actual areas of conflict and the issue of power-struggle. Perhaps, transcultural theorists are one step ahead in envisioning a culturally intermingled world; however, reality cannot be ignored: Fact is that numerous immigrants or minority groups face a lot of problems in their (host) country, not only language-wise but also culture-wise, regarding the complex relationship between the dominant (host) culture and their minority (home) culture.

According to Delanoy ("From 'Inter' to 'Trans'" 158) transcultural theorists such as Welsch (1999), Pennycook (2007), or Schulze-Engler (2002; 2007), often ignore problematic aspects such as power inequalities, when it comes to issues of globalisation and cultural mixing. Drawing on Bauman (1998), Delanoy ("From 'Inter' to 'Trans'" 158) argues that within the process of cultural mixing it has to be considered that it is very likely that some parties are given "a far better chance of bringing their influence to bear". In other words, transculturality may well serve the hegemonic interests of the powerful (see also Friedman, 1997; Pieterse, 1998). While transculturalists favour a borderless world, the crucial question of how multiple cultures should relate to each other seems to remain unanswered. Certainly, to assume separate cultural identities does not help either, as it ignores the possibility of *in-between* cultural identities, *multiple* cultural identities, or *mixed* cultural identities. In fact, the assumption of (cultural) identity as a stable, fixed, rigid, and clear-cut entity is being fiercely objected by (inter) cultural and postcolonial scholars. It is argued that (cultural) identity is "fragmented; composed, not of a single, but of several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved,

identities" (Hall, "Cultural Identity" 859). The (post-modern) subject is understood as having no fixed, essential, or permanent identity:

> Identity becomes a "moveable feast": formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural system which surrounds (see Hall, 1987). It is historically, not biologically, defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent "self". With us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continuously being shifted about. If we feel we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or "narrative of the self" about ourselves (see Hall, 1990). The fully unified, completed, secure, and coherent identity is a fantasy. (Hall, "Cultural Identity" 598)

Similar to Bhabha's notion of third space and hybrid identities (*Location of Culture* 4, 37), Kramsch's concept of the 'third place'(see *Context and Culture* 233-253), and Pennycook (158f.), who points to the transgressive and transformational aspects of cultural mixing and the possibility of new culture creation, this assumption approves of cultural mixing as a creative source. Certainly, it is accompanied with tension and friction, as it marks symbolic places of cultural negotiation. However, only if people enter a dialogue and try to see the world through different perspectives, will a peaceful society be possible.

> Groups tend to get on better together when their cherished identities and practices are respected and allowed to flourish within a superordinate culture that also allows groups to feel that their relations to one another are not competitive but are more in the nature of different teams 'pulling together'. (Hogg and Hornsey qtd. in Hogg and Vaughan 637)

Again, the issue of hegemonic power-struggle has to be considered before jumping to conclusions. Multicultural societies involve complex processes of balancing between different norms and values. Negotiation between different perspectives is required, which again poses the question of in how far transculturalism can account for such issues. In a nutshell, while such metaphoric superordinate cultures – third cultures – seems to be the most desired form to realise a society that promotes freedom and respect for cultural diversity, it is without a doubt the hardest form to achieve.

6.2. The Dimension of (Inter-) Cultural Learning in EFL/ESL Teaching and Learning

Fennes and Hapgood (43f.) name two principles for (inter-) cultural learning: (a) Cultural Relativism, and (b) Reciprocity, the first of which refers to the assumption "that there is no hierarchy of cultures" (Fennes and Hapgood 43). Cultural relativism in

(inter-) cultural education must not be confused with an 'anything goes' approach. It does not mean that cultures cannot or must not be judged, but implies that a culture must not be judged on the basis of another culture's values and norms. In other words, an (inter-) cultural understanding of cultures is essential in the avoidance of any forms of ethnocentrism. Judgement is possible, but must always be based on a thorough understanding of the complexities of the other culture. It has already been argued that (inter-) cultural learning is always connected with cultural learning, as the comprehension of another culture always requires the understanding and critical judgement of the underlying cultural norms and values in one's own context. This already leads to the second principle, namely reciprocity. (Inter-) cultural learning is understood as a dialogic learning process, a mutual enrichment between cultures. It "implies learning from and with each other across cultural boundaries" (ibid.), which in turn requires equal status of cultures. Fennes and Hapgood (43) identify the following objectives for (inter-) cultural learning which result from the principles mentioned above:

(a) Overcoming ethnocentrism, which implies a consciousness that one's perception is influenced by one's culture and experience;
(b) Acquiring the ability to empathise with other cultures, which implies an openness towards the foreign and unknown
(c) Acquiring the ability to communicate across cultural boundaries, which implies bilingualism;
(d) Developing a means of cooperation across cultural boundaries and in multicultural societies.

As has already been argued postcolonial literature is regarded as a valuable means to initiate and mediate (inter-) cultural learning processes, as it ties in with what is regarded the core principles of (inter-) cultural learning. Also, the objectives presented above, could well be formulated in combination with learning objectives suggested for a postcolonial pedagogy (see also Baquero Torres 321f.). Before approaching the question how to structure (inter-) cultural learning processes, the role of (inter-) cultural learning in EFL/ESL teaching and learning will be discussed in some more detail.

(Inter-) cultural awareness is one of the guiding principles of teaching and learning in Austrian grammar schools. The ability to come to terms with an increasingly international society is regarded a key competence. Thereby, (inter-) cultural

competence is based on values such as humanity, solidarity, tolerance, freedom, justice, equality, and environmental awareness:

> […] Den Schülerinnen und Schülern ist in einer zunehmend internationalen Gesellschaft jene Weltoffenheit zu vermitteln, die vom Verständnis für die existenziellen Probleme der Menschheit und von Mitverantwortung getragen ist. Dabei sind Humanität, Solidarität, Toleranz, Frieden, Gerechtigkeit, Gleichberechtigung und Umweltbewusstsein handlungsleitende Werte. ("Lehrplan, allgemein" 4)

(Inter-) cultural learning is one of the nine didactic principles stated in the core curriculum of Austrian grammar schools. (Inter-) cultural awareness, however, does not simply mean 'to know other cultures' or 'to learn about other cultures'; to know the cultural codes of a foreign country can be important to some extent (in order not to violate social or cultural customs when being in a foreign country, for instance); yet, the focus on 'dos and don'ts' might rather cement existing cultural stereotypes and even produce new ones than conquer them. As has already been argued in chapter 4, fact-based knowledge about a culture is insufficient to develop (inter-) cultural awareness. (Inter-) cultural learning is geared towards the mutual enrichment of different cultures, the awareness of cultural similarities and differences, and the appreciation of cultural diversity. Again, a focus is put on the correlation between (inter-) cultural learning and the development to the student's sense of identity:

> Interkulturelles Lernen beschränkt sich nicht bloß darauf andere Kulturen kennen zu lernen. Vielmehr geht es um das gemeinsame Lernen und das Begreifen, Erleben und Mitgestalten kultureller Werte. Aber es geht auch darum, Interesse und Neugier an kulturellen Unterschieden zu wecken, um nicht nur kulturelle Einheit, sondern auch Vielfalt als wertvoll erfahrbar zu machen. Durch die indentitätsbildende Wirkung des Erfahrens von Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden der Kulturen, insbesondere in ihren alltäglichen Ausdrucksformen (Lebensgewohnheiten, Sprache, Brauchtum, Texte, Liedergut usw.), sind die Schülerinnen und Schüler zu Akzeptanz, Respekt und gegenseitiger Achtung zu führen. ("Lehrplan, allgemein" 5)

In a pluralistic society the encounter with different, even conflicting concepts of life is unavoidable. Thus, for a society to be successful, strategies need to be found to come to terms with cultural differences:

> Die Erziehung zu einem Bewusstsein von der Normalität kultureller Differenz, zu Offenheit, Toleranz und Verständigungsbereitschaft sowie die Ausbildung einer dazu erforderlichen Wissensbasis sind daher unverzichtbare Bestandteile eines Bildungskonzepts, mit dem multikulturelle Gesellschaften Modi und kulturelle Praktiken des Zusammenlebens und eine verbindlichen ethische Basis dafür entwickeln. (Hallet 34f.)

Similarly, it is considered an integral part of education, to teach against the background that education itself is embedded into a plural and dynamic society:

> Der Bildungs- und Erziehungsprozess erfolgt vor dem Hintergrund rascher gesellschaftlicher Veränderungen insbesondere in Bereichen Kultur, Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft, Technik, Umwelt und Recht. Der europäische Integrationsprozess ist im Gange, die Internationalisierung der Wirtschaft schreitet voran, zunehmend stellen sich Fragen der interkulturellen Begegnung und Herausforderungen im Bereich Chancengleichheit und Gleichstellung der Geschlechter. In diesen Zusammenhang kommt der Auseinandersetzung mit der regionalen, österreichischen und europäischen Identität unter dem Aspekt der Weltoffenheit besondere Bedeutung zu. Akzeptanz, Respekt und gegenseitige Achtung sind wichtige Erziehungsziele insbesondere im Rahmen des interkulturellen Lernens […]. ("Lehrplan, allgemein" 1)

In accordance with Hallet (see above), cosmopolitanism and open-mindedness are key competences, which are considered to facilitate or even guarantee the peaceful coexistence and mutual enrichment of different groups of people. Also, critical thinking and conflict skills are regarded as inevitably to successfully participate in an increasingly pluralistic and rapidly changing society: "[…] Urteils- und Kritikfähigkeit sowie Entscheidungs- und Handlungskompetenz sind zu fördern, sie sind für die Stabilität pluralistischer und demokratischer Gesellschaften entscheidend" ("Lehrplan, allgemeiner Teil" 4).

When it comes to EFL/ESL teaching and learning the development of (inter-) cultural competence is indeed one of the main educational objectives, given that foreign language learning is always connected to (inter-) cultural learning as well.

> Durch interkulturelle Themenstellungen ist die Sensibilisierung der Schülerinnen und Schüler für die Sprachenvielfalt Europas und der Welt zu verstärken, Aufgeschlossenheit gegenüber Nachbarsprachen – bzw. gegenüber Sprachen von autochthonen Minderheiten und Arbeitsmigrantinnen und –migranten des eigenen Landes – zu fördern und insgesamt das Verständnis für andere Kulturen und Lebensweisen zu vertiefen. Die vorurteilsfreie Beleuchtung kultureller Stereotypen und Klischees, die bewusste Wahrnehmung von Gemeinsamkeiten und Verschiedenheiten sowie die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit eigenen Erfahrungen bzw. mit österreichischen Gegebenheiten sind dabei anzustreben. ("Lebende Fremdsprache" 1)

These excerpts underline the significance of the dimension of (inter-) cultural learning in Austrian grammar schools. Almost simultaneously to the highlighting of the dimension of (inter-) cultural learning, comes the question of its realisation. In other words, it is all well and fine to define the reflective consideration of cultural similarities and differences a major function in the acquisition of (inter-) cultural competence; however, it is not clear yet, how to achieve a reflective understanding of cultural

diversity. As has been argued, literary texts in general "can make valuable contributions to raising [the] readers' awareness of the cultural dimension of language learning" (Delanoy, "Come to Mecca" 279). As far as postcolonial literatures are concerned, the engagement with these literary works is considered especially valuable as they decisively contribute to the development of (inter-) cultural and symbolic competence:

> Die Auseinandersetzung mit Texten aus den ‚New English Literatures' im fremdsprachlichen Unterricht vermittelt nicht nur landeskundliches Wissen, sondern kann darüber hinaus zum Erreichen mehrerer wichtiger Lernziele beitragen. So fördert die Beschäftigung mit fremdkulturellen Identitäts- und Wirklichkeitsentwürfen, wie sie in den ‚New English Literatures' zum Tragen kommen, vor allem maßgeblich die Entwicklung von Fremdverstehen und interkultureller Kompetenz. Zudem kann durch die Arbeit mit postkolonialen literarischen Texten in besonderen Maße die (interkulturelle) Diskursfähigkeit der Lernenden gesteigert werden. (Freitag and Gymnich 259)

Certainly, the mere presentation of postcolonial literary texts is insufficient to realise an education that is truly geared towards peace education, tolerance, and the appreciation of a pluralistic world. Postcolonial literature won't just miraculously and "effortlessly transform racist hearts and minds and automatically develop tolerant attitudes" (Johnston 15). Literary texts are not explanatory by nature. Moreover, as Delanoy points out, "literary texts can vary considerably in their educational value for intercultural learning/the study of a foreign culture" ("Come to Mecca" 278), which is why language and literature teachers may want to consider "what qualities a literary text should possess in order to facilitate the study of a foreign culture in the interest of intercultural learning" (ibid.). In short, a methodology is needed on which to base the teaching of postcolonial literary texts (see chapter 3) and which facilitates the realisation of (inter-) cultural learning and the structuring of (inter-) cultural learning processes.

6.3. The Text: (Inter-) Cultural Learning Criteria

In addition to the question of the didactic quality of the literary text, language and literature teachers have to face the language problem, too. In order to fully engage with a text and to benefit from the reading process, the language barrier plays a crucial role. In a worst-case scenario, severe language problems can hinder the aesthetic reading experience decisively (Delanoy, "Literaturpädagogik "79), which is, however, important to build up a personal relationship to the text. Moreover, problems of understanding due to language difficulties were found to have negative effects on learner motivation (see Heuermann and Hühns qtd. in Delanoy, "Literaturpädagogik" 78).

Regarding the text itself, there are various suggestions concerning the adequacy and usefulness of literary texts for (inter-) cultural learning. Freitag and Gymnich (263), for instance, consider literary texts to be useful if they invite and stimulate students to articulate their own viewpoints. Additionally, students should be able to open up to and engage with unknown perspectives. Nünning (136f.) identifies texts as particularly qualified to promote (inter-) cultural learning, when they invite students to take up and switch between different perspectives. This criterion can either be realised on a figurative or narrative level. Accordingly, literary texts that deal with (inter-) cultural misunderstandings on a figurative level, motivate students to explicitly engage with stereotypes, cultural differences, and related misunderstandings (Schinschke qtd. in Nünning 137). On a narrative level, fist-person as well as multi-perspective narrations, can trigger (inter-) cultural learning and prompt perspective-taking. Whereas the former narrative point of view can inspire students to critically evaluate the narrator's point of view – often, first-person narrations involve unreliable narrators –, to design coutner-perspectives, or even perceive conflicts through the point of view of characters which perspectives are not presented, the latter demands students to engage with and coordinate multiple perspectives (137). In Addition, Delanoy (see "Come to Mecca" 278) suggests the following five criteria which can be applied to judge a text as to its adequacy and usefulness for (inter-) cultural learning:

(a) *Active Learner Participation*

Literary texts provide the basis for the exploration and explanation or interpretation of the complexities of different cultural groups. The text provides information needed to decipher areas of conflict, cultural misrepresentations, or misunderstandings. However, it is the reader who decides whether to engage with this exploration of the (inter-) cultural world of the text or not. In other words, the reader has to actively participate and take on the role of an intercultural mediator[49]: "[…] the foreign language learner takes over the role of mediator. As a mediator he is able to decipher those sociocultural interferences which decisively restrict interlingual interaction and international co-operation" (Kordes 296). It should be noted, that this is an ideal situation, which,

[49] The concept of the (inter-) cultural mediator is similar to what Kramsch referred to as '(inter-) cultural speaker' to capture the multicultural reality of foreign language learning. The (inter-) cultural speaker, like the (inter-) cultural mediator, stands between cultures and tries to mediate between them. Hereby, the process of mediation and negotiation requires (inter-) cultural competence (see Kramsch, "intercultural speaker" 27).

according to Kordes (296), will hardly be ever achieved but can bears "heuristic value" (ibid.), nonetheless.

(b) *Process-Orientation*

Drawing on Clifford Geertz (1973; 2001) and his concept of thick description, Delanoy ("Come to Mecca" 281) argues that literary texts which are multidimensional in terms of themes and perspectives, lend themselves to repeated readings. Postcolonial literary texts are indeed paradigmatic examples to explore the ways in which personal, political, and cultural dimension melt into one another. Also, issues of gender, race, class, and politics, to name but a few, are interrelated in a highly complex way, so that the strategy of re-reading might in fact lead to an elaborated understanding of the text. Drawing on Iser's conception of literary aesthetics outlined in chapter 3, the exploration of a text in a second, third, or even fourth go, can reveal layers and insights into the literary texts, of which the reader would have been deprived otherwise. Moreover, the strategy of re-reading can be helpful, as sometimes the postcolonial critique is hidden beneath layers or interwoven into personal, social, cultural, and political dimensions, so that it does not automatically reveal itself in a first reading.

(c) *Cultural Relativity*

This aspect relates to the first principle of (inter-) cultural learning stated above: The equal status of cultural norms and values. A text suits (inter-) cultural learning, according to Delanoy, if "the value systems in conflict are presented without privileging one over the other" ("Come to Mecca" 282). This criteria is, as I would argue, sometimes hard to fulfil, as no writing can ever be fully neutral. There will always be biased representations. Also, different people read a text in different ways, meaning that seemingly neutral accounts of cultural values can well be interpreted as biased ones. What is more important than the equal status of cultural norms and values in a text, is, as I would claim, the need to apply a postcolonial reading strategy, a reading strategy that seeks to detect and challenge cultural biases and underlying essentialist representations. In other worlds, texts that are culturally biased can well be used to promote (inter-) cultural learning, as long as students are trained in approaching such texts in a critical and a meaningful way.

(d) *Learning about a Foreign Culture*

This criterion refers to the extent to which a literary text makes accessible its cultural context. As has already been pointed out in chapter 4, it is necessary to keep in mind

that literary texts can only provide snippets of a culture; they offer limited, often highly subjective views on culture. The importance to draw attention to the limited account of culture presented in any literary texts, results from the way in which people in general process cultural information presented in literature: As Bredella ("Pedagogical Significance" 15) points out, "[…] we, as readers, tend to read literary texts about a foreign culture as information about that culture". Thus, for language and literature teachers it is important to keep in mind that reading, for instance, Adichie's account of Nigeria or Bulawayo's account of Zimbabwe, does neither reveal an essence about these countries, nor an essence about Africa. Or to put it even more provokingly, neither does Joseph Conrad reveal some truth about Africa in his *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Postcolonial criticism has emphasised how dominant discourses have produced an essence of the Other, and how this essence has been accepted as part of one's (inferior) identity. As has been argued in chapter 4, postcolonial literary texts bear great epistemic value, as they highlight and challenge cultural essentialism and conquer misrepresentations. "This also underscores that aesthetic reading is not separated from ethics and politics but inherently connected to them" (Bredella, "Pedagogical Significance" 16).

(e) *Exploring the Cultural Dimension of Language*

Kramsch's concept of symbolic competence (see also chapter 4) seems to be useful in this context, as it draws attention to the way in which culture is symbolically negotiated through language. In terms of (inter-) cultural communication, it is important to draw attention to different cultural concepts, the polysemy of words and language in general, as well as possible ideological inscriptions in language. The exploration of the cultural dimension of language is, as I would argue, not only about raising awareness to potential misunderstandings between (inter-) cultural speakers or between NS and NNS, but also about pointing to the ideological use of language in literary texts (see, for instance, Olusola and Fatai Alabi, 2013). For example, when exploring Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* and the way in which black inferiority is manifested in the postcolonial subject, teachers might want to draw attention to the way in which language functions to naturalise and integrate the symbolic meaning of blackness into the self (see also chapter 5).

As has been argued throughout this paper, postcolonial writers have appropriated the English language in order to carry a sense of cultural distinctiveness from their former colonial masters and to inscribe cultural identity in a language which was

originally not their own. The different ways of appropriation (see chapter 2) has contributed to creative language use, the disempowerment and de-privileging of 'the' English language, and ultimately to the flourishing of new forms of englishes. In short, the exploration of the use of language in postcolonial literary texts raises awareness to the political dimension of culture and language and encourages EFL/ESL learners to become critical and creative language users themselves.

6.4. Structuring (Inter-) Cultural Learning Processes: Dialogic Model

(Inter-) cultural learning does not present a single learning theory, but implies several complementary educational approaches, such as dialogic learning, experiential learning, and theme-oriented or person-centred learning (see Fennes and Hapgood 46). Delanoy's concept, too, is a dialogic engagement with different positions within reader-response theory or aesthetic literary criticism and approaches in foreign language learning. As has been argued in chapter 3, dialogue is at the very heart of his approach, whether it is dialogue as a principle of teaching as such, dialogue between reader, text, and context, dialogue between theory and practice, or dialogue between different theoretical positions. In chapter 3, it has been shown how Delanoy's dialogic concept of literature education lies within the field of tension between the interrelated dimensions of understanding and resistance on the one hand, and the literary text and the task, on the other. Also, it has been argued that his model of dialogic learning is placed within an understanding of education that is very much informed by TBL, which conceives of the (language) classroom as a place or space of negotiation, or, to put it in Kramsch's terms, a third place (see also chapter 4), in which dialogue constitutes an important role. In the developemnt of approaches in TBL, Ruth Cohn's concept and method of theme-centred interaction (TCI) (see Cohn 235ff.) turns out to be one of the most influential concepts to describe how the classroom can become a third place of negotiation, in which learners and teachers interact in a respectful and appreciative way. In this process of interaction or dialogue, which is marked by four interrelated, interdependent key factors – (1) the group (WE); (2) the individual (I); (3) the theme or topic (IT); and (4) the organisational, structural, social, cultural, political, etc. environment within which the first three factors are situated (GLOBE) –, the making of new insights becomes possible (see Cohn, 353; also Delanoy, *FLU* 145f.). Cohn's approach contributed decisively to the comprehension of the human behaviour and interaction as a complex interrelation between the self, the group, the theme, and the context within which interaction takes

place, and influenced approaches in TBL to a great extent. For example, Williams and Burden (1997) modified Cohn's model to account for the specific situation of education. Basically, Williams and Burden substitute Cohen's WE and I dimensions with learners and teachers, the IT factor becomes the task, and the GLOBE aspect is specified to account for the specific contexts in which learning occurs.

Delanoy's conception of dialogic literary didactics, too, is aimed at the development of a dialogic culture of understanding and interaction (see Delanoy, *FLU* 143f.), and acknowledges Williams and Burden's appropriation of Cohn's model; however, he criticises that their substitution of terms or concepts is a too simplified move which fails to account for the complexity of learning (*FLU* 148). More specifically, he argues that to assign roles of 'the learner' on the one hand, and 'the teacher' on the other, falls short of acknowledging that the learner is, in fact, more than just a student. As has been argued in chapter 4, students do not leave their selves behind, as soon as they enter a classroom; on the contrary, their selves will decisively affect their learning processes, too. The same is true for teachers. Also, the substitution of the factor 'theme' with 'task' is problematic, because theme, especially (but not only) in the context of the teaching of postcolonial literary texts is assigned a central role. Delanoy argues that theme is, at least, as important as task; in fact, "Themen stehen stets in Verbindung mit bestimmten Aufgaben. Dieses Ineinandergreifen von Thema und Task trifft auch für literarische Texte und den jeweiligen Umgang mit Literatur zu" (*FLU* 150). Taken together, Delanoy's understanding of dialogic learning accounts for the task as well as the theme, the individual subjects as well as the learner and the teacher in their respective roles, and, last but not least, the contexts in which learning is placed (see Delanoy, *FLU* 150f.). It should be noted that the contexts (whether the specific teaching context, 'the classroom', or the wider socio-political and cultural settings) are not isolated from the other factors; on the contrary, the contexts are as much influenced by the other dimensions as it happens the other way round. This is when the dimension of resistance and the critique of ideologies (see also chapter 3) come into play as a means of empowerment to counter limiting or restrictive, even hegemonial conditions. This understanding of dialogic learning perfectly ties in with what is proposed in this diploma thesis, namely the development of a postcolonial reading strategy, which is geared towards the empowerment of students to recognise and challenge ideological or dogmatic postulations and ethnocentric or essentialist

conceptions of the self which do not allow for alternative ways of being, thinking, and knowing.

In order to organise and structure learning processes which bring about (inter-) cultural and symbolic competence, Delanoy proposes a dialogic concept of literature teaching, which is informed by the interrelated and interdependent processes of evocation and interpretation. Based on the parameters of a hermeneutical oriented approach to dialogic learning presented in chapter 3, Delanoy (see "Intercultural Dimension") describes three complementary objectives to the aims of (inter-) cultural learning referred to above, which are important in the development of dialogic (inter-) cultural competence:

- Affective Dimension

This dimension relates to the importance of respect and acknowledgement of cultural difference. It builds on a hermeneutical oriented conception of understanding (see also chapter 3) and involves the acceptance of the particularity of human viewpoints. Empathy is an important component to connect with the literary text, to dive into secondary worlds, to get lost in a text (see below), and to be able to experience the world from different perspectives. Donnerstag and Wolff (150) differentiate between sympathy ("der Rezipient fühlt *für* den Charakter“) and empathy ("der Rezipient fühlt *mit* dem Charakter“) and argue that it is empathy which is necessary to be able to identify with a character's emotions, to see the world through a character's eyes, to feel a character's emotions as if they were one's own. Moreover, drawing on Neill (1996), they argue that to empathise with a fictional character is no difference from empathising with real people. But why are emotions (both positive and negative, as I would argue) so important for the reading process and the subsequent (inter-) cultural learning processes? Why is the lived-through process, as Rosenblatt (*The Reader* 69) describes it, so important for the subsequent discussion and interpretation of a literary text? Again, referring to Donnerstag and Wolff (157), it is the emotional response or reaction that triggers the cognitive engagement with a literary text or, to put it differently, a purely intellectual or rational engagement stripped off of all emotional aspects can only be a shallow act.

- Cognitive Dimension

For (inter-) cultural learning to be successful it is important to reflect on the (inter-) cultural learning process, and to analyse the new insights gained in this process. It is

assumed that (inter-) cultural learning processes expand one's mental frame of reference or filter. When engaging with a foreign culture and thus foreign norms and values, one's own value system will be challenged, too. This causes a relative chaos as the learner will experience that his/her worldview is by far not the only valid one – things he/she has taken for granted all of his/her life, suddenly appear in a totally different light. Suddenly, against the background of this foreign culture, one's mental frame of reference does not work anymore. Metaphorically, confusion and chaos prevail. Eventually, when the learner reflects on this disrupting experience, when he/she understands that cultures are always based on certain hidden presuppositions and that these underlying principles are the basis on which culture actually works, he/she will be ready to embrace this diversity and stand the ambiguity. Certainly, this development is not about accepting all values and norms of other cultures, the learner might as well reject certain cultural beliefs. The process is more about the development of (inter-) cultural awareness, flexibility, and a differentiated understanding of oneself and others. This is when tolerance and openness comes about. In sum, only if the experience is integrated into one's mental frame of reference, will one's behaviour become more flexible and open to change and appropriation.

For instance, when students learns about the social and cultural system of Achebe's Igbo culture presented in *Things Fall Apart*, how there is a strict hierarchical social order with the elders being highly respected, children being raised very strictly, man being patriarchs who have several wives, and women fulfilling a clear-defined gender role, they might feel confused and irritated, as the worldview presented in Achebe's novel clearly does not match their Western trained mind. Only if students are able to emotionally respond to the text and the characters, will they be ready to understand that different cultures are based on different underlying presuppositions. This does not mean that students have to agree with or adopt these cultural norms and values; however, they can learn to understand how these norms and values might be valid in their specific cultural environment. The ultimate goal in (inter-) cultural education, I would argue, is the ability to look at a different culture without (morally) judging it against the background of one's own cultural norms and values. This might be idealistic musing; however, one should set high goals when it comes to the avoidance of the same ethical, epistemic, and ontological crimes committed in the course of Western cultural imperialism and colonisation.

- Language-related Dimension

This category refers to the knowledge of culture-specific communicational differences and the awareness of how limited language skills may impact cross-cultural communication. As has been argued earlier, (inter-) cultural competence is tightly connected to the ability to communicate across cultural borders. Certainly, this requires language competence, but also (inter-) cultural and symbolic competence, as one has to be aware of the cultural, political, and social meanings a language carries.

Based on Rosenblatt's notion of evocation and interpretation (1987; see also chapter 3), Benton and Fox's phase model of reading (1985), and Nissen's description of different stages of interpretation (1982; 1984), Delanoy (1996; 2002; 2007) develops a process model to organise and structure (inter-) cultural learning, which will be discussed in some more detail in the following section of this chapter. Generally, a hermeneutic oriented, dialogic approach to teaching literature is always geared towards the making of new insights. Based on the limitedness or particularity of human understanding, the engagement with different perspectives enables the reader to fertilise and expand his/her knowledge or understanding. Aesthetic experience has been described as the dynamic process of involvement and distance (see Bredella, "Pedagogical Significance" 4), the interplay between evocation and interpretation. Within these dynamic, dialectic processes, understanding becomes possible. Importantly, Delanoy's dialogic approach does not favour aesthetic over critical understanding (see *FLU* 109). On the contrary, processes of involvement or engagement (evocation) and distance (interpretation) are equally important for the making of new insights – in fact, both proceedings can principally lead to the development of a critical stance. However, I would argue, that it is the dialogic and dialectic interplay between these two 'stages' that makes a Verstehens- und Handlungserweiterung possible.

6.4.1. Evocation

As has already been shown in chapter 3, Rosenblatt uses the concept of evocation to describe "the lived-through process of building up the work under the guidance of text" (*The Reader* 69). Both Rosenblatt and Iser differentiate between text and work, the latter of which is the actualisation or awakening of the former by a reader (see also chapter 3). In order for teachers to grasp, monitor, and, if necessary, intervene their students' reading processes, Delanoy (see *FLU*, 69-74) builds on the four-phase model

developed by Benton and Fox (1985), and appropriates the stages for EFL/ESL to attain the following phases in the evocation stage:

(1) Feeling like reading

In a language learning context, this stage basically comprises any forms of pre-reading work, the aim of which is to create an atmosphere and environment that invites students to reading. In addition to the development of an aesthetic attitude towards reading, this phase aims at the activation of pre-knowledge, the provision of contextual knowledge, the stirring of curiosity, the increase of motivation, as well as the reduction of language- or culture- related barriers. In short, before the actual reading, teachers might want to consider any factors that can impede the subsequent reading process, may it be language- or context-related, and think about how to create an environment that is fruitful and supportive[50]. The crucial questions entail how students can be motivated to read a literary text, how teachers can create an interest and stir curiosity, and (in the long run) how they can awake the love for reading in their students' hearts.

(2) Getting into the text

Metaphorically, this phase marks the transition into the secondary world of literary texts. However, it is important to note that the actual beginning of reading, the moment the reader opens the book and starts reading the first sentences, does not necessarily coincide with the phase of getting into the text. Some readers might find into the text only after several pages, while others will fail to get into it altogether. The beginning of the reading process is indeed a crucial moment as it often decides about the success of the whole reading and the subsequent learning process. The important thing is, according to Delanoy (see *FLU* 72) that students can build up a relationship with the text already in the first stage described above. This phase is crucial to achieve the next step – according to Jauß (see 26), the entrance into the secondary world is a condition sine qua non for the making of aesthetic experiences, and in Delanoy's hermeneutical literary didactics, for the making of new insights.

(3) Lost in reading

"Das Durchleben der Sekundarwelt (lost in the text) wird von der hermeneutischen Literaturdidaktik als ästhetisch motivierter Erfahrungsakt gedacht" (Delanoy, *FLU* 72). According to Delanoy, this experience implies "(a) ein Heraustreten aus primären

---

[50] See also chapter 3 and the discussion about the role of contextual knowledge and pre-teaching activities.

Handlungskontexten, (b) das Einnehmen einer offenen Lese- bzw. Erfahrungshaltung, (c) das Anerkennen von Literatur als Quelle zum Gewinn neuer Einsichten und (d) ein emotional intensives sowie reflektierendes Durchleben der Sekundarwelt“ (ibid., 73). A deep involvement is necessary to live through the text, to engage with different perspectives, and to make new insights on the basis of one’s aesthetic reading experience. However, skepticism has been raised as to the extent to which a text can totally engross a reader. Deanne Bogdan (1990) warns that a deep (emotional) involvement can easily lead to what Delanoy terms a “total absorption” (*FLU*, 107), so that the reader might fail to critically reflect on his/her reading experience. In other words, critical evaluation and interpretation might become impossible: “Kommt es zu einer ‘total absorption’, so vergrößert sich wegen der intensiven Textinvolvierung die Gefahr, Werthaltungen, die etwa über besonders ansprechende Textcharaktere vermittelt werden, unreflektiert zu verinnerlichen“ (*FLU*, 108). Certainly, the interplay between involvement and distance is important; however, Delanoy argues that a dialogic approach to literature must not favour one over the other (ibid., 109), which Bogdan’s approach, according to Delanoy, does.

(4) Getting out of the text

This phase refers to the phase in which students are prepared to leave the text world. In other words, it relates to the question of how students can distance themselves from the text to reach towards a reflected understanding of their reading process. Also, teachers need to consider how to build a bridge between evocation and the stages of interpretation without creating an artificial gap. Some texts might arouse a rather strong emotional involvement, which makes it difficult to leave a text world. Also, as has been claimed above, empathy felt for characters can be as strong and real as for real people, which can affect readers quite profoundly. For instance, the physical and psychological violence experienced in Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* (see, for example, 193-195) can be quite distressing and difficult to deal with, which makes it all the more important for teachers to create distance from the emotional involvement and transgress to the stage of interpretation in order to make sense of the lived-through process.

6.4.2. Interpretation

While evocation refers to the lived-through process, including the associations, emotions, feelings a text might arouse, interpretation means the description of “the nature of the lived-through evocation” (*The Reader* 70) with the aim to reach towards an

extended understanding. Delanoy (*FLU* 75) points out that the phases of interpretation can either accompany the reading process – when learners report on experiences while reading –, or follow after the reading process has been accomplished. In a foreign language learning context, it might not always be so easy to report on experiences of one's reading processes, simply due to language barriers. Thus, for foreign language teachers it is important to think about ways in which to empower their students to communicate and articulate their aesthetic experiences. Building on a hermeneutic conception of understanding, interpretation is never a completed processes; on the contrary, it is open to modification, negotiation, and if necessary alteration.

Based on the phases of interpretation developed by Nissen (qtd. in Delanoy, *FLU* 76), including evocation, modification, nucleation, and transfer, Delanoy uses the concepts of modification to describe the stage in which students can discuss and negotiated their responses and expand their first understandings, nucleation to describe the process of summing up the main results, and transfer to refer to subsequent learning processes (re-readings, further readings, new learning tasks), to start the interrelated cycle of evocation – interpretation anew (see Delanoy, *FLU* 76). Importantly, interpretation is captured as a social act (Delanoy, "Rezeptionsästhetik" 116), which implies that responses need to be communicated and shared in order to reach towards deeper understandings.

In this context, Reichl discusses the importance of interpretation in the meaning-making process and argues for the transfer of the reading experience into something productive (either written or spoken), not only to assess the reading of a literary text – which teachers might want to consider at some stage –, but also to reach towards a deeper, "more differentiated, more critical and more informed understanding of the literary text" (294). More specifically, Reichl focuses on the writing process (both academic and creative writing) as a means of reflection. Writing, according to Reichl, is a valuable strategy, as it "engages the reader in a closer assessment of the literary text and a more critical assessment of his/her own thoughts and opinions. Writing something down formalises it and requires the clarification of any ambiguities or vaguenesses" (ibid.). Reichl, too, stresses the importance of sharing one's outcome, or response to a literary text, as it 'forces' the reader to articulate and justify their opinions (see also Reichl 295). What they learn, ideally, is that once they share their product with other people, they receive constructive criticism and often need to clarify or justify their points. Additionally, by engaging with texts from the colleagues, they can encounter

new ideas, expressions and phrases" (295). In other words, the sharing of different readings facilitates collaborative learning and highlights the multiplicity of reader responses: "[…] a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is that place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader […]" (Barthes, "Death" 148). Reichl captures "the dynamics of writing as critical and creative meaning-making" (294) and locates the potential for language teaching in the ways in which students need to deeply engage with and reflect on their own understandings of a literary text as well as negotiate different perspectives when sharing their responses. To achieve deep understandings of a text and one's own understanding of it, Reichl suggests activities such as reading journals (ibid., 289f.) to promote learner autonomy, make visible and accessible reading processes, and, as I would argue, to make accessible stages of evocation and interpretation, too. Interpretations can be shared in forms of reading blogs (ibid., 299) or writing workshops (ibid., 294f.) both of which focus on collaborative learning.

Other, more creative writing activities[51] which facilitate the processing of the experiences made in the evocation phases, include poem-writing as a form of nucleation (central phrases of the text are used to create a poem or a stream of consciousness), letter writing or any other text productions (newspaper articles, e-mails, diary entries, etc.), the creation of alternative endings, or the re-writing of passages from other perspectives. Especially the latter strategy seems to be promising in terms of empowering students to see the world from different angles, to walk in somebody else's shoes, and try out different perspectives. The ability to understand somebody else's viewpoint will enable students to gain deeper insights into the way in which the world is constructed by many different, sometimes conflicting facets, each of which adds a little to the mosaic of human life.

In terms of linguistic or language awareness, postcolonial literary texts lend themselves to the experimentation with language, given the political dimension of English in these texts (see also chapter 2). Freitag and Gymnich (271) propose to re-write and transform standard texts into varieties of english. Also, the focus on the textual strategies deployed in postcolonial literature, can sharpen the foreign language learner's critical eye to the politicisation and cultural inscription of language. As Reichl (295) points out, the possibilities are sheer endless, one might for instance include

[51] See also Holzmann (1990).

action-based activities such as dramatised readings; however, "the opportunities are not" (ibid.) which is why language teachers should always be aware of the specific purpose the activities should fulfill. In general, however, creative writing activities positively influence the learners' attitude towards the target language which will in turn positively affect the language learning process, too (see Holzmann 13). In short, writing as an activity, as a social act, as an act of meaning-making (Reichl 294), adds to the development of the whole person (Holzmann 14).

Final Remarks

Building on a hermeneutic oriented approach to understanding, (inter-) cultural education is dependent on dialogue and contact, and the negotiation of different perspectives. For (inter-) cultural learning it is important to be able to see the world through somebody else's eyes and to negotiate this perspective with one's own understanding of the world. This process requires a great portion of engagement and empathy, as only a deep involvement will enable learners to feel the Other. Equally important is a distancing engagement with such experiences – (inter-) cultural learning requires a balance between distance or detachment and involvement (see Bredella, "Pedagogical Significance" 4) to process newly gained insights and won perspectives. Thus, the process of interpretation is given considerable weight in the teaching of literary texts to become culturally sensitive subjects. Here, Reichl's approach to interpretation – writing as a meaning-making process – seems to tie in with Delanoy's emphasis on the importance of the making of new insights as a central objective in literature education. Only if reading experiences and interpretations are shared and deeply processed, can newly gained insights enter the conceptual frame of mind, and alter stereotypical, ethnocentric, or essentialist assumptions. However, interpretation can only be based on the lived-through process, meaning that evocation is equally important as it lays the foundation for further stages of interpretation. Hence, evocation and interpretation are perceived of as cyclic processes. Delanoy's model of structuring (inter-) cultural learning processes along Rosenbaltt's differentiation of evocation and interpretation, Benton and Fox's phases in the reading process, and Nissen's stages of interpretation, offers language and literature teachers a feasible and well structured 'tool' to teach postcolonial literary texts in their language classrooms. Bredella's notion of perspective-taking and the focus on empathy are regarded as equally important for

the development of students as culturally conscious subjects, who not only accept or tolerate, but appreciate diversity and plurality as enriching aspects of their lives.

7. Conclusion and Outlook

> "His shell broke into pieces. But there was a great medicine man in the neighbourhood. Tortoise's wife sent for him and he gathered all the bits of shell and stuck them together. That is why Tortoise's shell is not smooth." (Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 99)

7.1. What we can learn from the Tortoise

Peoples' histories are never smooth. Like the cracked shall of the Tortoise, people have cracks in their histories, too. The Tortoise was healed, however the scars remained. People, too, have learned how to heal the wounds of the past, and storytelling or writing has been one important means of restoring their dignity. However, the scars still remain. They are very well visible. Postcoloniality is a fact that affects not only people of former colonies, but humanity as a whole. The engagement with postcolonial literatures is regarded as essential not only to understand postcolonial concerns in general, but to make sense of one's own environment, too, as it shapes the reader's critical eye to recognise uneven power-relations, cultural misrepresentation, essentialist understandings of identity, or limiting perspectives on gender. Importantly, postcolonial literature does not only point its finger at the cracks of the Tortoise's shell, but offers valuable perspectives that emphasise tolerance, empathy, and openness, all of which is regarded as essential for the students' development towards open-minded and culturally sensitive subjects.

The aim of this diploma thesis was to investigate into the pedagogical potentials of postcolonial literature for EFL/ESL teaching and learning. As postcolonial literature comprises such a vast field of different texts and authors form all parts of the world, with each culture adding a new dimension to the discussion, the analysis had to be limited to the exploration of postcolonial literary texts from the African continent. Due to the manifold nature of African postcolonial literature itself, this selection could not be mastered in all its facets either. Certainly, the selection was a highly subjective one; however, I regard the issues explored in chapter 5 very promising for EFL/ESL teaching and learning and the development of (inter-) cultural and symbolic competence, as they make visible the power of a postcolonial reading strategy. These areas include the

critique of Western universalism as communicated in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* as well as Baingana's short stories "Lost in Los Angeles" and "Questions of Home", the issue of cultural identity negotiated in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, notions of hybridity and transcultural identity such as in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, the relationship between cultural identity and language explored on different levels in Adichie's novels *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Baingana's short story collection *Tropical Fish*, and *Nervous Conditions,* the role of education explored, for instance, in *Nervous Conditions*, the critique of Western intolerance towards indigenous life, thought, and faith as impressively expressed in *Purple Hibiscus*, the critique of the Western ideal of progress posed in *Purple Hibiscus* as well as in *Nervous Conditions*, the investigation into the complexities of societal change in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the postcolonial critique of the Western dominance in native historiography put forward in *Half of a Yellow Sun* as well as touched upon in *Things Fall Apart*, and last but not least the issue of feminism within a postcolonial context explored in the short story collection *Tropical Fish* and the novel *Nervous Conditions*. The illustration of African postcolonial literary texts does not only touch upon central key concerns in postcolonial theory, but highlights the interdisciplinary nature of postcolonialism, as themes raised in these texts interweave with both, issues raised within and outside postcolonial criticism. Postcolonial theory has often been criticised for its dizziness or undecidedness, whether in regard to the nature of postcolonialism, its terminology, or the topics discussed within this field of study. However, as has been argued in chapter 2, it is the beauty of postcolonial criticism that it enters into a dialogue with various disciplines and critical positions, both critically and collaboratively. This makes postcolonial theory a powerful discourse to explore the manifoldness of human life.

Against the assumption that the use of literary texts is valuable for language learning in general, chapter 4 explored the way in which the development of a postcolonial reading strategy is most beneficial for the language learners' development of the self as critical, tolerant, and open-minded individuals, as the confrontation and engagement with issues inspired by postcolonial theory will bring to the surface power relations that pervade the world. In this connection Kramsch's concept of symbolic competence has been identified to be supportive of the development of a postcolonial reading strategy. This is where students can become critical of underlying cultural, social, and political presuppositions, on the basis of which (mis-) representations of the

Other are constructed, and are encouraged to challenge and deconstruct discourses that have silenced and marginalised groups of people, countries, or whole continents. Also, social competence (postcolonial competence?) empowers students to participate in (inter-) cultural discourses and become creative in the process of meaning-making themselves.

The teaching of postcolonial literature seems to be somewhat challenging and demanding, as it requires language and literature teachers to gain theoretical knowledge and familiarise themselves with postcolonial theory, to fully benefit from issues raised in literary texts. It has been argued that the engagement with postcolonial criticism requires teachers to constantly reflect on their own cultural, social, and political presuppositions, in order to promote a genuine investigation into the complexities of other cultures, instead of repeating essentialist, ethnocentric, and racist assumptions. However tough this might seem, it should be part of one's teaching ethos to engage with and appreciate different perspectives on life, especially if these perspectives have been silenced and marginalised for a terribly long time. Also, the teaching of any language means to explore its rich cultural context to grasp the way in which language, culture, and thought inform and construct each other. Especially against the political dimension of the English language, the engagement with postcolonial literary writings seems to be paradigmatic to explore the way in which language affects cultural identity and vice versa. There could have been an entire diploma thesis about language, culture and postcolonial literature for it is postcolonial writers who have turned language-power-relations upside down to de-stabilise, de-centre, and de-privilege the language of the former master to mould the language to their own cultural needs.

To make postcolonial literary texts accessible and digestible for language learners, and to monitor their reading and (inter-) cultural learning processes (see chapter 6), it has been suggested to use Delanoy's hermeneutic oriented approach of dialogic, (inter-) cultural learning. Based on a hermeneutical concept of understanding presented in chapter 3, this approach conceives of learning as a social process in which individuals engage with the text, the theme, the contexts in which learning is situated, and with each other, to reach towards new, deeper, and more differentiated modes of understanding. Literary texts are seen as excellent sources to enter such verstehenserweiternde dialogues. Building on reader-response theory, Delanoy's approach promotes learner autonomy and agency. An important feature of Delanoy's hermeneutical literary didactics constitutes the aspect of ideological critique, which plays a particular role for

the understanding of postcolonial literary texts and the development of a postcolonial reading strategy, too. Only if students are empowered to criticise literary texts or positions claimed in literary texts, or identify ideological inscriptions in the text or the language itself, will they become critical and culturally sensitive subjects. Finally, in chapter 7, I presented Delanoy's conceptual framework of (inter-) cultural education. The mere reading of postcolonial literary texts is not enough to fulfil the pedagogical goal of (inter-) cultural competence even though literary texts are regarded as essential means to achieve this aim. Apart from reflecting on their own approach to literature and reading in general, which is regarded a determining factor in language and literature education (see chapter 3), language and literature teachers need to ask how students can benefit the most from the potentials literary texts (can) offer. Thus, a methodology is needed that guides both teachers and students in their mutual exploration of the world of literature, and helps to organise and structure (inter-) cultural learning processes. Delanoy's dialogic concept is regarded as offering promising tools to feed this need. Equipped with such a clear guidance, I am most confident that both teachers and students will gain enormously from the exploration of postcolonial literary texts.

7.2. Off to New Shores: Towards a Postcolonial Pedagogy

The inclusion of postcolonial literature in EFL/ESL teaching is only one step along "a journey of transformation" (Johnston, "Politics of Representation" 15) towards an open-minded, just, and pluralistic society. This transformation clearly "[…] involves a new pedagogical commitment beyond just adding a text or two by a minority or non-Western writers. It requires us [the teachers] to be advocates for change in our classroom, with new text selection as an important first part of the process" (ibid.). The idea behind the incorporation of postcolonial literary texts is part of a larger, genuine educational project, namely the development of a new pedagogy, which is inspired by postcolonial parameters, and which is based on values such as difference, diversity, and plurality[52]. This is a pedagogy that is most suspicious of totalising ideologies, monopolies of truths, as well as essentialist and universalist conceptions of the human nature. It admits and affirms contradictions and friction, embraces multiple ways of knowing, and in fact "seeks to legitimize multiple traditions of knowledge" (ibid. 23).

At this point, philosophy of science, in particular (inter-) cultural philosophy of science, is invaluable in researching the different ways of knowing, and examining the

[52] See also Johnston and Mangat (2012).

different ontological and epistemological principles of indigenous systems of knowledge on the one hand, and Western science on the other[53] (see, for instance, Wallner, 2011).

The analysis of different systems of knowledge, the emphasis of the constructedness of our reality, and the description of indigenous epistemologies, however, is only half the battle. Douglas L. Morgan summarises central problems in the attempt to legitimise indigenous knowledges and argues that despite the effort of acknowledging alternative ways of knowing besides Western parameters of science, "Indigenous scientific knowledges have been and continue to be plundered" (37). In reality, it is still the Western paradigms upon which indigenous knowledge is judged (see 45). This is indeed problematic if we wish different ways of knowing to equally coexist and nourish each other. The problem is also raised by Wallner (*Systemanalyse* 10f.) who argues: "Momentan ist die Situation so, dass Wissenschaft zwar international organisiert ist, tatsächlich aber einen europäischen Kern besitzt. Sie trägt in sich all jene impliziten Voraussetzungen, die der europäischen Kultur eignen".

Morgan suggests that a framework needs to be created within which indigenous researchers can develop a methodology that appreciates difference and diversity, and that "does not result in the appropriation of Indigenous knowledges and the exploitation of Indigenous peoples" (45f.). Wallner, too, warns against the common attempt to impose Western interpretations and explanations on indigenous knowledge and points to "the locality of truth" (*Systemanalyse* 67). In other words, there is no universal truth; hence, European universalism becomes inoperative. What follows is that "[a]n adequate philosophy of science must face the multitude of cultures and their different scientific approaches" (61).

This claim counts for the development of a culturally conscious pedagogy or science education, too. There has been incredibly valuable work conducted by

---

[53] The categories 'Indigenous knowledge' and 'Western science' are not without problems. Drawing on Macedo (1999), Aikenhead and Ogawa point out that they "continue the false dichotomy, Indigenous knowledge versus science, found in colonial discourse with its subtext of winners and losers" (540). The authors suggest using the triad "*Indigenous ways of living in nature* (plural), *neo-indigenous ways of knowing nature* […], and *Eurocentric sciences* (plural)" in order to decolonise and legitimise indigenous ways of knowing (ibid.). The term knowledge to describe indigenous ways of living or being is also problematic: "[…] Indigenous knowledge obviously conveys, like a Trojan horse, a Eurocentric noun-oriented epistemology. In this Eurocentric worldview, knowledge (as a noun) is something that can be given, accumulated, banked, and assessed by paper and pencil examinations. In short, knowledge within a Eurocentric worldview is an entity separate from the knower. Such an epistemic concept is totally foreign to most Indigenous worldviews […]" (ibid., 553). For reasons of simplicity, the terms are kept for this paper. Nevertheless, the critique by Aikenhead and Ogawa is most valuable for further analysis of and research into this topic, and the decolonisation of indigenous wisdoms.

philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, cultural studies researchers, and educators (see for instance Freire, 1970; Smith, 1999; Waters, 2004; Higgs, 2009; Aikenhead and Ogawa, 2007) to establish culturally conscious, postcolonial frameworks within which research of science education, inclusive of local epistemological discourses, is possible. This is indeed a tremendous step ahead to realise a postcolonial pedagogy that is convinced of the incredible potentials different wisdoms can offer. Hereby, it should be mentioned that the multiplicity of different perspectives does not necessarily lead to relativism; on the contrary, "Eine Vielzahl von Kulturen gibt bessere Einsichten in wissenschaftliche Mikrowelten als nur eine Kultur" (Wallner, *Systemanalyse* 11). What is gained when cultural diversity and the plurality of knowledges is taken seriously, is a better understanding of the world and human life. This is also pronounced by Brayboy and Castagno who argue that "Indigenous Science extends, complicates, and highlights the limitations of Western Science" (790). In this sense, the critique and subsequent advancement of western-dominated science education towards a culturally inclusive pedagogy is a question of mutual enrichment, and not a question of competition. Within a postcolonial framework, different ways of knowing are allowed to flourish and enrich each other. It creates an environment, where interaction between different, even conflicting mind-sets can occur, without the risk of domination, exploitation, or assimilation. This starting point is regarded as most fruitful for the advancement and reconceptualisation of educational theory, too[54], the overall aim of which is to "transform science education into a key vector for contributing to a socially just, culturally inclusive and environmentally balanced world order" (Adams et al. 1002).

One could well ask why a 'new' pedagogy has to be developed or what is wrong with the pedagogical basis of Austrian or other European (or in general Western) schools. Concerning the education systems of countries with a colonial past, the demand to revise the pedagogical premise seems to be more obvious, given that education was systematically misused to enshrine the colonial ideology[55]. Hickling-Hudson's teaching experience and research in Jamaica, for instance, demonstrated the way in which the Caribbean History curriculum of the 1960s and 1970s still continued to reflect colonial interpretations and created a "racialised neo-colonial discourse" (210) that decisively contributed to the development of a negative self-image of her students. It was only with the efforts of teachers that a change of the curriculum could be achieved. Further

---

[54] For further research and analysis of a culturally inclusive science education, consult the journal *Cultural Studies of Science Education*.
[55] See also Dei (2010).

research in schools in Australia and the United States has shown that "[s]chool students are often subjected to a callously ethnocentric version of knowledge" and revealed how "systemic institutional racism continues to locate disproportionate numbers of 'Blacks' at the bottom of multiracial societies" (ibid., 207). In general comparative education and curriculum research have revealed how "social power operates in cultural and ideological practices in schools" (Johnston, "Politics of Representation" 13), and how educational knowledge is produced within a framework based on the hierarchical representation of the dualistic categories 'self and non-self' (Baquero Torres 316), which is particularly prevalent in Western educational institutions.

Against the background of worldwide migration and growing multicultural societies, teachers need to adjust to this development and appreciate the cross-fertilisation of ideas flowing from different perspectives. Classrooms are microcosms that mirror reality. When it comes to institutionalised discrimination in schools, the work of comparative education and curriculum research is particularly significant in debunking any discriminatory reference of people based on sex, gender, class, race, ethnicity, or age (see, for instance, Weber 200, or Gomolla and Radtke, 2009). Schoolbooks, too, mirror the current value system of a society and will have an immense impact on students as research has proven. Alan Cunningsworth (90), for instance, argues that text books "directly or indirectly communicate sets of social and cultural values […]". In their book, *Die Anderen im Schulbuch* (2007), Christa Markom and Heidi Weinhäupl fiercely criticise Austrian textbooks for promoting prejudicial stereotypes, clichés, racist values, and biased narratives (in relation to the narrative of colonialism, for instance). Also, there was a project named "Migration(en) im Schulbuch"[56] (running from 2011 to 2013) lead by Christiane Hintermann, Christa Markom, and Heidi Weinhäupl, which focused on the representation of migrants in Austrian schoolbooks. More precisely, together with students and scientists, the researchers investigated into questions including: Which narratives of migrants are told and preferred?; Which are left out, marginalized, or forgotten?; How is 'the migrant' constructed?; and, How is migration valued in Austrian textbooks? The results yielded rather alarming results. Accordingly, migration is predominantly embedded in a negative context and generally perceived as a problem[57]. The conceptualisation of the

[56] More information about the initiative is available at the project website: http://www.migrationen-im-schulbuch.at/.

[57] If presented positively, migration is embedded within a "Nützlichkeitsdiskurs" (Markom and Weinhäupl, "Migration diskursiv" 16). Accordingly, migrants are portrayed as beneficial for the Austrian or European economy (ibid.).

migrant in textbooks is directly in line with the medial and political discourses about this issue (Hintermann, "Interview"). These findings did not remain unheard: The bm:uuk decided to set up guide lines for the textbook commission to guarantee the adequate representation of migration in Austrian schoolbooks (see Binder 5). Based on the research of Hintermann, Markom, and Weinhäupl, the online campaign "Diskrimminierung in Schulbüchern bekämpfen" was launched by M-Media in 2014, to raise awareness to the actuality and urgency of the issue of discrimination in Austrian schoolbooks. To reach a large audience and to benefit from collaborative work, M-Media set up a facebook website[58] where basically anyone can upload and discuss dubious teaching material. The aim of the project is to expand the research of discrimination in Austrian schoolbooks to issues of diversity, including age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and worldview (Inou qtd. in Tanasijevic, "Diskriminierung in Schulbüchern"). Critical reflection of educational presuppositions, evaluation of teaching materials, and curriculum research are absolutely necessary if we wish to live peacefully in a pluralistic world. Pedagogical premises do not only need to be revised in postcolonial environments, where traces of white supremacy are still pervasive. Especially in Western countries, where cultural presuppositions largely remain unquestioned, educators and researchers need to face the structures behind the production and circulation of eurocentric paradigms within Western educational contexts (see Adams et al. 1002).

Jane Elliott, a former teacher and anti-racist activist and educator, directly traces the problem of racism and discrimination back to Western education: "We [white population] are conditioned to the myth of white superiority" ("The Event" 45:21 – 45:24). In other words, people learn to be racist. Elliott greatly contributed to the understanding of the power-relations of institutionalised racism (see "Experiment"). With her famous blue-eyed brown-eyed exercise, Elliott highlighted the arbitrariness of discrimination and showed how the most minimal discriminal cue can be the basis of discrimination, when an authority adds value to one or another. The renowned psychologist Dr. Philip Zimbardo commented on the experiment (see "Experiment") and draws the following conclusion: "How do we teach people compassion after they have suffered, and not want revenge; teach them reconciliation and not […] retaliation?" (ibid., 07:41 – 07:51). Within a postcolonial pedagogy this is indeed a significant question: How can people live peacefully together in an environment that is

[58] https://www.facebook.com/SchulbuecherOsterreich.

marked by cultural conflict, diverse cultural, social, and political values, and diverse understandings of the world? How can people be freed from hate against each other and their 'desire' for revenge? One of the most admirable people, who understood that a peaceful society can only function on the basis of mutual respect, acceptance, understanding, tolerance, and the appreciation of a common humanity, was Nelson Mandela:

> It was during those long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my own people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black. I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred; he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as sure as I am not free when my humanity is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity. (Mandela, *Long Walk* 10469)

Even though Elliott's quasi-experiment of the 1960s and her subsequent anti-racist workshops and trainings have drawn much criticism concerning the ethical justification of her approach (Schrödter, 2009), or the pedagogical concept (Lang and Leiprecht, 2000), it bluntly demonstrates how systematic racism works: It is about how a system or establishment keeps uneven power relations among people. In an anti-racist workshop (see "the Event") the complexity of racism became particularly evident: One the one hand, people seemed to hold very different concepts of racism, and on the other, especially white participants, did not feel the need to make racial discrimination such a big issue at all. Psychological experts commenting on the processes of the workshop argued that this is a particular 'white problem' – racism does not exist because it does not exist to them. White participants were reluctant to see the problem and even more reluctant to walk in the shoes of the oppressed.

This is indeed a sad truth. Many people tend to be ignorant of the reality of discrimination. There seems to be a gap in the perception of the problem which is why students and teachers need to be trained in debunking and deconstructing processes and conceptions which produce and maintain the structural hegemony of discrimination[59]. In other words, "[t]he situation calls for teachers to face the complexities of challenging

---

[59] The qualitative research study conducted by Tamara Wallace and Brenda R. Brand provides valuable insights into the potentials of culturally responsive science teaching and education, to meet the needs of students from oppressed cultural groups. The starting point of the study is the growing trend in U.S. public schools: "the growing number of minority students […] and the young, White, middle-class women available to teach them […]" (345). The study engages with the political nature of education and the complex relationship between education, neo-colonialism, and structural discrimination. The overarching research question of the study is: "Is a critical awareness of societal constructions of difference or characterizations of race pivotal to teaching African American students?" (ibid.; 347).

the manifestations of continuing racism – discrimination, exclusion, cultural suppression and other forms of injustice" (Hickling-Hudson 205). A postcolonial pedagogy seeks to shatter the myth of white superiority which seems to be so deeply rooted in Western civilisation, so that many people already become blind to issues of discrimination, social and racial injustice, and other infringements. Only with a postcolonial turn in educational theory, will underlying cultural presuppositions become accessible to criticism and change. Against the background of the power of education (both, to keep people in subjugation and to liberate oppressed groups of people), Jamila Codrington argues for the development of a "liberatory education" ("Sharpening the lens") to decolonise oppressed student groups. Accordingly, education is conceived of as "a primary pathway for liberation" (ibid.), "a liberatory tool" (ibid.), or, to put it into Shaull's words, "a practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (34). Similar to Wallance and Brand, Codrington is alarmed by the way in which structural inequalities and cultural biases within the educational system have disadvantaged African American students in the United States, and stresses the necessity of a culturally responsive teaching practice to end structural inequities.

In accordance with Codrington, I, too, favour "an education that can challenge the systematic racism, neo-colonialism, Eurocentrism, and cultural oppression that have historically relegated them [marginalised groups of people] to a subordinate status, continued to violate their civil liberties, and psychologically reinforced inferiority complexes and self-alienation" ("Sharpening the lens"). In respect to the situation in Austria, a reconceptualisation of the pedagogical premises towards a postcolonial approach to education is already long overdue, given the cultural bias against migration found in Austrian textbooks (see *Die Anderen im Schulbuch*), or the use of dubious and prejudicial teaching materials (see "Schulbücher-Österreich"). Also, research is necessary to investigate into the way in which Austrian teachers perceive the growing multiculturalism in their classrooms, and the way in which they handle this situation[60]. The study carried out by Wallace and Brand was based on the facts that teachers "possess preconceived ideas about the students' culture and academic potential"[61] and

[60] Kalpaka argues that teachers often shield or shift problems of discrimination (32f.). Accordingly, teachers react inherent to the system in using dominant explanatory models that both generate and cement institutionalised discrimination (ibid., 33).

[61] Kalpaka, too, argues that academic underachievement of migrants is almost instinctively ascribed to their cultural or ethnic identity (26).

additionally feel "ill-equipped to teach culturally diverse students" (345). This vicious combination leads, according to the authors, to "the achievement gap; the overrepresentation of minority students in special education programs; and the under representation of this same group in accelerated programs" (ibid.). A similar situation prevails in Austria. As the most recent PISA study reveals, there is an achievement gap between Austrian students without a migration background and those students with a migration background (see Pareiss and Schwantner 48f.). Moreover, students with a migration background are overrepresented in high-risk groups (Risikogruppe[62]) and underrepresented in top groups (Spitzengruppe[63]) (see Schwantner 54f.). The latest examination of the educational standards in English at form 8 (E8) carried out in spring 2013, yielded similar results: Although the difference is not as striking as in other studies (PISA, 2013 or M8, 2012[64]), students with a migration background generally achieve lower competences in listening, reading, and writing skills than students without a migration background (see Schreiner and Breit 47ff.). Against this background it is important to ask why students with a migration background find it hard to be successful in Austrian schools. Apparently, the Austrian school system cannot meet the needs for this increasingly growing group of students. A rethinking has to take place, regarding the educational assumptions that shape and structure everyday teaching and learning, and it is essential to start the analysis of the current situation

> from the vantage point of the cultural group being taught, not from the dominant cultural group that controls the educational institution and has the power to promote their own beliefs, values and standards. Without a clear understanding of what goals are considered paramount to those marginalized cultural groups being educated, we run the risk of promoting education reform strategies that continue to serve the needs of the dominant group and perpetuate the status quo. (Codrington "Sharpening the lens")

In conclusion, as sensible and culturally responsive teachers, it is our responsibility to teach students an ethics of tolerance, respect, and understanding of others. However, given that Western education is decisively ensnared in a binary logic of dichotomies and the associated hierarchical and deficient representation of the Other (Baquero Torres 323), the commitment and readiness of educators to teach along the idea of diversity and plurality only seems a drop in the ocean. What is really needed to achieve real

[62] "Zur Risikogruppe werden bei PISA jene Schüler/innen zusammengefasst, denen es im Alter von 15-/16 Jahren an den wesentlichen Grundkompetenzen mangelt. Sie erreichen in Lesen, Mathematik oder Naturwissenschaft maximal die unterste Kompetenzstufe1" (Schwantner 55).

[63] "Die Spitzengruppen umfassen bei PISA jene Schüler/innen, die in Lesen, Mathematik oder Naturwissenschaften sehr hohe Leistungen (zumindest auf Kompetenzstufe5) erbringen" (Schwantner 55).

[64] Examination of the educational standards in mathematics at form 8.

change towards an inclusive and tolerant society, is a postcolonial pedagogy, “die das pädagogische Denken und Handeln in ihrer Verstrickung in (neo)kolonialen Machterhältnissen als Bestandteil der Lehrerbiludung und Fortbildung betrachtet” (Baquero Torres 323). Similarly, Kalpaka criticises the tendency towards the detachment of pedagogical action from its socio-political and institutional framework, and argues that only with a critical focus on the institutional dimension of education, insights can be gained to engage into a “rassismuskritischen Bildungsarbeit” (29). The necessity to critically analyse the socio-political dimension of education with a postcolonial lens is also stressed by David G. Smith, who poses the question: “How shall education proceed when its central assumptions about curricular and teacherly authority have been shown to be complicit in the subjugation of many of the world’s people […]” (1). How should culturally sensitive education proceed when it is still situated within a context that is ethnocentric, monocultural, and monolingual (Kalpaka 33)?[65] Ultimately, it is the aim of postcolonial pedagogy “to recognise, explore and disrupt entrenched preconceptions that may be limiting our possibilities for changing the directions that would create more equitable societies in a globalising world” (Hickling-Hudson 203).

[65] Certainly, (inter-) cultural competence, the awareness and importance of linguistic and cultural diversity, and other related issues are firmly anchored in the Austrian curriculum of grammar schools; however, this does not mean that teaching automatically occurs along these principles. For this reason, a critical stance is necessary to debunk traces of discrimination in both, every day teaching practices and the structural framework within teaching practice is embedded.

8. Bibliography

Achebe, Chinua. “An African Voice.” Interview by Katie Bacon. *Atlantic Unbound: The Atlantic Online.* 2 August 2000. 10 February 2014 <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/interviews/ba2000-08-02.htm>

-----.*Things Fall Apart*. 1959. US: Anchor Books, 1994.

-----.“The Role of the Writer in a New Nation.” *African Writers on African Writing*. Ed. G. D. Killam. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973. 7-13.

-----.*Morning Yet on Creation Day*. London: Heinemann, 1975.

-----.“The African Writer and the English Language.” 1964. *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays.* London: Heinemann, 1975. 55-62.

-----.“The Novelist as Teacher.” *Hopes and Impediments*. London: Heinemann, 1988.

Adams, Jennifer, Bal Chandra Luitel, Emilia Alfonso, and Peter Charles Taylor. “A cogenerative inquiry using postcolonial theory to envisage culturally inclusive science education.” *Cultural Studies of Science Education* 3 (2008): 999-1019. *Springer Link*. University Vienna Library. 17 February 2014 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11422-008-9130-0>.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Purple Hibiscus*. 2004. London: Fourth Estate, 2013.

-----.*Half of a Yellow Sun*. 2006. London: Fourth Estate, 2009.

-----.”Ghosts.” *The Thing Around Your Neck*. London: Fourth Estate, 2009. 57-73.

-----.“The Danger of the Single Story.” Youtube Video. *TED Talk*, 2009. 31 October 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>.

Afolayan, Shina. “The Question of a Post-Colonial Culture: Language, Ideology and Cultural Essentialism.” *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 7 (2002). 10 April 2014 <http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v7is1/afola.htm>.

Ahmad, Aijaz. “Jameson’s Rhetoric of Otherness and the ‘National Allegory’.” *Social Text* 17 (Autumn 1987): 3-25. *JSTOR.* 15 April 2014 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466475>.

“AHS Lehrplan der Oberstufe. Allgemeiner Teil des Lehrplanes.“ *Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*. 30 October 2013 <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11668/11668.pdf>.

“AHS Lehrplan der Oberstufe für lebende Fremdsprachen.“ *Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*. 30 October 2013 <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11854/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs.pdf>.

Aikenhead, Glen S. and Masakata Ogawa. “Indigenous knowledge and science revisted.” *Cultural Studies of Scientific Education* 2 (2007): 539-620. *Springer Link*. University Vienna Library. 22 February 2014 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11422-007-9067-8>.

Alimi. S. A. “A Study of the Use of Proverbs as a Literary Device in Achebe’s Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God.” *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 2 (March 2012): 121-127. 16 January 2014 <http://www.hrmars.com/admin/pics/657.pdf>.

Anthony, Andrew. “Jane Elliott, the American schoolmarm who would rid us of our racism.” *theguardian.com* 18 October 2009. 20 February 2014 <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2009/oct/18/racism-psychology-jane-elliott-4>.

Antor, Heinz. “Postcolonial Pedagogy, or Why and How to Teach the New English Literatures.” *Anglistentag 1999 Mainz. Proceedings of the Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English XXI.* Ed. Bernard Reitz and Sigrid Rieuwerts. Trier: WVT,2000. 245-262.

-----.“Multikulturalismus, Interkulturalität und Transkulturalität: Perspektiven für interdisziplinäre Forschung und Lehre.“ *Inter- und Transkulturelle Studien, Theoretische Grundlagen und interdisziplinäre Praxis*. Ed. Heinz Antor. Heidelberg: Winter, 2006. 25-39.

Anyokwu, Christopher. “Igbo Rhetoric and the New Nigerian Novel: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*.” *The African Symposium* 11 (June 2011). 5 March 2014 <http://www.ncsu.edu/aern/TAS11.1/TAS11.1_Anyokwu.pdf>.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. Introduction. *Nervous Conditions.* By Tsitsi Dangarembga. 1988. Oxfordshire: Ayebia, 2004. vii-xi.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*. 2nd ed. 1989. London: Routledge, 2002.

Ashcroft, Bill. “Including China: Bei Dao, resistance and the imperial state.” *Textual Practice* 27 (2013): 357-377. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Vienna University Library. 20 April 2014 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2013.784019>.

Atofarati, Abubaker A. “The Nigerian Civil War, Causes, Strategies, and Lessons Learnt.” *African Masterweb*. 1992. 19 January 2014 <http://www.africamasterweb.com/BiafranWarCauses.html>.

Bakare-Yusuf, Bibi.“Beyond Determinism: The Phenomenology of African Female Existence.” *Feminist Africa: Changing Cultures* 2 (2003). 25 April 2014 <http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_2_feature_article_1.pdf>.

Bakhtin, M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Baingana, Doreen. *Tropical Fish. Tales from Entebbe*. 2005. New York: Harlem Moon, 2006.

Baingana, Doreen. “Passion”. *Tropical Fish. Tales from Entebbe*. 2005. New York: Harlem Moon, 2006. 55-80.

-----.“Tropical Fish.” *Tropical Fish. Tales from Entebbe*. 2005. New York: Harlem Moon, 2006. 97-114.

-----.“Lost in Los Angeles.” *Tropical Fish. Tales from Entebbe*. 2005. New York: Harlem Moon, 2006. 115-144.

-----.“Questions of Home.” *Tropical Fish: Tales from Entebbe*. 2005. New York: Harlem Moon, 2006. 145-177.

-----.“The role of offensive language in novels.” Youtube Video. *TED Talk*. 1 December 2013 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwslzT6DKSI>.

Balakian, Anna. “The Pitfalls of the Definitions of World Literature.” *Neohelicon* 10 (1983): 33-39. *Springer Link*. Vienna University Library. 8 April 2014 <http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/817/art%253A10.1007%252FBF02090406.pdf?auth66=1398441438_5be12033981e83d3fdec3fc8441019fe&ext=.pdf>.

Baquero Torres, Patricia. “Postkoloniale Pädagogik. Ansätze zu einer interdependenten Betrachtung von Differenz.” *Schlüsselwerke der Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Julia Reuter and Alexandra Karentzos. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012. 315-326. *Springer Link*. Vienna University Library. 17 February 2014 <http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-531-93453-2/page/1>.

Barker, Chris. “Ethnicity, Race and Nation.” *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage Publications, 2000. 193-211.

Barthes, Roland. “The Third Meaning.” *Image Music Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana Press, 1977. 52-68.

-----.“The Death of the Author.” *Image Music Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana Press, 1977. 142-148.

Baumann, Zygmunt. *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity, 1998.

Behdad, Ali. “Global Disjunctures, Diasporic Differences, and the New World (Dis-)Order.” *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002. 396-409.

Bennett, Louise. “Colonization in Reverse.” lousebennett.com. 13 April 2014 <http://louisebennett.com/colonization-in-reverse/>.

Benton, Michael, and Geoff Fox. *Teaching Literature: Nine to Fourteen*. 6th ed. Oxford: OUP, 1985

Berndt. Katrin. “West Africa.” *English Literatures Across the Globe: A Companion.* Ed. Lars Eckstein. München. Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2007. 61-85.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

-----.“Signs of Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Dehli. May 1817.” *Critical Inquiry* 12 (Autumn 1985): 144-165. *JSTOR*. 21 April 2014 <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/1343466?uid=3737528&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21104049656453>.

Binder, Susanne, Hanna Klien, and Eva Kössner, ed. “Wenn KSA zur Schule geht: Kultur- und Sozialanthropolog_innen im Bildungsbereich zwischen Forschung und Praxis. Konferenzbericht: 8. Tage der Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie 2013.“ *Austrian Studies in Social Anthropology (ASSA), Sondernummer KSA-Tage* (2013). 21 February 2014 <http://www.univie.ac.at/alumni.ksa/images/text-documents/ASSA/ASSA-KSA2013_WennKSAzurSchuleGeht.pdf>.

Bogdan, Deanne. “Feminism, Romanticism and the New Literacy in Response Journals.” *Reading and Response*. Ed. Michale Hayhoe and Stephan Parker. Philadelphia: Open UP, 1990. 62-72.

Bonanomi, Klaus. “Schweizer stimmen für Wiedereinführung von Einwanderungsquoten.” *derStandard.at*. 9 February 2014. 28 February 2014 <http://derstandard.at/1389859784061/Schweizer-stimmen-ueber-Initiative-gegen-Zuwanderung-ab>.

Boswell, Barbara. “Review: Tropical Fish: Stories out of Entebbe by Doreen Baingana.” *Feminist Africa: Diaspora Voices* 7 (December 2006): 138-143. 7 January 2014 <http://web.uct.ac.za/org/feministafrica/Feminist_Africa_7.pdf>.

Brayboy McKinley Jones, Bryan, and Angelina E. Castagno. “Indigenous Knowledges and native science as partners: a rejoinder.” *Cultural Studies of Science Education* 3 (2008): 787-791. *Springer Link*. University Vienna Library. 17 February 2014 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11422-008-9142-9>.

Bredella, Lothar. “The Anthropological and Pedagogical Significance of Aesthetic Reading in the Foreign Language Classroom.” *Challenges of Literary Texts in the Foreign Language Classroom.* Ed. Lothar Bredella and Werner Delanoy. Tübingen: gnv, 1996. 1-29.

Bredella, Lothar, and Werner Delaony. Introduction. *Challenges of Literary Texts in the Foreign Language Classroom.* Ed. Lothar Bredella and Werner Delanoy. Tübingen: gnv, 1996:vii-xxviii.

-----.“Bildung als Interaktion zwischen literarischen Texten und Leser/innen. Zur Begründung der rezeptionsästhetischen Literaturdidaktik.“ *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht*. Ed. Lothar Bredella and Werner Delanoy. Tübingen: gnv, 1999. 49-68.

-----.“Zielsetzungen interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterrichts.” *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht*. Ed. Lothar Bredella and Werner Delanoy. Tübingen: gnv, 1999. 85-120.

Breitinger, Eckhard, and Pia Thielmann. “East Africa.” *English Literatures Across the Globe: A Companion*. Ed. Lars Eckstein. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag UTB, 2007. 108-132.

Bulawayo, NoViolet. *We Need New Names*. 2013. London: Vintage, 2014.

Byram, Katra, and Claire Kramsch. “Why Is It so Difficult to Teach Language as Culture?” *The German Quarterly* 81 (Winter 2008): 20-34. *Wiley Online Library*. Vienna University Library 29 April 2014 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1756-1183.2008.00005.x/pdf>.

Cai, Mingshui. *Multicultural Literature for children and Young Adults: Reflections on Critical Issues*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.

Chan, Philip. K. W. “Literature, Language Awareness and EFL.” *Language Awareness* 8 (1999): 38-50. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Vienna University Library. 29 April 2014 <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09658419908667116#.U1-fx1ecz-A>.

Ch’ien, Evelyn Nien-Ming. *Weird English*. London: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Childs, Peter, and Patrick Williams. *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*. Essex: Pearson Education, 1997.

Cohn, Ruth C. “Gelebte Geschichte der Psychotherapie. Buch II.“ *Gelebte Geschichte der Psychotherapie. Zwei Perspektiven*. Ed. Alfred Farau and Ruth Cohn. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984. 199-647.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness and other Tales*. 1990. Ed. Cedric Watts. New York: OUP,2002.

Cordington, Jamila. “Sharpening the lens of culturally responsive science teaching: a call for liberatory education for oppressed student groups.” *Cultural Studies of Science Education* (2014). *Springer Link*. Vienna University Library. 23 February 2014 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11422-013-9543-2>.

Cunningsworth, Alan. *Choosing Your Coursebook. Oxford*: Heinemann, 1995.

Damasio, Antonio R. *Descartes‘ Irrtum: Fühlen, Denken und das menschliche Gehirn*. 1994. 5th ed. Trans. Hainer Kober. Berlin: List, 2007.

-----.*Ich fühle, also bin ich: Die Entschlüsselung des Bewusstseins*. 1999. 7th ed. Trans. Heiner Kober. Berlin: List, 2007.

Damrosch, David. *What is World Literature?* New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2003.

-----.*How to read World Literature?* UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Dangarembga, Tsitsi. *Nervous Conditions*. 1988. Oxfordshire: Ayebia, 2004.

Davis, Geoffrey V., Peter H. Marsden, Bénédicte Ledent, and Marc Delrez, ed. *Towards a Transcultural Future: Literature and Society in a ‘Post’-Colonial World*. New York: Rodopi, 2004.

Daymond, M. J., Dorothy Driver, Sheila Meintjes, Leloba Molema, Chiedza Musengezi, Margie Orford, and Nbantu Rasebotsa, ed. *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region*. Vol. I. New York: Feminist Press, 2003.

Dei, George J. Sefa. “Reclaiming Our Africanness in the Disaporized Context: The Challenge of Asserting a Critical African Personality.” *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4 (January 10). 21 March 2014 <www.jpanafrican.com/docs/vol4no10/4.10Reclaiming.pdf>.

Delanoy, Werner. “’Come to Mecca’: Assessing a Literary Text’s Potential for Intercultural Learning.” *Experiencing a Foreign Culture*. Ed. Werner Delanoy, Johann Köberl and Tschachler Heinz. Tübingen: gnv, 1993. 275-302.

-----.“The Complexity of Literature Teaching in the Language Classroom: A Reflective Practitioner’s View. *Challenges of Literary Texts in the Foreign Language Classroom*. Ed. Lothar Bredella and Werner Delanoy. Tübingen: gnv, 1996. 62-90.

-----.“Die Relevanz der englischsprachigen Literaturpädagogik für die fremdsprachliche Literaturdidaktik.“ *Fremde Texte verstehen: Festschrift für Lothar Bredella zum 60.*

Geburtstag. Ed. Herbert Christ and Michale K. Legutke. Tübingen: gnv, 1996. 72-86.

-----.*Fremdsprachlicher Literaturunterricht. Theorie und Praxis als Dialog*. Tübingen: gnv, 2002.

-----."Literaturdidaktik als Zusammenspiel von Rezeptionsästhetik und TASK-BASED-LEARNING." *Neue Ansätze und Konzepte der Literatur- und Kulturdidaktik*. Ed. Wolfgang Hallet and Ansgar Nünning. Trier: WVT, 2007. 106-122.

-----."Transkulturalität und Literatur im Englischunterricht." *Fremdsprachliches Lehren und Lernen* 37 (2008): 95-108.

-----."From 'Inter' to 'Trans'? Or: Quo Vadis Cultural Learning?" *Basic Issues in EFL Teaching and Learning*. Ed. Maria Eisenmann and Theresa Summer. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012. 157-168.

-----."The (Inter)cultural Dimension of (English) Language Learning." Seminar at the Alpen-Adria University of Klagenfurt (summer term 2013).

Dewey, John, and Arthur Bentley. *Knowing and the Known*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1949.

Dirlik, Arif. "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism." *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Winter 1994): 328-356. 14 April 2014 <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/sj6/dirlikpocoaura.pdf>.

Donnerstag, Jürgen, and Martina Wolff. "Literarische Texte und Emotionen im Fremdsprachenunterricht." *Neue Ansätze und Konzepte der Literatur- und Kulturdidaktik*. Ed. Wolfgang Hallet and Ansgar Nünning. Trier: WVT, 2008. 143-164.

Döring, Tobias. *Postcolonial Literatures in English*. 4th edition. Stuttgart: Klett Lernen und Wissen GmbH, 2011.

Eckstein, Lars. Introduction. *English Literatures Across the Globe: A Companion*. Ed. Lars Eckstein. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag UTB, 2007. 13-19.

"Experiment Jane Elliot – Brown Eyes vs. Blue Eyes." Youtube Video. *Heroic Imagination TV* 25 September 2011. 19 February 2014 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hqp6GnYqIjQ>.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks.* 1952. Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2008.

Fennes, Helmut, and Karen Hapgood. *Intercultural Learning in the Classroom: Crossing Borders*. London: Cassell, 1997.

Fish, Stanley. "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One." *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. 1980. 12th printing. London: HUP, 2003. 322-337.

Fokkema, Douwe Wessel, and Elrud Ibsch. *Knowledge and Commitment: A Problem-Oriented Approach to Literary Studies*. Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literatures. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. Introd. Donald Macedo. New York: Continuum, 1970.

Freitag, Britta, and Marion Gymnich. "New English and Postcolonial Literatures im Fremdsprachenunterricht." *Neue Ansätze und Konzepte der Literatur- und Kulturdidaktik*. Ed. Wolfgang Hallet and Ansgar Nünning. Trier: WVT, 2007. 258-276.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice. Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: OUP, 2007

Friedman Jonathan. "Global Crisis, the Struggle for Identity and Intellectual Porkbarrelling. Cosmopolitans Versus Locals, Ethnics and Nationals in an Era of De-

Hegemonisation." *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*. Ed. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood. London: Zed, 1997. 70-89.

Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2nd ed. New York: Crossroad, 1989.

Gay, J., M. Groce-Galis, and K. Hardee. "Reducing Stigma and Discrimination." *What Works for Women and Girls: Evidence for HIV/AIDS Interventions*. 2nd ed. Washington DC: Future Group, Health Policy Project, 2012. 24 April 2014 <http://www.whatworksforwomen.org/chapters/21-Strengthening-the-Enabling-Environment/sections/67-Reducing-Stigma-and-Discrimination>.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. 1973. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

Gilroy, Paul. *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*. 1992. Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2002.

-----."Roots and Routes: Black Identity as an Outernational Project." *Racial and Ethnic Identity: Psychological Development and Creative Expression*. Ed. Herbert Harris, Howard Blue, and Ezra Griffith. London: Routledge, 1995. 15-30.

Gomolla, Mechtild, and Frank-Olaf Radtke. *Institutionelle Diskriminierung. Die Herstellung ethnischer Differenz in der Schule*. 3. Auflage. Wiesbaden: VS, 2009.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Ed and transl. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith 1971. London: ElecBook, 1999. 23 April 2014 <http://courses.justice.eku.edu/PLS330_Louis/docs/gramsci-prison-notebooks-vol1.pdf>.

Grioux, Henry A., and Peter L. McLaren. "Introduction: Media Hegemony: Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Representation." *Media Knowledge: Readings in Popular Culture, Pedagogy, and Critical Citizenship*. Ed. James Schwoch, Mimi White, and Susan Reilly. NY: State University of New York, 1992. xv-xxxiv.

Hanauer, David. "Poetry reading in the second language classroom." *Language Awareness* 6 (1997): 2-16. Taylor & Francis Online. Vienna University Library. 29 April 2014. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09658416.1997.9959912>.

Hall, Stuart. "When was the post-colonial: rethinking at the limit." *The post-colonial question: common skies, divided horizons*. Ed. Ian Chambers and Lidia Curti. London: Routledge, 1996. 242-259.

-----."The Question of Cultural Identity". *Modernity. An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Ed. Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. 596-632

Hall, Stuart, and Paul du Gay, ed. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. 1996. London: SAGE Publications, 2005.

Hallet, Wolfgang. "Literatur und Kultur im Unterricht: Ein kulturwissenschaftlicher didaktischer Ansatz." *Neue Ansätze und Konzepte der Literatur- und Kulturdidaktik*. Ed. Wolfgang Hallet and Ansgar Nünning. Trier: WVT, 2007. 31-47.

Hickling-Hudson, Anne. "Cultural Complexity, Post-Colonialism and Educational Change: Challenges for Comparative Educators." *International Review of Education* 52 (2007): 201-218. *Springer Link*. Vienna University Library. 28 November 2013 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11159-005-5592-4>

Higgs, Philip. "Towards an Indigenous African Educational Discourse: a Philosophical Reflection." *Living Together: Education and Intercultural Dialogue*. Ed. Suzanne Majhanovich, Christine Fox and Adila Pašali Kreso. Springer, 2009. 159-172. *Springer Link*. Vienna University Library. 22 February <http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4020-9816-1_10>.

Hintermann, Christiane, Christa Markom, and Heidi Weinhäupl. *Zwischenbericht des Projekts "Migration(en) im Schulbuch"*. April 2012. 19 February 2014 <http://www.migrationen-im-schulbuch.at/pdf/Zwischenbericht%20Migrationen%20im%20Schulbuch%20April%202012.pdf>.

Hintermann, Christiane. "Interview: Migracija u školskim udžbenicima - Migration(en) im Schulbuch." Youtube Video. *Dijaspora TV* 19 April 2013. 19 February 2014 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyMCLZSHdW4#t=92>.

Hoffmann, Michael. *Interkulturelle Literaturwissenschaft Eine Einführung*. München: Wilhelm Fink, 2006.

Hogan, Norma Colm. *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A guide for Humanists*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Hogg, Michael A., and Graham M. Vaughan, eds. *Social Psychology.* 4th ed. Essex: Pearson Education, 2005.

Holland, Norman N. *The Dynamics of Literary Response*. New York: OUP, 1968.

Holzmann, Christian. "Creative Writing im Englischunterricht". *Studienreihe Pädagogik und Fachdidaktik für LehrerInnen* Nr. 6 (1990).

Iser, Wolfgang. "Die Wirklichkeit der Fiktion – Elemente eines funktionsgeschichtlichen Textmodells" *Rezeptionsästhetik. Theorie und Praxis*. Ed. Rainer Warning. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975. 277-324.

-----."Die Appellstruktur der Texte." *Rezeptionsästhetik. Theorie und Praxis*. Ed. Rainer Warning. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975. 228-252.

-----."Der Lesevorgang." *Rezeptionsästhetik. Theorie und Praxis*. Ed. Rainer Warning. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975. 253-276.

-----.*Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*. München: Fink, 1976.

Jauß, Hans-Robert. *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*. München: Fink, 1977.

Johnston, Ingrid. "Postcolonial Literature and the Politics of Representation in School Programs." *Interchange* 30 (1999): 11-25. *Springer Link*. Vienna University Library. 17 February 2014 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A%3A1007539608721>.

-----.*Re-Mapping Literary Worlds: Postcolonial Pedagogy in Practice*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003.

Johnston, Ingrid, and Jyoti Mangat, eds. *Reading Practices, Postcolonial Literature, and Cultural Mediation in the Classroom*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012.

Kalpaka, Annita. "Institutionelle Diskriminierung im Blick – Von der Notwendigkeit Ausblendungen und Verstrickungen in rassismuskritischer Bildungsarbeit zu thematisieren." *Rassismuskritik Band 2: Rassismuskritische Bildungsarbeit*. Politik und Bildung 48. Ed. Wiebke Scharathow, and Rudolf Leiprecht. Schalbach: Wochenschau Verlag, 2009. 25-40.

Keshavarzi, Abdollah. "Use of literature in teaching English." *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 46 (2012): 554-559. Elsevier. 5 January 2014 <http://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042812012888/1-s2.0-S1877042812012888-main.pdf?_tid=3b0f3066-9581-11e3-b414-00000aacb362&acdnat=1392386982_11fe26ecfd76e9651fcc85eb4b6ae95c>

Kordes, Hagen. "Intercultural Learning at School: Limits and Possibilities." *Mediating Languages and Cultures: Towards an Intercultural Theory of Foreign Language Education*. Ed. Dieter Buttjes and Micahel Byram. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1991. 287-305.

Kostogriz, Alex. "Teaching literacy in multicultural classrooms: Towards a pedagogy of 'Thirdspace'." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian

Association for Research in Education, Brisban. 2002. 4 April 2014 <http://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2002/kos02346.pdf>.

Kramsch, Claire. *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: OUP, 1993.

-----."The Privilege of the Intercultural Speaker." *Language Learning in Intercultural Perspective. Approaches through drama and ethnography*. Ed. Michael Byram and Michael Fleming. Cambridge: CUP, 1998. 16-31.

-----. "Thirdness: The Intercultural Stance." *Language, Culture and Identity*. Ed. Torben Vestergaard. Aalborg: Aalborg UP, 1999. 41-58.

-----."From Communicative Competence to Symbolic Competence." *Modern Language Journal* 90 (Summer 2006): 249-252. *JSTOR*. Vienna University Library. 5 May 2014 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3876875>.

-----."Third Culture and Language Education." *Contemporary Applied Linguistics: Language Teaching and Learning*. Vol. 1. Ed. Vivian Cook and Li Wei. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009. 233-254.

-----."The symbolic dimension of the intercultural." *Language Teaching* 44 (July 2011): 354-367. *Cambridge Journals*. Vienna University Library. 20 February 2014 <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=8271740&jid=LTA&volumeId=44&issueId=03&aid=8271738&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession=>.

Kramsch, Claire, and Oliver Kramsch. "The Avatars of Literature in Language Study." *The Modern Language Journal* 4 (Winter 2000): 553-573. *Wiley Online Library*. Vienna University Library. 20 March 2014 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/0026-7902.00087/pdf>.

Kurtz, J. Roger. "The Intertextual Imagination in Purple Hibiscus." *The Free Library* (2011). 5 March 2014 <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+intertextual+imagination+in+Purple+Hibiscus.-a0284678700>.

Lang, Susanne, and Rudolf Leiprecht. "Sinnvolles und problematisches in der antirassistischen Bildungsarbeit. Eine kritische Betrachtung des Blue Eyed/Brown Eyed-Trainings (Jane Elliott)." *Neue Praxis* 30 (2000): 449-471.

Lazar, Gillian. *Literature and language teaching: A guide for teachers and trainers*. Cambridge: CUP, 1993.

Lazarus, Neil. *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*. Cambridge: CUP, 1999.

"Legasthenie-Test: Suche ‚Neger' und ‚Enger'." *derStandard.at* 18 February 2014. 19 February 2014 <http://derstandard.at/1392685426789/Legasthenie-Test-Suche-Neger-und-Enger>.

Liamputtong, Pranee, ed. *Women, Motherhood and Living with HIV/AIDS: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013.

Lihamba, Amandina, Fulata L. Moyo, Mugaybuso M. Mulokozi, Naomi L. Shitemi, and Saida Yahya-Othman, ed. *Women Writing Africa: The Eastern Region*. Vol. III. New York: Feminist Press, 2007.

Lyons, Eric, and Kyle Butt. "Darwin, Evolution, and Racism." *Apologetics Press*. (2009). 2 April 2014 <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=9&article=2654>.

Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. Kindle Ed. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008.

-----."Lighting your Way to a Better Future." *Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory*. 2 February 2014 <http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub_view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NMS909&txtstr=lighting%20your%20way >.

Markom, Christa and Heidi Weinhäupl. *Die Anderen im Schulbuch: Rassismen, Exotismen, Sexismen und Antisemitismus in österreichischen Schulbüchern*. Wien: Braunmüller, 2007.

Markom, Christan and Heidemarie Weinhäupl. "Migration diskursiv: Problematisierung und Sprachkritik in Schulbuch und Schule." Ed. Susanne Binder, Hanna Klien, and Eva Kössner. "Wenn KSA zur Schule geht: Kultur- und Sozialanthropolog_innen im Bildungsbereich zwischen Forschung und Praxis. Konferenzbericht: 8. Tage der Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie 2013." *Austrian Studies in Social Anthropology (ASSA), Sondernummer KSA-Tage* (2013). 21 February 2014 <http://www.univie.ac.at/alumni.ksa/images/text-documents/ASSA/ASSA-KSA2013_WennKSAzurSchuleGeht.pdf>.

McClintock, Anne. "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism'." *Social Text* 31 (1992): 64-98. 21 April 2014 <http://postcolonial.net/@/DigitalLibrary/_entries/43/file-pdf.pdf>.

McFadden, Patricia. "Sexual Pleasure as Feminist Choice." *Feminist Africa: Changing Cultures* 2 (2003). 24 April 2014 <http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_2_standpoint_1.pdf>.

McRae, John. "Dances with the Thorns: New Perspectives on the Teaching of New Literatures." *Challenges of Literary Texts in the Foreign Language Classroom*. Ed. Lothar Bredella and Werner Delanoy. Tübingen: gnv, 1996. 227-232.

Miller, J. Hillis. "Globalization and World Literature." *Neohelicon* 38 (Dec 2011): 251-265. *Springer Link* 8 April 2014 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11059-011-0114-9>.

Mishra, Vijay, and Bob Hodge. "What is post(-)colonialism?" *Australian Cultural Studies: A Reader*. Ed. John Frow and Meaghan Morris. Sidney: Allen & Unwin, 1993. 30-46.

Miyoshi, Masao. "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State." *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary.* Ed. Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996. 78-106.

Morgan, Douglas L. "Appropriation, Appreciation, Accommodation: Indigenous Wisdoms and Knowledges in Higher Education." *International Review of Education* 49 (2003). *Springer Link*. Vienna University Library. 18 February 2014 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A%3A1022937003545>.

Neill, Alex. "Empathy and (Film) Fiction." *Post-Theory: Reconstruction Film Studies*. Ed. David Bordwell and Noel Carroll. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996. 175-194.

Ngugi, wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature*. 1981. London: Currey, 1991

Nkrumah, Kwane. *Africa Must Unite*. 1963. London: Heinemann, 1964.

Nunner-Winkler, Gertrud. "Normal Elements of Ethnocentrism." *Multiculturalism in a World of Leaking Boundaries*. Ed. Dieter Haselbach. Münster: LIT, 1998. 279-308.

Nussbaum, Martha. *Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2006.

Nünning, Ansgar. "Fremdverstehen und Bildung durch neue Weltansichten: Perspektivenvielfalt, Perspektivenwechsel und Perspektivenübernahme durch Literatur." *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht*. Ed. Lothar Bredella and Werner Delanoy. Tübingen: gnv, 1999. 123-142.

"Official Website of the Federal Republic of Nigeria." 12 March 2014 <http://www.nigeria.gov.ng/index.php>.

Oatley, Keith. "A Taxonomy of the Emotions of Literary Response and a Theory of Identification in Fictional Narrative." *Poetics* 23 (1994): 53-74. *Science Direct*. Vienna University Library. 29 April 2014 <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0304422X94P4296S>.

Olaniyan, Tejumola. "Africa: Varied Colonial Legacies." *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002. 269-281.

Olusola, Lawal M., and Fatai Alabi, Lawal. "Language and Ideology in Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 13 (July – August 2013): 8-16. 28 April 2014 <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol13-issue1/B01310816.pdf>.

Pareiss, Manuela, and Ursula Schwantner. "Schüler/innen mit Migrationshintergrund." *PISA 2012 Internationaler Vergleich von Schülerleistungen: Erste Ergebnisse Mathematik, Lesen, Naturwissenschaft*. Ed. Ursula Schwantner, Bettina Toferer, and Claudia Schreiner. Graz: Leykam, 2013. 48-49. *Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation & Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens*. 23 February 2014 <https://www.bifie.at/system/files/buch/pdf/pisa12_erste_ergebnisse_2013-12-03.pdf>.

Paran, Amos. "State-of-the-Art Article: The role of literature in instructed foreign language learning and teaching: An evidence-based survey." *Language Teaching* 41 (2008): 465-496. 13 March 2014 <http://www.finchpark.com/courses/grad-dissert/articles/literature/literature.pdf>.

Pawling, Christopher. "Debating Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: The Limitations of a Culturalist Approach." *Postcolonial Media: Culture in Britain*. Ed. Rosalind Brunt and Rinella Cere. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 142-155.

Peirce, Charles. S. *The Philosophy of Peirce: Selected Writings*. Ed. Justus Buchler. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1940.

Pennycook, Alastair. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*. London: Routledge, 2007.

Petersen, Marilyn and Deirdre, Lashgari. "Teaching The Woman Warrior to High School and Community College Students." *Approaches to Teaching Kingston's 'The Woman Warrior'*. Ed. Shirley Geok-lin Lim. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1991. 101-120.

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. "Der Melange-Effekt: Globalisierung im Plural." *Perspektiven der Weltgesellschaft*. Ed. Ulrich Beck. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1998. 87-124.

Quayson, Ato. "Postcolonialism and Postmodernism." *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002. 87-111.

Reichl, Susanne. *Cognitive Principles, Critical Practice: Reading Literature at University*. Göttingen: Vienna UP, 2009.

Rhoads, Diana Akers. "Culture in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*." *African Studies Review* 36 (September 1993): 61-72. *JSTOR*. 4 December 2013 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/524733>.

Rizvi, Fazal, Bob Lingard, and Jennifer Lavia. "Postcolonialism and education: negotiating a contested terrain." *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 14 (October 2006): 249-262. 15 October 2013 <www.freewebs.com/engl492group6b/postcolonialismeducation.pdf>.

Rockefeller, Steven C. Comment. *Multiculturalism. Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Ed. Charles Taylor et al. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994. 87-98.

Rosenblatt, Lousie M. *Literature as Exploration*. 1938. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1995.

-----.*The Reader, the Text, the Poem. The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978.

-----.“Louise Rosenblatt Interview.” *Department of Teaching and Learning, University of Miami*. 15 March 2014 <http://www.education.miami.edu/ep/rosenblatt/>.

Sadiqi, Fatima, Amira Nowaira, Azza El Kholy, and Moha Ennaji, eds. *Women Writing Africa: Northern Region*. Vol. IV. New York: Feminist Press, 2009.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. NY: Pantheon, 1978.

Schein, Edgar, H. *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.

Schinschke, Andrea. *Literarische Texte im interkulturellen Lernprozess. Zur Verbindung von Literatur und Landeskunde im Fremdsprachenunterricht Französisch*. Tübingen: gnv, 1995.

Schreiner, Claudia, and Breit Simone, eds. “Standardüberprüfung 2013 Englisch, 8. Schulstufe: Bundesergebnisbericht.“ *Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation & Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens*. 31 January 2014. 24 Februray 2014 <https://www.bifie.at/system/files/dl/01_BiSt-UE_E8_2013_Bundesergebnisbericht.pdf>.

Schrödter, Mark. “Ist das Antirassismus-Training “Blue-Eyed” legitimierbar? Evaluation sozialpädagogischer Intervention vor dem Hintergrund der universalen Regeln der Moral.“ *Rassismuskritik Band 2: Rassismuskritische Bildungsarbeit*. Politik und Bildung 48. Ed. Wiebke Scharathow and Rudolf Leiprecht. Schalbach: Wochenschau Verlag, 2009. 97-118.

Schubert, Frank. “Das Erbe des Kolonialismus – oder: warum es in Afrika keine Nationen gibt.” *Zeitgeschichte online*. June 2010. 10 January 2014 <http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/print/276>.

“Schulbücher Österreich: Diskriminierung in Schulbüchern bekämpfen.“ Facebook Website. 2012. 10 February 2014 <https://www.facebook.com/SchulbuecherOsterreich>.

Schulze-Engler, Frank. “Changing Spaces: Globalization, Migration, and the Post-Colonial Transition.” *Borderlands: Negotiating Boundaries in Post-Colonial Writing*. Ed. Monika Reif-Hülser. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999. 3-15.

-----.“Transnationale Literatur als Herausforderung für die Literaturwissenschaft:” *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 50 (2002): 65-79.

-----.“Theoretical Perspectives: From Postcolonialism to Transcultural World Literature.” *English Literatures Across the Globe: A Companion*. Ed. Lars Eckstein. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag UTB, 2007. 20-32.

Schwantner, Ursula. “Spitzen- und Risikoschüler/innen: Migrationshintergrund.“ *PISA 2012 Internationaler Vergleich von Schülerleistungen: Erste Ergebnisse Mathematik, Lesen, Naturwissenschaft*. Ed. Ursula Schwantner, Bettina Toferer, and Claudia Schreiner. Graz: Leykam, 2013. 54-55. *Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation & Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens*. 23 February 2014 <https://www.bifie.at/system/files/buch/pdf/pisa12_erste_ergebnisse_2013-12-03.pdf>.

Shaull, Richard. Foreword. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. By Paulo Freire. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. Introd. Donaldo Macedo. New York: Continuum, 1970. 29-34.

Shohat, Ella. “Notes on the ‘Post-colonial’.” *Social Text* 31 (1992): 99-113. *JSTOR*. 21 April 2014 <http://postcolonial.net/@/DigitalLibrary/_entries/44/file-pdf.pdf>

Sickels, Amy. “The Critical Reception of Things Fall Apart.” Ed. M. Keith Booker. *Critical Insights: Things Fall Apart* 1. (October 2010). 5 February 2014 <http://salempress.com/store/samples/critical_insights/things_fall_reception.htm>.

Smith, David G. “Globalization and Education: Prospects for Postcolonial Pedagogy In a Hermeneutic Mode.” *Interchange* 30 (1999): 1-10. *Springer Link*. Vienna University Library. 13 February 2014 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A%3A1007514907813>.

Smith. L. T. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* London: Zed Books, 1999.

“Nationalrats-Sondersitzung zur Bildung.” Parlamentskorrespondenz Nr. 721 vom 18. 09. 2013. *Republik Österreich Parlament*. 27 September 2013 <http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2013/PK0721/index.shtml>.

Soja, E. W. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and OtherReal-and-imagined Places*. London: Blackwell, 1996.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. Ed. Sarah Harasym. London: Routledge, 1990.

-----. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Christman. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. 66-111.

-----.*A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. USA: Harvard UP, 1999

-----.Foreword: Upon Reading the Companion to Postcolonial Studies. *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002. xv-xxii.

Sutherland-Addy, Esi, and Aminatat Diaw, ed. *Women Writing Africa: West Africa and the Sahel*. Vol. II. New York: The Feminist Press, 2005.

Thaler, Engelbert. *Teaching English Literature*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008.

Tanasijevic, Tamara. “Diskriminierung in Schulbüchern: Es geht uns alle an!“ *M-MEDIA* 14 January 2014. 20 February 2014 <http://www.m-media.or.at/gesellschaft/diskriminierung-in-schulbuchern-es-geht-uns-alle-an/2014/01/14/>.

“The Event: How Racist Are You?” Youtube Video. *Channel 4*. 26 June 2013. 19 February 2014 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MYHBrJIIFU>.

“The World Factbook: Nigeria.” *Central Intelligence Agency*. Website. 10 March 2014 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>.

Ushioda, Ema. “Motivation as a socially mediated process.” Learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: Teacher, learner, curriculum and assessment. Ed. David Little, Jennifer Ridley, and Ema Ushioda., Dublin: Authentik, 2003. 90-102.

Van Lier, Leo. *Semiotics and the Ecology of Language Learning*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004.

-----.“Agency in the classroom.” *Sociocultural Theory and the Teaching of Second Languages.* Ed. James Lantolf and Matthew E. Poehner. London: Equinox, 2008. 163-186.

Wallace, Tamara, and Brenda R. Brand. “Using critical race theory to analyze science teachers culturally responsive practices.” *Cultural Studies of Science Education* 7 (2012): 341-374. *Springer Link*. Vienna University Library. 23 February 2014 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11422-012-9380-8>.

Wallner, Friedrich G. *Systemanalyse als Wissenschaftstheorie III: Das Vorhaben einer kulturorientierten Wissenschaftstheorie in der Gegenwart*. Culture and Knowledge Vol. 16. Ed. Friedrich G. Wallner. Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 2011.

Walton, Kendall L. *Mimesis as Make-Believe*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993.

Waters, Anne, ed. *American Indian thought: Philosophical Essays*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Weaver, Jace. “Indigenousness and Indigeneity.” *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002. 221-235.

Weber, Hans. “Gardeners in the DaF-Classroom: Poems and Stories in Intercultural Learning.” *Challenges of Literary Texts in the Foreign Language Classroom*. Ed. Lothar Bredella and Werner Delanoy. Tübingen: gnv, 1996. 233-247.

Weber, Martina. *Heterogenität im Schulalltag. Konstruktion ethnischer und gesellschaftlicher Unterschiede*. Schule und Gesellschaft 30. Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 2003.

Weiner, Mark S. “Foreword: The Importance of Historical Sensibility.” *Rutgers Law Review* 64 (Spring 2012): 591-593. 14 February 2014 <http://www.rutgerslawreview.com/wp-content/uploads/archive/vol64/issue3/Foreword.pdf>.

Welsch, Wolfgang. “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today.” *Spaces of Culture. City, Nation, World*. Ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash. London: Sage, 1999. 194-213.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Ed. John B. Carroll. Massachusetts: Technology Press of Massachusetts Inst. of Technology, 1956.

Widdowson, Henry G. *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*. London: Longman, 1975.

-----. *Practical Stylistics*. Oxford OUP, 1992.

Williams, Marion and Robert L. Burden. *Psychology for Language Teachers. A Social Constructivist Approach*. Cambridge: CUP, 1997.

Wolff, Martina. *Vorstellungsorientierte Textarbeit mit narrative Texten im Englischunterricht der Sekundarstufe 1*. Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 2002.

Yule, George. *The Study of Language*. 2nd ed. 1985. UK: CUP, 1996.

Zima, Peter V. *Literarische Ästhetik, Methoden und Modelle der Literaturwissenschaft*. Francke: Tübingen, 1991.

German Abstract

Vor dem Hintergrund der vorherrschenden Postkolonialität in unserer globalisierten Welt und die damit verbundenden hegemonialen Machtstrukturen, erfährt die Auseinandersetzung mit postkolonialen Studien sowie postkolonialer Literatur eine neue Prägnanz. Entgegen der Kritik, dass postkoloniale Diskurse in Zeiten der Globalsierung wenig Relevanz für die Diskussion von komplexen Machtverstrickungen und Ungleichverteilungen haben, werden in der vorliegenden Diplomarbeit zentrale Punkte herausgearbeitet, die für ein besseres und kritisches Verständnis unserer Gesellschaft beitragen können. Angesichts des spezifischen Hintergrundes, aus welchem postkoloniale Kritik entsprungen ist, können wichtige Einsichten hinsichtlich zentraler Themen, wie kulturelle Identität, Hybridität, kulturelle Dominanz, Ethnozentrismus, Eurozentrismus, etc. gewonnen werden. Vor allem die Beschäftigung mit postkolonialer Literatur erscheint als eine wichtige Quelle für die Entwicklung kritischen Denkens und die Gewinnung neuer Einsichten, da die Auseinandersetzung mit verschiedenen Sichtweisen maßgeblich der kritischen Hinterfragung der eigenen kulturellen Situiertheit, sowie der eigenen kulturellen Normen und Werte, welche meist unhinterfragt bleiben, beitragen kann. So tragen postkoloniale Diskurse über Kultur, Sprache und Identität maßgeblich zur Entwicklung der SchülerInnen als kritische und weltoffene Subjekte bei, welche kulturelle Diversität und Pluralität als Chance wahrnehmen und den interkulturellen Dialog suchen. Die Inkludierung, beziehungsweise die besondere Berücksichtigung postkolonialer Literatur im Englischunterricht, ist dabei nicht nur eine Frage der Akzeptanz einiger lebensweltlicher Gegenentwürfe, sondern zieht Fragen eines hegemonialen Machtdiskurses mit sich, welche nicht unbeantwortet bleiben dürfen, gerade hinsichtlich der politischen Dimension der englischen Sprache. Abschließend sei betont, dass eine Bildung, welche die Forderung nach Toleranz, Offenheit, Inklusion und Friedenserziehung ernst nimmt, an postkolonialen Diskursen teilhaben sollte. Für den Englischunterricht bedeutet dies, dass der Dialog mit postkolonialer Literatur maßgeblich für die persönliche und sprachliche Entwicklung der SchülerInnen beiträgt. Dieses Projekt betrifft gleichermaßen theoretische als auch praktische Fragestellungen hinsichtlich der Potentiale postkolonialer Literatur für den Englischunterricht und beschäftigt sich mit Positionen innerhalb der fremdsprachlichen Literaturdidaktik, Fragen des (inter-) kulturellen Lernens, sowie Ansichten pädagogischer und didaktischer Ansätze des hermeneutisch orientierten dialogischen Lernens.

Curriculum Vitae

Angaben zur Person

Name:	Claudia Wobovnik
Geburtsdatum:	12. Dezember 1986
Geburtsort:	Villach, Kärnten

Ausbildung	November 2013 – May 2014 Diplomarbeitsphase
	2005 – 2014 Lehramtsstudium UF Psychologie und Philosophie und UF Englisch, Universität Wien
	2001 – 2005 Bundesoberstufenrealgymnasium Hermagor
	1997 – 2001 Hauptschule Greifenburg
	1993 – 1997 Volksschule Weißensee
Praxiserfahrung	2005 – laufend Privatnachhilfe Englisch
	2010 – 2013 Mitarbeit am Project „Theory, Methodology and Structure of TCM“ unter der Leitung von Univ.-Prof. Dr. Friedrich Wallner
	Mitherausgeberin des Sammelbandes *SHEN – Psychotherapy and Acupuncture: Theory, Methodology and Structure of Chinese Medicine* (2011)
	10 – 14 Juni 2010 Internationaler Kongress „Shen – Interculturality and Psychotherapy“ (Mitorganisatorin, Chair)
	Sommersemester 2009 Tutorium für die Seminare „Grundlagen der TCM I + II – Metapher und Wissenschaft“ unter der Leitung von Univ.-Prof. Dr. Friedrich Wallner
Fremdsprachen	Englisch: fließend in Wort und Schrift Französisch: Grundkenntnisse Italienisch: Grundkenntnisse Latein: Grundkurs